TXT 2019: The art of reading : contemporary perspectives on the countless ways we encounter the written word

Gercar, Jaka

THE ART OF READING

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CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES ON THE COUNTLESS WAYS WE ENCOUNTER THE WRITTEN WORD

TXT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITOR'S LETTER

Learning to read in the 18th century was considered a privilege and an advantage. In the developed world today, literacy levels are close to 100%; reading is a prerequisite to be able to participate fully in our society. However, the instance of nearly total literacy does not signify that the battle had been won; if anything, it altered the ways we think about the ability to read and write. In today's learned discussions, literacy is more often regarded as a continuum rather than as a threshold. Perhaps not even as a continuum, but an agglomeration of various ways of reading and comprehending. As it is duly pointed out elsewhere in this issue, mere coding and decoding of letters can be considered only the first and most rudimentary level of literacy. There is no guarantee that being able to read out a certain text correctly entails comprehension, let alone impact. As John Ruskin knew well in 1856, there is even little guarantee that being able to read and indeed reading vast numbers of books makes for an educated person:

> [T]hat you might read all the books in the British Museum (if you could live long enough), and remain an utterly "illiterate", uneducated person; but that if you read ten pages of a good book, letter by letter, – that is to say, with real accuracy, – you are for evermore in some measure an educated person.[1]

There are as many ways of reading as there are readers and learning to read well is a valuable asset in a knowledge economy. Yet reading remains an idiosyncratic endeavour, which is also to say personal and perplexing. As a society we have no set conceptions of what it means to read well and what our reading ideals should be. If our issue has one aim, it is to put varied scholarly perspectives on reading side-by-side with the hopes of elucidating the complex space that exists between texts and that which is or, what is far more telling, which is not attained from them.

Jaka Gercar
Editor-in-Chief

[1] J. Ruskin, "Of King's Treasures", in *Essays and letters selected from the writings of John Ruskin*, ed. L.G. Hufford (Boston: Gin&Company, 1894), p. 20.

THE LITERACY WE TEACH TODAY

Adriaan van der Weel
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It is a truism to say that literacy is a fundamental prerequisite for participating fully in today's society. However, more than that, the literacy we teach today will determine the shape of tomorrow's world. This too would appear at first blush to be no more than a statement of obvious fact. Yet it is cause for worry that awareness of the fact doesn't appear to be widespread. There is little sign, for example, of it influencing educational policy. We don't seem to realise that literacy and our reading culture are not givens but that they constantly evolve under the influence of new text technologies, the current digital media revolution being the most recent case in point. Like all revolutions, this one too has major consequences for the future shape of society. As research shows, it is already having the effect of devaluing reading as a cultural technique and a technique to care for the self. It certainly stimulates reading as an information practice, but it fails to recognise – let alone promote – reading as an intellectual achievement. If we set any store by that for the shape of tomorrow's society, we will have to work a bit harder at it. The role of literacy has been crucial since the education revolution of the nineteenth century. Without that revolution modern democracies would be unthinkable. Yet that the literacy we teach today will determine the shape of tomorrow's world is at least as true now as it was then. It may even be more true today, principally because literacy as a suite of necessary skills appears to be expanding greatly. To take one simple but telling example, it is

now generally accepted that schools should include "digital literacy" in the curriculum – even though there is little agreement what position it should take between the purely practical and the philosophical. The unbridled access to online information and communication has been shown to come with unintended consequences of a rather dubious kind. These range from a more superficial engagement with text down to a massive incidence of manipulation, deception and privacy infringement. It is clearly unrealistic to expect the media to solve the resulting crisis of mistrust and to stem the tide of misinformation and fake news. Rather, our only hope lies, I think, in creating greater awareness among consumers of the dark side of the new "democratised" information environment. Such an extension of literacy is new, not just because the digital element is new; it is new also in the sense that it was never felt necessary to teach what by analogy we might dub "book literacy".

Another, probably less immediately visible way in which schools' responsibility for teaching literacy is – or should be – actually growing is in countering the fast disappearance of what was once the ultimate (if implicit) goal of all attempts at teaching literacy: the practice of long-form deep reading. Deep reading has the potential to foster mental focus, patience and discipline, to offer emotional and esthetic experiences, to increase linguistic knowledge and to enhance economic and personal well-being. It is associated in particular with more than averagely demanding long-form texts, such as, say, poetry, serious non-fiction, or literary fiction. In the course of the last twenty or so years the inclination to read book-length texts – and probably in particular those of a more demanding kind – has experienced a remarkable downturn. Simply put, if young people have less experience of engaging in demanding long-form texts this is likely also to affect their ability to do so. This means that, if we still believe

that this ability is an important literacy skill, there is no room for complacency. It should now more than ever be consciously trained, and thus explicitly be made part of the formal curriculum. As it happens, in the Netherlands stimulating such serious reading (thereby hopefully enhancing the ability and inclination) is subject of a policy-making exercise at the time of writing. The government has commissioned a report by the national Education Council to determine ways in which young people of a school-going age can be induced to read more long-form texts. One of the particular challenges will be how to get Dutch teachers, who are themselves often notoriously poor readers, to motivate their charges to become more enthusiastic about reading.

The assumption that reading is fundamentally beneficial is a relatively recent one. When only an elite was reading the literacy question (the issue of who should be allowed and enabled to read what) hardly existed. It certainly wasn't a pressing one. It became so with the education revolution in the nineteenth century. From today's vantage point of virtually universal literacy it is only too easy to overlook the magnitude of the changes that resulted from the introduction of massive educational reforms in Western Europe. Perhaps for someone of my generation an analogy may be found in the introduction of the networked computer. Now that being online is a permanent condition, it is hardly thinkable what an offline existence looked like. From a technological development that merely added an exciting new dimension to one's private and social life, it has become one of the basic necessities of life. Observing the ensuing social transformations, the painful but inescapable conclusion must be that only very few people even thought very hard about the potential consequences of a 24/7 connectedness. Certainly no one predicted the extent of the ensuing societal transformation.

By contrast, scholars, politicians and clergymen alike sensed

already in the seventeenth century that "undbridled reading" needed regulation. To us this might seem an unnecessarily alarmist position, sprouting from a quaintly unenlightened temperament: we now regard newspaper consumption as an essential means to create an informed public. In the seventeenth century it was recognised that newspapers also had the potential to derail social order if readers were not sufficiently equipped to make sense of what they read. This fear certainly proved less misguided and alarmist than we might think. In fact it prefigured quite accurately what is happening today. We now see that even people who we would in an earlier era have called literate can easily fall prey to fake news. The seventeenth-century "moralists" somehow intimated how powerful literacy is as an instrument of social change.

The distrust of literacy never completely disappeared. Even Enlightenment thinkers remained highly ambivalent about popular access to books. It was only in the course of the nineteenth century that what appeared as a drastic change in attitude occurred. Slowly but surely pessimism gave way to a new optimism about the potential of literacy to elevate the masses. This indicated an initially hesitant but nevertheless decisive new willingness by a hereditary elite class to share its power. The elite carried responsibility for those lower on the social ladder, but also for the future of society. While modern democracy was at best only an incipient idea at the time, it was felt that, on balance, literacy would be beneficial to society.

It wasn't till the turn of the twentieth century that literacy gained its current unassailable position as a sine qua non of life in a representative democracy. The optimism that had made this about-face possible was not to last very long. The voices warning of the Pandorean nature of the power of reading and writing had never been totally silenced. Many had always kept their

doubts about the effects of unbridled access to books and knowledge. As the new readers began to indulge their taste for what was regarded as inferior reading matter, especially intellectuals saw their worst fears become reality. Romance novelettes and crime fiction were among the many new "trashy" genres that fed their sense of disillusionment. The atrocities of WWI only served to confirm the sense of the literacy-for-the-masses project as a painful fiasco.

The disillusionment was profound and widespread, and not only social and political, but also philosophical. The ostensible failure of the optimistic social and political programme of nineteenth-century positivism also raised – or confirmed – doubts about the suitability of the means chosen: universal literacy. The very efficacy and power of textual communication and even human language itself came under increasing scrutiny. Under the influence of this new problematic view of language, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw the birth of the new disciplines of linguistics and the philosophy of language. Almost without exception the linguists and philosophers of language, too, expressed a new pessimism: a fundamental skepticism about the power of linguistic expression.

However, even such broad disillusionment came too late to stop the march of literacy. The position that reading and writing had managed to acquire for themselves in a relatively short period had already become impregnable. In retrospect, there had been only a brief window of opportunity for this to happen, but it had been seized – not by anyone on purpose, but by an almost accidental confluence of forces. Text had de facto gained a virtual monopoly as a vehicle for knowledge and culture. When from the end of the nineteenth century one potentially competing new medium after another made its appearance, it was already too late. Each could – in retrospect – have been

used for the purpose of communicating human knowledge and culture. However, none managed to overthrow the by now sanctified place of text in education, scholarship and science. In other words, whatever the popularity of film, radio or television, they could not oust books from their hard-won position – at least not for the time being.

Given the new position of text as a self-evident necessity, it did not really have to be defended any longer, or even explained or rationalised as such: reading and writing had become securely ensconced in the curriculum. In fact, the entire education system in the West – not to mention modern democracy – has come to rely on it. This had the interesting effect that before we were even aware of it, the status of literacy, which had only so recently found its way into compulsory education, had become relegated from that of an intellectual achievement – a miraculous means to change people's minds and ways of thinking – to that of a mere practical skill, prerequisite for learning – and teaching – other knowledge.

If this analysis is correct it is in retrospect perhaps understandable that none of the new mediums were ever regarded as a serious threat to books and other text forms. Reading and writing had as it were simply "got their first". Books could pride themselves on a centuries-old tradition, and when film, radio and television came along, all subjects had already been properly described in (text-)books. Books were venerable, if not revered objects that maintained a natural place in everyone's esteem.

It was only some time after the middle of the twentieth century that the tables finally turned and the position of books started slowly to decline. Though in the absence of relevant research there is no easy access to precise statistics, TV was the first medium to show itself a massive competitor for reading as leisure-time home entertainment. But it was the advent of the

networked computer at the tail end of the twentieth century that made the decisive difference. The parallel presence of all mediums on the same screen suddenly showed the real place of text in people's affections. Being cognitively more demanding, text clearly takes second position to auditory and visual media for entertainment and as a vehicle of cultural experience. The social use of text in the meantime is a different matter: text is still very important in social media – although in an ever more rudimentary form.

Inherent properties of screens are shifting the dominant reading mode away from deep long-form reading. Though by no means the exclusive or even necessarily primary focus of paper reading habits, deep long-form reading was at least one of its ready affordances and an implicit ideal. This "screen effect" leading to the demotion of such more demanding forms of reading clearly shows once again the contingent nature of literacy. What follows is a plea to give back to literacy its original aura as a major intellectual achievement: a means to shape future minds, and thus the society in which our children will live.

Narrowly, literacy is simply the ability to code and decode textual expressions that use the writing system that is dominant in one's society. In other words, to be able to read and write. Now that such a large proportion of all communication (personal, in education, in society at large) is in a textual form, a more extensive definition would encompass an understanding and mastering of the way text functions in society, minimally one's own, but given the ineluctable advance of globalisation, also globally. It is questionable if this is what the curriculum currently achieves, given that teachers – at least in the Netherlands – tend to be rather reluctant readers themselves, and given the growing role of screens in education. Attempts to substitute the long-form paper experience with screens – a medium that seems inherently

antithetical to it – can only be regarded as inexpedient if not doomed. Some individuals will probably always be determined enough to manage to rise above the level that they are offered by the education they receive. But for most people the upper literacy level that their curriculum is aimed to achieve will determine the level of thinking that they – and hence in the aggregate society – will be able to reach. The sad reality is that there is no evidence of any concerted efforts to raise the aims of literacy education above the minimum level required to code and decode text: to simply read and write.

The question that faces us now is ostensibly primarily one of ambition: how deeply does society wish its individuals to be able to think? However, before we can get to the matter of ambition we need to deal first with an unspoken and almost unspeakable, yet persistent fear: that such deep thinking may harbour unsuspected dangers. So the real question is whether we may prevail over our persisting distrust of the power that literacy may bestow on the next generation. How deeply do we who have the power to cogitate and decide about such things think that those who do not have that power should be allowed to think? Just how critical do we think the next generation should be allowed to be?

Perhaps the most serious problem here is that it is the new orthodoxy that an elite like the one that worried about literacy in the seventeenth century no longer exists. The elite's excuse was always that the world is too complex for some people to understand, and that it was necessary for that reason to set limits to literacy. Today's Western-style democracy is founded on equal participation in – compulsory – education. Yet if we look properly, we can see a political establishment again – or still – behaving like an elite and again – or still – distrusting the electorate. This distrust is – incidentally – mutual and growing. The difference with the seventeenth century is that in the Web (2.0) the

masses have gained a powerful channel to express their feelings and sentiments. It is easy to mock the inarticulate nature of such expressions (think of the yellow vests or other "populist" protesters), but that will of course merely reinforce their mistrust of elites and authorities.

It is clearly not an option to attempt to put the spirit of literacy back in its bottle, going back to a social divide between literates and illiterates. The only way open to us now is fearlessly forward. The populist movements of Europe all seem to exhibit the same phenomenon: that unfocused and often preverbal disgruntlement is hijacked by more literate demagogues and rabble rousers for their own political ends. It is only the demagogues who appear interested and willing to take the shouters seriously. However, they do so for their own ulterior motive of political power; not to improve the lot of the disenfranchised. Instead of shaking our heads disapprovingly while observing the disturbance from a distance, we have to realise that however prevocal they may sometimes be, these expressions of disgruntlement are by and large justified. Perhaps hardest to accept is that the distrust is mutual. The electorate feels – rightly – that its legitimate concerns have not been taken seriously: about globalisation, about mass immigration, about the European project.

If we feel that it is beneath us to listen to mere inchoate and inarticulate noise, surely the only way out of the mire is to enable the masses to articulate their concerns and protests properly. Even if the elite is supposed no longer to exist, the reality is that it does exist, and that it needs to take action. It alone is in a position to decide on a fairer distribution of literacy. Ultimately the future of the literacy project still comes down to the willingness to share power: the power that literacy bestows.

DIGITIZATION AND CHANGING READING PRACTICES IN ACADEMIC STUDIES

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1 Reading in academic studies

Learning performance is determined by reading comprehension and reading behavior, which have a major influence on academic accomplishments.[1] Without the adoption and development of academic literacy, students can rarely maximize their learning potential. Recently, the academic reading capabilities of students have led to an increasing dissatisfaction among lecturers and to a progressing helplessness among students: many lecturers complain that texts are not read thoroughly enough anymore.[2] This constant criticism of the lecturers, as well as noticeable consequences in their performance ratings, are subsequently decreasing students' learning motivation and their engagement in academic courses. Therefore, although students do not seem to have reduced their reading efforts for academic studies, the efforts are not providing the same learning benefits as in former generations.

Lecturers complaining about learning behavior and reading

[1] Cf. C. Frauen et al., *Lesekompetenz – Schlüsselqualifikation und Querschnittsaufgabe* (München: Oldenbourg, 2007), p. 9.
[2] Cf. D. Blum, "'Keiner liest…' Lesekompetenz fördern – ein Modell aus dem Fach Kirchengeschichte", *Tübinger Beiträge zur Hochschuldidaktik* 13, no. 2 (2017); D. Schulte, "Vom Bücherfrust zur Leselust. Wissenschaftliche Textkompetenz von Studierenden steigern", *Neues Handbuch Hochschullehre* G 3, no. 6 (2006), pp. 1–24.

problems of students are in fact a recurring topic in the history of education systems.[3] The current discourse nevertheless appears to be different, because digital transformation has clearly changed social communication processes and individual communicative activities in everyday life. The principles of digital communication are, at the same time, opposing an education system that has been established in the tradition of the written word of modernity.

This article uses an explorative approach to give some insights into changing reading routines and their consequences for academic reading. While previous research related to digital reading focused on the transformation of reading processes when engaging with text, this article aims to supplement this research by using a praxeological approach for analyzing the more complex reading behavior of students. To do so, the article will use the results of an explorative experiment utilizing reading diaries. These diaries indicate that there is an increasing insufficiency in academic reading routines, caused by changing implicit knowledge regimes for reading in everyday life.

1.1 Digitization and reading processes

Explanations of the increasing mismatch of reading competencies of students and reading requirements in academic studies include different narratives. One argument is simply characterizing students as a generation with merely simple and pragmatic information needs.[4] Another argument is based on the increasing matriculations, which might on average reduce read-

[3] Cf. U. Preußer and N. Sennewald, "Literale Kompetenzen an der Hochschule – eine Einleitung", in *Literale Kompetenzentwicklung an der Hochschule,* eds. U. Preußer and N. Sennewald (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012), pp. 7–37; S. Rühr and A. Kuhn, eds., *Sinn und Unsinn des Lesens – Gegenstände, Darstellungen und Argumente aus Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2013).
[4] Cf. E. Albrecht and K. Hurrelmann, *Die heimlichen Revolutionäre: Wie die Generation Y unsere Welt verändert* (Weinheim: Beltz, 2016), pp. 145–148.

ing competencies, because the student's cohort simply becomes more heterogenous.[5]

Most arguments however involve digitization, which seems to devaluate reading as a cultural technique altogether.[6] Although related assessments have remained only discursive statements so far, it has been proven that digital media is indeed transforming cognitive processes and strategies when engaging with texts. Caused by the increasing mediatization of living environments[7] and the associated differentiation of reading media like e-mails, websites, chats, weblogs, messaging, social networks etc., reading socialization has obviously changed, and with it, the interaction between people with information in written form.[8]

Especially in younger generations, reading processes have become more focused on efficient information retrieval and less focused on reading as a complex experience. Reading processes and text reception units have become shorter, fragmented, and erratic. The dominant strategy for reading has become an increasingly discontinuous approach of texts, ignoring textual structures and content orders for a fast and efficient identification of information. The consequences are reduced reading comprehension as well as reduced involvement, often causing emotions of boredom, overstraining, and impatience when reading.[9]

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[5] Cf. C. Ganseuer and U. Klammer, *Diversity Management – Kernaufgabe der künftigen Hochschulentwicklung* (Münster: Waxmann, 2015).

[6] Cf. A. Kuhn, "Das Ende des Lesens? Zur Einordnung medialer Diskurse über die schwindende Bedeutung des Lesens in einer sich ausdifferenzierenden Medienlandschaft", in *Sinn und Unsinn des Lesens – Gegenstände, Darstellungen und Argumente aus Geschichte und Gegenwart,* eds. S. Rühr and A. Kuhn (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2013), pp. 219–240.

[7] Cf. J. van Dijck, *The Network Society* (London: SAGE Publications, 2006).

[8] Cf. N. Baron, *Words Onscreen: The Fate of Reading in a Digital World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); A. Kuhn and S. Hagenhoff, "Digitale Lesemedien", in *Lesen. Ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch*, eds. U. Rautenberg and U. Schneider (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2015), p. 361; A. Mangen and A. van der Weel, "The evolution of reading in the age of digitization: an integrative framework for reading research", *Literacy* 50, no. 3 (2016), pp. 116–124.

[9] Cf. A. Kuhn, "Lesen – beschleunigt, fragmentiert und mit habitueller Ungeduld", *Zeitpolitisches Magazin* 15, no. 33 (2018), pp. 20–22.

1.2 Praxeology

Despite its inherent logic, reducing the impact of digital transformation of reading on cognitive processes and text engagement strategies is concealing the fact that digitization is also universally changing the embedding of reading and texts in daily lives. Its consequences have been rarely addressed in reading research so far,[10] especially because theoretical and methodological concepts are still missing.[11] Research perspectives therefore need to shift their arguments to reading spaces and explain reading as a cultural practice including different reading modes, reading subjects, reading motivations, reading objects, and reading contexts.

A possible approach for doing so is the perspective of praxeology,[12] which is based on a fundamentally modified understanding of social action, social subjects, and social communication. Culture and social structures are thereby defined as an "array of activities",[13] which are embedded materially and corporally in living environments. Practices like reading are defined as comprehensive, pre-shaped patterns of activities; as typical acting and behavior; and as specific form of social interaction, produced and reproduced by subjects in complex relational arrangements of bodies, artifacts, and symbolic meanings.[14]

Therefore, practices like reading are commonplace and typical patterns of behavior that have not consciously come into

[10] An exception is research on reading socialization of children.
[11] Cf. Mangen and Van der Weel, "The evolution of reading", p. 118; A. Kuhn and S. Hagenhoff, "Kommunikative statt objektzentrierte Gestaltung: Zur Notwendigkeit veränderter Lesekonzepte und Leseforschung für digitale Lesemedien", in *Lesen X.0 – Rezeptionsprozesse in der digitalen Gegenwart,* eds. S. Böck et al. (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2017), pp. 33–41.
[12] For basics, see A. Reckwitz, "Grundelemente einer Theorie sozialer Praktiken – Eine sozialtheoretische Perspektive", *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 32, no. 4 (2003), pp. 282–301.
[13] Cf. T. R, Schatzki, "Introduction: Practice Theory", in *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory,* eds. T. R. Schatzki et al. (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 2.
[14] Cf. S. Hirschauer, "Verhalten, Handeln, Interagieren", in *Praxistheorie – Ein soziologisches Forschungsprogramm,* ed. H. Schäfer (Bielefeld: transcript, 2016), p. 46.

being by drafts, goals, or plans, but are socialized pre-reflexively and practiced unconsciously and automatically using physically incorporated knowledge. Using this approach, reading practices can be described as habitual movements of bodies in specific situations, involving influential material objects and associated knowledge regimes. Practices enable individual acting, require humans for their reproduction, and exist independently from particular subjects. Practices in this regard are the smallest social and cultural units and can be analyzed as discrete events, as regularly linked events, and as complex practice formations.[15]

In addition, reading practices are based on physically incorporated knowledge, which becomes visible only in repeating routines of action sequences, spatial constellations, and body movements. This incorporated knowledge is provided and restricted by collective knowledge regimes, affecting its adoption and evaluation. Consequently, specific action sequences, spatial constellations, and body movements are unconsciously reproduced or left out because they are collectively accepted or rejected. Knowledge regimes can be further differentiated: explicit knowledge regimes have been consciously designed as institutions by powerful individuals, organizations, or social systems. They are usually recorded in documents and are openly communicated. Sticking to their rules is widely expected, also because not doing so may result in negative consequences for individuals.[16] In contrast, implicit knowledge regimes are invisible regulations of everyday life, which are adopted automatically by observation.[17] Practices and knowledge regimes are transformed mutually over time, becoming only visible retrospectively as cultural change.

[15] Cf. F. Hillebrandt, *Soziologische Praxistheorien. Eine Einführung* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2014), p. 59.
[16] see *2.1 Hermeneutics as knowledge regime of higher education* for an explicit knowledge regime.
[17] Cf. A. Reckwitz, "Praktiken und ihre Affekte", in *Praxistheorie – Ein soziologisches Forschungsprogramm,* ed. H. Schäfer (Bielefeld: transcript, 2016), pp. 163–180.

1.3 Explorative research by reflexive photography

To gain insight in current reading practices of complex texts[18] and interpreting their underlying knowledge regimes, an explorative diary study was performed at the University Erlangen-Nürnberg. Its primary objective was to reveal the invisible and unconscious patterns of reading behavior of students. Related to the central ideas of praxeology, hypotheses for expected results and pre-defined set-ups of reading were renounced. Instead, reading practices were documented, described, and reflected freely without predetermined expectations.

An appropriate method for measuring unconscious aspects of practices is the method of reflexive photography,[19] by which individual everyday activities are documented visually by images and reflected later by the picture taking subjects using an open guided interview. Non-verbal documentation techniques allow the representation of reading in its subjective physical and spatial perceptions. At the same time, the images can be analyzed as self-revelation of subjects in their reading practices:[20] already the selection of specific motives and choosing specific image perspectives unconsciously reveal relevant aspects of reading practices. By reflecting their own images, the subjects become experts of their own acting and may complement the visual information by simultaneous rational assessments.

Over one regular week of the lecture period, 20 students

[18] Complex texts are specialist, factual, fictional, or journalistic texts, which can be defined relatively by linguistical and textual complexity, perceptional requirements of contextual knowledge, and high demands for reading competencies. Cf. W. Graf, "Leseverstehen komplexer Texte", in *Lesen – ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch,* eds. U. Rautenberg and U. Schneider (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2015), pp. 185–205. Reading for interpersonal communication, e.g. by e-mail or messaging were excluded.

[19] Cf. P. Dirksmeier, "Zur Methodologie und Performativität qualitativer visueller Methoden – Die Beispiele der Autofotografie und reflexiven Fotografie", in *Raumbezogene qualitative Sozialforschung,* eds. E. Rothfuß and T. Dörfler (Wiesbaden: Springer VS 2013), pp. 88–101.

[20] Ibid., p. 88.

documented each of their reading acts of complex texts by freely taking pictures of their reading stances, their reading material, their reading media, their used or otherwise important artifacts, and their reading places. In addition, they noted the geographical place, time, and duration of each reading sequence. Following the visual documentation, the finished visual reading diaries were reflected on by a brief guided interview: the students were asked to remember their reading motivation and body posture in particular reading sequences; to evaluate the importance of place, time, and reading media for their reading experience; to identify important beneficial or distracting elements; and finally about their moods and emotions before, during, and after reading. The students documented a total of 394 reading sequences, of which 142 were identified as reading for academic studies.

The documented and reflected reading sequences were subsequently deconstructed by the principles of objective hermeneutics, and similar reading acts were summarized as collective and repeated reading routines. Accordingly, typical reading sequences in everyday life were differentiated by repetitive times, durations, places, and interlinked practices. Furthermore, typical spatial constellations of reading were characterized by places and their arrangement of artifacts. Additionally, similar spatial positions of readers, their postures, and their body movements were identified. All aspects were finally connected with statements about cognitive and emotional effects. The results are typical formations, performances, and perceptions of reading practices.[21]

2 Reading practices in academic studies

One documented complex reading practice was reading for aca-

[21] Cf. S. Rau, *Räume – Historische Einführungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2013), p. 133 et seq.

demic studies, especially for preparing and revising courses, for preparing presentations, for exam preparation, and directly in courses at the university. Reading for academic studies thereby is a lasting desideratum in reading research: if at all, it is only mentioned in guidebooks for academic research and writing, widely taken for granted and not needing explanation.[22] Therefore, its processes have neither been described systematically yet[23] nor reflected in its consequences for learning subjects.[24] Instead, academic reading is shaped by the powerful explicit knowledge regime of the western hermeneutics, which is unconsciously reproduced by students in their academic reading practices.

2.1 Hermeneutics as knowledge regime of higher education

Modern principles of higher education emerged from the scholastic and humanistic ideals of thinking as an archetype of science and the tradition of enlightenment as the comprehension, interpretation, and evaluation of individual aspects of human culture and society.[25] Based upon knowledge in written form and intertextuality, complex texts and text networks are therefore still the central sources for academic studies, displayed by the academic importance of longer text units in their entirety and given order.[26]

Complex texts and text units therefore should be used for

[22] Cf. O. Kruse, "Schreiben lehren an der Hochschule: Aufgaben, Konzepte, Perspektiven", in *Wissenschaftlich schreiben – lehren und lernen,* eds. K. Ehlich and A. Steets (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), p. 95.
[23] Cf. A.C. Garcia, *Textarbeit in der geisteswissenschaftlichen Lehre* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2016), pp. 43–52.
[24] Cf. P.J. Brenner, "Die Grenzen des Geistes – Zur Infrastruktur geisteswissenschaftlicher Arbeit", in *Geisteswissenschaften wozu? Studien zur Situation der Geisteswissenschaften,* eds. H. Reinalter and R. Benedikter (Thaur: Druck- und Verlagshaus Thaur, 1997), p. 56; M. Krähling, *Wie wird geisteswissenschaftliches Wissen gemacht: Arbeitsprozesse in den Geisteswissenschaften – Ergebnisse einer qualitativen Studie* (Konstanz: KOPS, 2010), pp. 8–12.
[25] Cf. R. Bod, *A New History of the Humanities – The Search for Principles and Patterns from Antiquity to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 346 et seq.
[26] Cf. G. Antos & Hasler, U. & Perrin, D., *Textoptimierung*, in S. Habscheid (ed.), *Textsorten, Handlungsmuster, Oberflächen – Linguistische Typologien der Kommunikation* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), p. 638.

individually reconstructing, interpreting, and absorbing knowledge by cognitive processes of memorizing and connecting new information with prior knowledge and experiences.[27] For making this kind of written knowledge accessible, high-level reading and language competencies are required:[28] Assertions in texts must be identified and connected by describing, extracting, and referencing information. Assertions and information then must be related to prior knowledge from other texts to create coherencies and to develop associative stocks of knowledge, usually done by categorizing, systemizing, contrasting, and combining information. Additionally, the significance of assertions, meanings, and associations must be evaluated in situational contexts and objectives, using methods of selection, supplementation, ranking, and commenting. Finally, knowledge gained must be logically structured, compiled, and memorized.

Consequently, higher education is strongly correlated with deep reading processes,[29] which firstly enable comprehension and absorption of written knowledge. Deep reading therefore requires cognitive processes involving all cerebral areas. Therefore, it is time-consuming and exhausting; vulnerable to distraction; and highly in need of motivation, awareness, and concentration by the reader. In this context, academic reading has become the subject of an explicit and powerful knowledge regime, regulating reading sequences, spatial constellations, and body movements, coded primarily in instructions for academic research.

Accordingly, academic reading should be implemented sys-

[27] Cf. H. H. Hiebel, *Interpretieren – Eine Einführung in die literarische Hermeneutik* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2017).
[28] Cf. C. Tenopir et al., *Electronic journals and changes in scholarly article seeking and reading patterns*, *Aslib Proceedings: New Information Perspectives* 61:1 (2009), p. 19.
[29] Cf. B. Brummett, *Techniques of Close Reading* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2010); M. Wolf & M. Barzillai, *The Importance of Deep Reading*, *Educational Leadership* 66:6 (2009), p. 32.

tematically and steadily as an isolated practice in daily routines. It should have fixed times and places as well as sequential routines of action. Additionally, readers should be prepared by intrinsic motivations and by feeling relaxed and refreshed when starting. Places for academic reading should avoid distractions as much as possible while being individually stimulating. For this, a fixed working place is recommended, which is adequately illuminated, ventilated, and climatized. It should furthermore eliminate noise and motion, for example, by other persons or media. Immediate surroundings should be organized, neat, and tidy. Finally, body movements when reading should be strongly standardized using an office chair and a desk to avoid back pains and muscular tension. Writing practices are recommended for excerpts, annotations, and notes as supplementary practices for academic reading, joining drinking for hydration as the only accepted secondary activities.[30]

2.2 Academic reading practices of students

The lasting effectiveness of this explicit knowledge regime can be confirmed by analyzing the students' documented and reflected reading practices for academic studies in their reading diaries:

1. The reading practices for academic studies are embedded in the students' everyday lives by fixed and scheduled times, especially for course preparation in the morning before going to university and for preparation of presentations in the evening. Academic reading sequences are additionally oriented towards explicit learning tasks and are typically not finalized before accomplishing their

[30] These recommendations evolved historically from scholastic traditions and are repeated steadily in manuals for academic studies to the present times (Cf., e.g., Garcia 2016; Brenner 1997; Krähling 2010; Kruse 2003).

objectives. Thus, students' reading practices for academic studies cannot be characterized as fragmented, as they are rarely interrupted and therefore can still be described as isolated, primary activities. Also, their reading practices for academic studies are drawn out in longer reading periods, lasting between 45 and 180 minutes on average. Writing as paraphrasing, noting, and annotating is almost always connected to reading practices for academic studies, as well as drinking water to support concentration. Only some interlinked practices, mainly eating, listening to music, and using different Internet media for content reception and interpersonal communication contradict the absolute adoption of the knowledge regime. But these practices do not happen as excessively as discursive statements in media indicate, but rather as short breaks and breathers between longer reading periods.

2. The spatial constellations of reading practices for academic studies can be fundamentally separated in predetermined public spaces and arranged private spaces. Predetermined spaces mainly include the seminar rooms of courses, in which books, printed texts, hand-written notes, digital texts, and presentations are read. These spaces obviously do not meet the requirements of the knowledge regime of academic reading: the students are distracted by other students, uncomfortable seating, poor illumination, and stale air, restricting concentration.

The students' arranged private reading spaces for academic studies, on the other hand, are universally characterized by explicit working places at home. They are always organized by using a writing desk, an office chair, writing tools, and subjective tidiness. When reading for their academic studies, the students watch out for ade-

quate illumination, fresh air, and quietness. Personal and familiar artifacts are used for mental stimulation and comfort. Academic reading practices using beds, couches, or the floor are almost non-existent, just as little as academic reading in public transportation or waiting rooms. Occasionally contradicting the spatial knowledge regime for academic reading are outdoor locations, especially parks, swimming pools, green fields, and forests.

3. In accordance with the dominating spatial constellation of academic reading at a desk at home, the body movements in the student's reading practices for academic studies are also widely standardized: by using specialized office chairs, the typical body posture is sitting upright or slightly bent over at the desk with the hands on the desk and the feet slightly bent under the seat. Variations of this posture arise only from using different reading media: when using paper sheets or printed books lying on the desk, the head is slightly lowered. When using digital texts on screens to read, the head instead is slightly raised. Movements of head and arms result mostly from supplementary writing practices, but the body posture rarely changes while reading.

The far-reaching reproduction of the knowledge regime of hermeneutics for academic reading can thus be confirmed in the reading diaries: reading practices for academic studies are widely standardized by set times; are rarely interrupted; occur at clearly assigned, quiet, and organized working places; and are performed while sitting at a desk, only altered when executing supplementary practices.

3 Academic and everyday reading practices

Despite an unchanged knowledge regime for academic reading

and its steady reproduction in students' reading practices for academic studies, its effectiveness for learning by reading is nevertheless diminishing.[31] As an explanation cannot be found in academic reading behavior itself, it must be derived from associated reading experiences.

3.1 Moods and emotions as indicators of academic reading issues

The transformation of reading experience becomes apparent in the evaluation of reading practices for academic studies by the students: moods and emotions related to standardized reading sequences, spatial constellations, and body movements are strongly negative, especially the duration of academic reading, the one-dimensional concentration on texts, and the monotonous involvement, which are described generally as tiring and exhausting. The students also describe their mood before reading as having feelings of reluctance, pressure, and compulsion. Mood improvements are achieved by finishing reading practices for academic studies, not related to gained knowledge or satisfied interests, but rather to "getting it done".

Reading practices for academic studies are therefore integrated in everyday life as compulsive tasks, and not as subjects of favorable reading experiences. Rigid reading postures at the desk and missing body movement are also negatively evaluated, because they are experienced as artificial, compulsive, exhausting, and tiring. The spatial constellations of private reading places in contrast are experienced as relief when reading, justified mostly by the perception of personal objects.

Altogether, motivation for academic reading, which should be gained from content and the students' interests, is negatively influ-

[31] Cf. T. Morstein and U. Preußer, "'Das Buch muss mich von der ersten Seite an fesseln… sonst lese ich es nicht' – Das Leseverhalten von BA-Studierenden der Germanistik und seine Konsequenzen für die Kompetenzentwicklung", in *Literale Kompetenzentwicklung an der Hochschule,* eds. U. Preußer and N. Sennewald (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012), p. 139.

enced by the explicit knowledge regime of academic reading. Reading practices for academic studies are therefore hardly ever experienced as a positive, voluntary, and meaningful experience, but rather as extrinsically forced work,[32] which also, and probably for this reason, often does not provide the expected gratification related to learning.

3.2 Implicit knowledge regimes opposing academic reading practices

The increasing emotional rejection of academic reading practices cannot be explained by the transformation of reading processes and reading strategies. Instead, the unconscious patterns of socialized reading practices must be revealed. To do so, it must be considered that reading practices for academic studies are determined not by one but by multiple knowledge regimes.

As shown above, the students are explicitly adapting their reading practices for academic studies to the knowledge regime of hermeneutics and organizing it accordingly.[33] But simultaneously, they unconsciously experience these practices in the context of other implicit knowledge regimes for everyday reading, which have been radically transformed by digitization. Their influence will be outlined below by using three examples, focusing on conflicts with the academically demanded deceleration, decontextualization, and isolation of academic reading practices.[34] In order to do so, the non-academic reading practices of the students are used to gain insights into their unconscious reading socialization and its implicit knowledge regimes.

The first noticeable difference between non-academic and academic reading practices is their temporal embedding in daily

[32] Ibid., p. 125.
[33] Cf. R. Bohnsack, *Rekonstruktive Sozialforschung – Einführung in qualitative Methoden, 7th Edition* (Opladen: UTB – Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2007), pp. 59–65.
[34] Cf. O. Kruse, *Lesen und Schreiben – Der richtige Umgang mit Texten im Studium* (Stuttgart: UTB – UVK, 2010), p. 17.

routines. Although steadily integrated reading routines still exist, especially reading in the evening before sleeping, reading behavior is strongly fragmented, location-independent, and spontaneous. Non-academic texts are read for shorter continuous periods, often only for a few minutes in spare time when traveling by train and bus, while waiting between courses, between social activities, or in other breaks. Spatial constellations and body movements seem to be arbitrary and insignificant for reading, instead they are mutually and dynamically adjusted. Reading practices altogether appear automated and unconscious activities for passing time. At the same time, these reading practices are evaluated by the students as productive activities for actualizing information by news and expanding knowledge in their interests and for personal development.

The underlying implicit knowledge regime is referring to the optimization of time and the acceleration of society: digital information environments are radically collapsing temporal structures of media communication by enabling access everywhere at any time.[35] People today have therefore internalized an interpretation of reality as fragmented and cyclical, characterized by steadily flowing communication, and have developed a perception of time as a scarce resource. Affected by this knowledge regime, reading practices are automatically influenced by aspects of time saving, e.g., by combining reading with other practices. At the same time, reading as a "useful" activity for self-optimization is used to turn "idle" time spans into something useful. Acceleration and efficiency of reading practices become symptomatic for a successful way of living.[36] Isolated and continuous academic reading practices are the opposite of this kind

[35] Cf. P. Virilio, *Fluchtgeschwindigkeit: Essay, 2nd Edition* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2001), p. 29.
[36] Cf. G. Dobler and P.P. Riedl, "Einleitung", in *Muße und Gesellschaft,* eds. G. Dobler and P.P. Riedl (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), p. 1.

of reading, because they cannot be embedded automatically and fragmented in daily routines, and therefore prevent time optimization by linking and changing practices. Reading practices for academic studies are hence evaluated unconsciously as a waste of time, limiting self-optimization.

A second difference between non-academic and academic reading practices is their interrelation to other practices. Using the smartphone or other digital devices, non-academic reading sequences are characterized by alternative media practices like listening to music, watching videos, or information retrieval on the Internet. Reading therefore becomes a practice interlinked with other media activities, which is positively evaluated by the students, justified also by pleasant body movements. The spatial constellation of reading therefore becomes a ubiquitous, virtual space, which also reduces distractions from noise and movements.

The underlying implicit knowledge regime for reading is the internalized expectation of media convergence. Digitization has erased former material boundaries of media, and their practices of information and entertainment are nowadays not considered to be separate anymore, but as part of indistinct communicative spaces and parallel media channels.[37] Information access and reading have become ubiquitous activities embedded in multiple media practices. Reading therefore must not be connected to specific times and places but can be realized spontaneously and automatically when needed. Academic reading as an isolated media activity does not correspond to this kind of convergence and is therefore evaluated as monotonous and rarely varied.

Finally, a third difference between non-academic and aca-

[37] Cf. T. Dwyer, *Media Convergence* (Berkshire: McGrawHill Open University Press, 2010); H. Jenkins, *Convergence Culture – Where old and new media collide* (New York/London: New York University Press, 2006).

demic reading practices is the embedding of interpersonal communication by students when reading. Non-academic reading practices are often interrupted by communicative practices using a smartphone. Along the lines of media convergence, communication through messaging systems appears as an interlinked practice when reading, changing body positions and spatial constellations by the virtual presence of other persons. Communicating when reading is not evaluated as a distraction in non-academic reading practices, and at times, is even seen as enhancing the reading experience.

The underlying implicit knowledge regime is the digital imperative of permanent integration in digital social interaction and communities.[38] The students have thereby widely internalized its associated disposition of steady communication and its presumed importance for their social position. The internalized expectation of connectivity is contradicting academic reading practices, because they are considered to be isolated, excluding any other person. This temporary exclusion of students from their virtual communities is considered to be exceptionally negative, also because the students seem to irrationally fear a decrease in external perception and consequences for their social inclusion.

4 Conclusion

Academic reading practices are the result of a historically evolved, rigid knowledge regime for learning in education systems organized by written communication. But reading in everyday life and its spatial constellations and body movements have been digitally transformed by powerful implicit knowledge regimes of efficient use of time, convergent use of media, and

[38] Cf. J. van Dijck, *The culture of connectivity – A critical history of social media* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

permanent social connectivity. This has led to increased tension between socialized reading practices and reading ideals in the academia. The resulting mismatch of everyday and academic reading practices is not visible in the academic reading practices themselves, but rather in students' experience. The associated increase of negative moods and emotions in turn reduces the effectiveness of these reading practices. Finally, this increase is mistakenly interpreted by lecturers as decreasing reading competency of their students, because the reasons for this development remain invisible to lecturers and students alike.[39]

Reducing transformations of academic reading on digital reading objects and processes therefore is insufficient. Instead, digital transformation of reading must be recognized as a complex cultural phenomenon, which implicitly affects reading practices and reading extensively. While universities and lecturers react to changes in academic reading mostly by reducing the amount of texts, simplifying the content, and substituting texts with audiovisual material, it should be considered whether academic reading must be taught differently to enable positive experiences by and effects on students. The praxeological perspective and presented limited explorative insights into the students reading behavior thereby point toward many complex questions, which require further research.

[39] Cf. Morstein and Preußer, "Das Buch", pp. 138–140; Preußer and Sennewald "Literale Kompetenzen", p. 21.

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(E-)READING IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND DICTIONARY USE

A LITERATURE REVIEW: DOES THE MEDIUM MATTER?

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1 Have eBooks lost their shine? Why is digital literary reading not much more popular?

Over time, digital reading has become commonplace in our everyday lives, the norm for numerous activities. We read and answer to personal messages and emails without first printing them, we access newspapers and magazines online. Despite the prevalence of digital text, digital reading for pleasure is still much less popular than traditional reading from text. The 2017 report "The Book Sector in Europe: Facts and Figures"[1] realized by the Federation of European Publishers (FEP) offers a clear overview of the book market of last few years. The report shows that the digital market is estimated to represent some 6–7% of the total market in Europe, with significant differences between countries. The following graph shows the proportion of digital sales in the overall book market in some selected countries comparing the digital (in black) and print (in grey) book market. According to the FEP Report it is however hard to predict how the e-book market will develop in the coming years, as "we have passed several dates at which the demise of paper had been predicted: what is sure is that a lot will depend on

[1] See Federation of European Publishers, *The Book Sector in Europe: Facts and Figures* (2017), <https://fep-fee.eu/The-Federation-of-European-844>, (24 August 2018).

the readers' preferences and that different supports, formats and business models are most certainly going to coexist for the foreseeable future."[2]

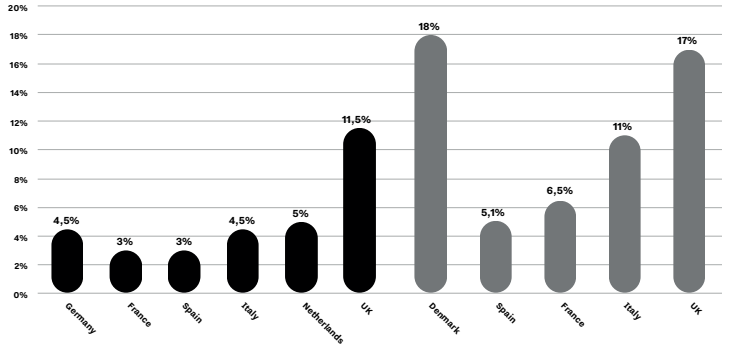

Figure 1– Federation of European Publishers 2017 Report - Note: Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands: the share of e-books refers to the trade/consumer books sector only (excluding scientific and educational books) - Due to differences in methodology, in most cases figures are not comparable between countries.

Last year, Stephen Lotinga, chief executive of the Publishers Association, stated in an article: "there is generally a sense that people are now getting screen tiredness, or fatigue, from so many devices being used, watched or looked at in their week. [Printed] books provide an opportunity to step away from that."[3] Whether this is more than a statement, needs further examination.

However, print still remains the preferred means of reading text in the educational context too and student preference

[2] Ibid., p.5
[3] See M. Sweney, "'Screen fatigue' sees UK ebook sales plunge 17% as readers return to print", *The Guardian* [online], 27 April 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/apr/27/screen-fatigue-sees-uk-ebook-sales-plunge-17-as-readers-return-to-print>, (8 August 2018).

for print is accentuated when reading involves thorough study.[4] With her book, *Words Onscreen: The Fate of Reading in a Digital World* (2015), Naomi Baron brings more data to the case for print. In a survey of over 300 university students in the U.S., Japan, Germany, and Slovakia, the author found a common preference for print, especially for reading long texts. When students were given a choice of different media—including hard copy, cell phone, tablet, e-reader, and laptop—92% reported that they could concentrate best in hard copy. Furthermore, the American textbook publisher Scholastic found in 2015 that "nearly two-thirds of children (65%)—up from 2012 (60%)—agree that they'll always want to read print books even though there are e-books available."[5]

On the same line, results of the last four years of researches into the impact of digitisation on reading practices conducted by the members of the European research initiative COST E-READ[6] have shown that paper remains the preferred reading medium for longer single texts, especially when reading for deeper comprehension and retention, and that paper best supports long-form reading of informational text. The 2018 *Stavanger Declaration*[7], signed by over one hundred scholars and scientists, summarizes the outcomes of the COST Action concluding that the transition from paper to digital is not neutral and exhorts for caution when introducing digital technologies to education.

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[4] R. Ackerman and T. Lauterman, "Taking reading comprehension exams on screen or on paper? A metacognitive analysis of learning texts under time pressure", *Computers in Human Behavior* 28, no. 5 (2012), pp. 1816–1828.
[5] N.S. Baron, *Words onscreen: the fate of reading in a digital world* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); see also A. Rob, "92 Percent of College Students Prefer Reading Print Books to E-Readers", *New Republic*, 14 January 2015, <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/120765/naomi-barons-words-onscreen-fatereading-digital-world>, (18 August 2018).
[6] See E-READ COST, <http://ereadcost.eu/>, (29 March 2019).
[7] See E-READ COST, "Stavanger Declaration", <http://ereadcost.eu/stavanger-declaration/>, (29 March 2019).

Why is this the case? How can digital reading be improved? The main reasons why e-reading did not overcome reading on print might be summarized as the following:

- Implication for metacognitive performance[8] and for learning efficiency;[9]
- Pragmatic reasons to learn how to use digital devices for the long read. Screens are (still) connected with leisure time (smartphones) or work (stress), not with the long read. So, pragmatics of discourse could explain a difference: habits of reading functions;
- Disruptive effects on the reading performance linked to shallow reading;
- Influence of the digital medium on the kinaesthetic and tactile feedback provided to the reader. The haptic perception of the digital device might reduce the pleasure of reading;
- Social prestige carried by printed books in Western society;
- Implication for health such as "iPad neck", eyestrain, visual fatigue and screen-related sleeplessness.

The present article aims at contributing to the present discussion on reading on paper vs. digital reading by observing the advantages and disadvantages of paper vs. digital dictionaries for vocabulary learning in a foreign language.

1.1 Embodied feel and increased prestige of digital reading

The understanding of how reading on paper is different from reading on screens might be attributed to different causes. The first is concerned with the psychological aspects of read-

[8] Ibid.
[9] A. Mangen, B.R. Walgermo and K. Brønnick, "Reading linear texts on paper versus computer screen: Effects on reading comprehension", *International Journal of Educational Research* 58 (2013), pp. 61–68.

ing behavior. Screens make it difficult for readers to construct an effective cognitive map, or a topography, of the text.[10] Paper books are easily navigable and offer to the reader plainly defined domains: the left and right pages, the eight corners with which to orient oneself. A reader can focus on a single page of a paper book without losing sight of the whole text; one can see where the book begins and ends and where one page is in relation to those borders. Thanks to these features it is easier to construct a coherent mental map of texts that researches have shown to have a central role in the navigational performance (i.e., searching for or locating a piece of textual information), reading speed, content recall, and reading comprehension.[11] The cognitive map is particularly important when it comes to look up a word in the paper dictionary, since one has to flip to the pages and scan through a list of words in order to find the section of interest.

Other aspects that influence the text processing are haptics and the embodiment of reading.[12] When we read a print book or on an e-reader, we engage in human–technology interactions involving the body, the mind-brain, and a technology or medium (with its interface and affordances). Movement and object manipulation might affect the reading act. Screens and e-readers fail to adequately recreate certain tactile experiences of reading on paper that many people miss and, more importantly, prevent people from navigating long texts in an instinctive and

[10] Cf. S.J. Payne and W.R. Reader, "Constructing structure maps of multiple online texts", *International Journal of Human - Computer Studies* 64, no. 5 (2006), pp. 461–474.
[11] Ibid.
[12] A. Mangen and T.S.S. Schilhab, "An embodied view of reading: Theoretical considerations, empirical findings, and educational implications", in *Skriv! Les!,* eds. S. Matre and A. Skaftun (Akademika, 2012), pp. 285–300; A. Mangen, "Hypertext fiction reading and immersion", *Journal of Research Reading* 31, no. 4 (2008), pp. 404–419.

enjoyable way.[13] Subjects of a study reported "feeling awkward while manipulating the iPad during reading."[14] Readers can feel disoriented because they miss the typical experiences related to reading on paper such as the tactile feel of holding the book in their hands, tinkering with the pages, feeling the paper on their fingertips.[15] The lack of the paratextual information (cover, color, footnotes, indication of pages) makes the digital text more fluid and less stable than the paper text. This should be detrimental for the purpose of learning and memorizing in particular that typically demand a precise localization and storage of information. A related explanation are the differences in metacognitive performances, i.e. the subjective knowledge level evaluation during the learning process. Digital texts imply a form of shallow reading while reading on paper seems more associated with deep reading. In the study carried out by Ackerman & Goldsmith (2011), it was found that there was a lower test performance on screen compared to on paper.

However, this difference was only observed when study time was fully regulated (unlimited study time) by the participants, as paper readers generally perform better and choose to spend more time with the text. Performance level was similar when study time was fixed and not controlled by the participants. Under both conditions subjective knowledge assessment was overestimated on screen and more accurate on paper. These findings suggest that media does not affect learning itself but rather the effectiveness of learning management. More and more research is showing how stressful digital environments are

[13] J. Gerlach and P. Buxmann, "Investigating the acceptance of electronic books: The impact of haptic dissonance on innovation adoption", *European Conference on Information Systems (ECIS)*, (2011).
[14] A. Mangen and D. Kuiken, "Lost in an iPad: Narrative engagement on paper and tablet", *Scientific Study of Literature* 4, no. 2 (2014), pp. 15–177.
[15] A. Mangen and D. Kuiken, "Lost in an iPad – Narrative engagement on paper and tablet", *Scientific Study of Literature* 4, no. 2 (2014), pp. 150–177.

and how this impacts negatively on the last generation. Thus, reading on paper seems to also be a way to cognitive overload as a consequence of our digital environments.[16]

A further aspect to be considered is the social significance carried by the old-fashioned reading support. Books are cultural artifacts, sometimes treasured ones. You might find them housed in museums and special collections—like the Book of Kells in the Old Library at Trinity College, Dublin. They can be embedded within national histories—like in Germany, where the legendary Frankfurt Book Fair has a tradition spanning more than 500 years. The first book fair was held in 1454, soon after Johannes Gutenberg had developed printing in movable type in Mainz.

Nowadays, the importance of the physicality of books is emphasized by the new trend of the book photography. Books represent pieces of art that people have in their house and that they show using social communities such as Instagram: #bookphotography, #booklover or #bookstagram[17] are just a few examples where users shoot and post their current reading situation or pictures of their favorite books. As the more than 20 million posts show, the paper book continues to be desirable because it carries with it a material presence and a social prestige that books still have in our world. It's very difficult to explain the resistance of the paper in our digitized world. The social prestige might offer a clue to the reasons why texts on screen are taken less seriously than texts on paper.[18] Indeed, there are studies

[16] See M. Salgaro and A. van der Weel, "How reading fiction can help you improve yourself and your relationship to others", *The Conversation,* 18 December 2017, <http://theconversation.com/how-reading-fiction-can-help-you-improve-yourself-and-your-relationship-to-others-88830>, (8 August 2018).
[17] See Instagram, "#bookstagram", <https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/bookstagram/>, (20 August 2018).
[18] M. Salgaro, P. Sorrentino, G. Lauer, J. Lüdtke and A. M. Jacobs, "How to measure the social prestige of a Nobel Prize in Literature? Development of a scale assessing the literary value of a text", *TXT* 5 (2018), pp. 138–148.

showing that readers are less inclined to take screens seriously as a reading surface.[19] These data are worrying since e-books and tablets are largely integrated in didactic activities, i.e. mobile-assisted learning.

1.2 Capitalize on the benefits of digital reading for learning

Digital tools for didactic purposes are a huge trend nowadays, used every day not just outside schools or universities but also inside the classroom. Their popularity encompasses everything from social media to websites, for example, *Facebook*, *YouTube*, and *Google Apps for Education*, and no doubt there are a lot more to come in the future. Digital reading has a very strong potential in terms of language learning, most notably of learning of a foreign language. The growing popularity of Mobile-assisted Language Learning (MALL) is evidence of that. A review of mobile learning projects funded by the European Union since 2001[20] confirms that mobile phones are the most frequently used device in these projects, followed by personal digital assistants (PDAs).

Incorporating new technologies in the language learning process has many advantages, it allows learners to foster communication, creativity, collaboration and critical thinking. Thanks to ICT, learners can easily make use of authentic resources that promote inter-cultural understanding and interact with virtual peers in real contexts. For these reasons, students can be motivated to learn in the way in which they are most interested in and have fun in their learning activity. Recently several apps for learning foreign languages on the smartphone, i.e. *Duolingo,*

[19] L.M. Singer and P.A. Alexander, "Reading across mediums: Effects of reading digital and print texts on comprehension and calibration", *The journal of experimental education* 85, no. 1 (2017), pp. 155–172; P. Delgado et al., "Don't throw away your printed books: A meta-analysis on the effects of reading media on reading comprehension", *Educational Research Review* 25 (2018), pp. 23–38.
[20] A. Pecherzewska and S. Knot, "Review of existing EU projects dedicated to dyslexia, gaming in education and m-learning", *WR08 Report to CallDysc project* (2007).

Babbel, Memrise, Busuu became more and more popular.

Digital reading is a valid support of reading comprehension of literature, too. It is well-known that reading in a foreign language is one of the best ways to improve the knowledge of it, expand the vocabulary and observe the grammar in the context. But it can become a really frustrating activity, when the reader does not know key words and has to open and close a dictionary every few lines and to keep falling out of the narrative. The dictionary on e-readers is one of the functions that makes the reading experience in a foreign language more flexible and pleasant, since it permits looking at the meaning of a word by simply pressing on it and the definition from the dictionary pops up. Furthermore, e-readers such as Kindle[21] (6th Generation and newer) offer the Vocabulary Builder feature. With Vocabulary Builder, the reader can, besides looking up words with the dictionary, memorize their definitions and create flashcards to learn them. For both parents and educators, knowing whether technologies are improving or compromising education is a question of concern. With the diffusion of e-books, online learning and open educational resources (OER), researchers have been trying to find out whether students do as well when reading a given text on a digital screen as on paper. Within this literature, differences across mediums have been found in terms of speed of processing, text recall, and reading comprehension.[22]

[21] We focus on one distributor of e-books, Amazon, because it is the main player in the e-books market with shares reaching close to 70% in the US, 60% in the UK and around 40% in Germany and Spain (Wischenbart 2014; Li 2014).
[22] M.A. Kerr and S.E. Symons, "Computerized presentation of text: Effects on children's reading of informational material", *Reading and Writing* 19, no. 1 (2006), pp. 1–19; A. Mangen, B.R. Walgermo and K. Brønnick, "Reading linear texts on paper versus computer screen: Effects on reading comprehension", *International Journal of Educational Research* 58 (2013), pp. 61–68.

2 The role of (e-)dictionaries in the vocabulary acquisition process

Vocabulary learning is an essential part in the foreign or second language learning process.[23] (Summers, 1988). One of the main strategies of vocabulary learning consists of dictionary use. "When students travel, they don't carry grammar books, they carry dictionaries."[24] As crucial self-learning instruments, dictionaries have many different types considering their language basis and design. Regarding their language basis, there are monolingual dictionaries which offer the definitions in the target language and bilingual dictionaries which present definitions in native-to-target or target-to-native languages. Taking their designs into account, there are print dictionaries in hard copy forms and electronic dictionaries which can be divided into two types; online dictionaries and off-line dictionaries. Knight (1994) investigated the practice of using dictionaries while reading. Her results showed that "subjects who used the dictionary not only learned more words but also achieved higher reading comprehension scores than those who guessed from context. In addition, correlations between actual number of words looked up and recall scores reinforce the finding that comprehension does not suffer as a result of dictionary use."[25] There are divergent opinions regarding dictionary consultation while reading in a foreign language. Educators following the grammar-translation methods have supported the extensive use of dictionaries in order to decode text. However, current communicative approach in the didactic of a foreign language focus on strategic

[23] D. Summers, "The role of dictionaries in language learning", in *Vocabulary and language teaching*, eds. R. Carter and M. McCarthy (London: Longman, 1988), pp. 111–125.
[24] M. Lewis, *The Lexical Approach: The state of ELT and a way forward* (Hove: Language Teaching Publications, 1993), p. iii.
[25] S. Knight, "Dictionary use while reading: The effects on comprehension and vocabulary acquisition for students of different verbal abilities", *The Modern Language Journal* 78 (1994), pp. 285–298.

reading and inferring the meaning of unknown words from context. Those who are sceptical regarding dictionary consultation believe that its excessive use might disrupt the comprehension process and hinder short-term memory involved in vocabulary learning. They encourage print exposure, since they believe that it is more effective and helpful for learning words inferring from context.[26] Numerous studies focusing on post-reading vocabulary and comprehension scores of students with or without the use of dictionaries[27] have reported divergent results, but most are more inclined to show that dictionary use can enable better comprehension depending on learners' proficiency level and other factors too.

From the publishing perspective, in the last years the sale of numerous print dictionaries such as Oxford English Dictionary have fallen due to the increasing popularity of the digitalized version and many publishers made the decision to stop the press and go 100% digital.[28] In his update on the world's lexicographical services, Lan (2005) stated that online dictionaries are the main support of word reference for many people. The emergence of the internet and Google made the original concept of a paper dictionary as a book and a language-learning aid close to becoming obsolete. The advent of electronic dictionaries has raised the inevitable question of whether electronic dictionaries have a similar effect to that of paper dictionaries. Consulting

[26] W. Grabe and F. Stoller, "Reading for academic purposes: Guidelines for the ESL/EFL Teacher", in *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*, ed. M. Celce-Murcia (New York: Heinle & Heinle 2001), pp. 187–204.
[27] P. Bogaards, "Using dictionaries: Which words are looked up by foreign language learners?", in *Studies of dictionary use by language learners and translators*, eds. B.T.S. Atkins and K. Varantola (Tübingen: Niemeyer 1998), pp. 151–157; S. Knight, "Dictionary use while reading"; S. Luppescu and R.R. Day, "Reading, Dictionaries, and Vocabulary Learning", *Language Learning* 43, no. 2 (June 1993), pp. 263–279.
[28] See A. Jamieson, "Oxford English Dictionary 'will not be printed again'", *The Telegraph,* 29 August 2010, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/booknews/7970391/Oxford-English-Dictionary-will-not-be-printed-again.html>, (29 August 2018).

print dictionaries is considered by many to have the disadvantage of being too time-consuming, while the digitalized ones are faster, easier and more practical to use. Dictionaries of all types are available online (with type-in or pop-up function), as apps for smartphones and for tablet computers or in electronic pocket format. In the last years a large body of studies were devoted to compare and to investigate the usefulness of paper and electronic dictionaries. These studies investigated mainly, i) time for word retrieval, ii) the number of target words retained, iii) the accuracy of selecting L1 equivalent, and iv) learners' impressions of the dictionaries.[29]

2.1 Studies reporting advantages in the use of electronic dictionary

The proponents of electronic dictionary use believe that 1) it is more useful with receptive and productive tasks and 2) it is a better learning tool since its use can reinforce word retention because the ease and speed of use does not interrupt the reading flow and reduces cognitive load and as a result, affords greater comprehension.

Dziemianko (2010) compared the usefulness of a monolingual English learners' dictionary in electronic (online) and paper form in receptive and productive tasks. The results show

[29] H. Nesi and R. Haill, "A study of dictionary use by international students at a British university", *International Journal of Lexicography* 15, no. 4 (2002), pp. 277–305; G.M. de Schryver, "Lexicographers' Dreams in the Electronic-Dictionary Age", *International Journal of Lexicography* 16, no. 2 (June 2003), pp. 143–199; J. Stirling, "The portable electronic dictionary: Faithful friend or faceless foe?", *Modern English Teacher* 14, no. 3 (2005), pp. 64–71; C. Kobayashi, "The use of pocket electronic and printed dictionaries: A mixed-method study", in *JALT 2007 Conference Proceedings*, eds. K. Bradford-Watts, T. Muller and M. Swanson (Tokyo: JALT, 2008), pp. 769–783; Y. Chen, "Dictionary use and EFL learning: A contrastive study of pocket electronic dictionaries and paper dictionaries", *International Journal of Lexicography* 23, no. 3 (2010), pp. 275–306; X. Xu, "Study on the effect of dictionary use on second language incidental vocabulary acquisition: An empirical study of college English vocabulary learning strategy", *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 1, no. 4 (2010), pp. 519–523; A. Dziemianko, "Paper or electronic? The role of dictionary form in language reception, production and the retention of meaning and collocations", *International Journal of Lexicography* 23, no. 3 (2010), pp. 257–273.

that the subjects consulting the electronic dictionary performed both tasks much better than those using the paper dictionary. Likewise, the results of the retention test (after one week) indicated that the consultation of the electronic dictionary was more beneficial to remembering both the meaning of the target words and prepositions.

Similar results were presented by Laufer (2000), who investigated incidental vocabulary acquisition in two reading conditions: when unknown words were encountered in a paper text and glossed in the margin, and when they were read on computer screen and explained in a computer dictionary. The group using the electronic dictionary performed significantly better than the "paper group" in the comprehension task of low frequency words (immediately after the reading session) and in long term retention (after two weeks).

The study of Zhiliang (2008) reinforces the belief that a more extensive dictionary search could increase incidental vocabulary acquisition. The research focused on three learning strategies: 1) guessing from context, 2) using e-dictionary, 3) combined guessing and e-dictionary method on EFL[30] students. The results showed that the students using the combined guessing and e-dictionary method significantly outperformed students in the other two groups. One of the reasons explaining these findings might be that the mental effort of working out the correct meaning of a word in a given context and of looking up the definitions of it might promote better memorization. Furthermore, the author argues that the visual impact created by the pop-up window of a word's entry might play an important role too, since it guides student's attention on the unfamiliar word, which created a memory trace of the word and might contribute to its acquisition. This aspect refers to Schmidt's "noticing hypothe-

[30] English as a foreign language.

sis", a hypothesis suggesting that input does not become intake for language learning unless it is noticed, that is, consciously registered.[31]

In the same line, the experiment carried out by Liu and Lin (2011) on the effects of three types of dictionaries (pop-up online dictionaries, type-in online dictionaries, and printed dictionaries) showed that the group using the pop-up dictionary performed better than the other two in terms of vocabulary learning efficiency, but not of comprehension. This study differed from others because authors controlled for the information provided by various dictionaries[32] and focused on exploring the nature of its associated processes (e.g., vocabulary and text reading) in relationship to participants' subsequent performance. Subjects did not receive the target items to search, but they were free to check any words they wished. After reading a vocabulary matching test a comprehension task was submitted.[33] The better vocabulary performance registered in the pop-up dictionary condition might be related to the fact that students using the pop-up dictionary consulted it twice as many times as students using the other two types of aids. According to the authors, the difference in the consultation frequency can be explained to the fact that students had to exert more effort when using the book dictionary in comparison to the pop-up support, as shown by the average vocabulary searching time (longer in the paper condition).

The beneficial effect of using an e-dictionary was evidenced in long-term study too, conducted by Alharbi (2016) over a full

[31] R. Schmidt, "The role of consciousness in second language learning", *Applied Linguistics* 11, no. 1 (1990), pp. 129–158.
[32] In order to keep the contents of the three dictionaries the same across conditions, researchers created a specific printed version of a book dictionary for this study. Words that did not appear in the text were omitted in all dictionaries to reduce the possible distractions from irrelevant words.
[33] In the vocabulary task, students were asked to match the 15 pre-selected items to their definition, while for the comprehension test they received 10 multiple-choice questions.

semester in the Saudi Arabian context. Four groups of 35 students were created: 1) using a pop-up dictionary; 2) using a type-in dictionary; 3) using a book dictionary; and 4) with no dictionary (control group). The findings showed that the pop-up and type-in group had significantly higher scores than the book dictionary group on both the comprehension test and the vocabulary test. The qualitative data reported that student's most favored type of dictionary was the pop-up dictionary. According to the author it is reasonable to think that pop-up dictionary use helped to reduce cognitive load, therefore subjects had more time to concentrate on text reading and comprehension.

Guillot and Kenning (1993) underline the motivational function of electronic dictionaries. According to the researchers, electronic dictionaries encourage students to look up more unknown words and "enabled students to leave no stone unturned, and gave them a degree of control over the materials, and momentum," and that leads to the reason why the electronic dictionary can "generate its own learning impetus."[34]

2.2 Studies reporting advantages in the use of paper dictionary

The speed of electronic vocabulary consultation represents valid support when a learner needs to produce a word mid-conversation or hears something that completely hinders their comprehension, but according to some researchers that aspect might lead to a great distraction and compromise in the vocabulary learning process.[35] On the other hand, when students search for a word in a paper dictionary, they have to engage with it: for example, they have to 1) look at the word carefully to try to remember spelling, 2) search for it in the dictionary alpha-

[34] M.N. Guillot and M.M. Kenning, "Electronic monolingual dictionaries as language learning aids: A case study", *Computers in Education* 23 (1994), pp. 63–73.
[35] J. Stirling, "The portable electronic dictionary: Faithful friend or faceless foe?", *Modern English Teacher* 14, no. 3 (2005), pp. 64–71.

betically (probably returning to the text to check spelling), 3) eye-scan the dictionary page and reject other words, 4) see translation or definition. All those passages imply a deeper processing which helps the fixation of the lexical item into the learner's brain. As Schmitt and McCarthy write "the more cognitive energy a person expends when manipulating and thinking about a word, the more likely it is that they will be able to recall and use it later […] learning strategies which involve deeper engagement with words should lead to higher retention than "shallower" activities."[36] According to the "the depth of processing" hypothesis[37] an elaborate process for acquiring new lexical information leads to higher retention. Consequently, the words searched in a longer process through a hard copy dictionary could be retained better than those looked up in an electronic dictionary. This hypothesis was explored empirically by Koyama and Takeuchi (2004) in a study[38] in a Japanese University that found no significant difference regarding the number of words searched and the search time, but that the words searched with a printed dictionary resulted in better retention (after one week) than those with an electronic one.

The study comparing the effects of using printed dictionaries, pocket electronic dictionaries, and online type-in dictionaries on vocabulary retention carried out by Li-Ling& Liu (2013) in a Taiwanese junior high school bring further data in favor of the printed dictionary. The study adopted a mixed-methods

[36] N. Schmitt and M. McCarthy, *Vocabulary: Description, Acquisition and Pedagogy* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.3.
[37] B. Laufer and J.H. Hulstijn, "Incidental vocabulary acquisition in a second language: the construct of Task-Induced Involvement", *Applied Linguistics* 22, no. 1 (March 2001), pp. 1–26.
[38] Researchers compared English learners reading in paper and electronic dictionary conditions. The experiment consisted of two parts. In the first part, participants (18) had to read two-texts selected from an English-reading textbook without a dictionary and answer the vocabulary test with a dictionary (pocket electronic or paper). In the second part (seven days after) subjects had to answer to recall and recognition tasks. They had to 1) write the translation of 4 target words from the texts and 2) quote the correct usage examples in English from the dictionary of 4 other words.

research methodology with within-subject design. All participants (33) were measured under the three types of dictionaries. The task consisted in reading three adapted articles (of 300 words) in English with a different lexical support and looking up 15 target marked words. Results reported no significant differences among the three types of dictionaries. This indicates that all three types of dictionaries were equally helpful with regard to keeping the target items in the learners' short-term memories. In the two delayed vocabulary tests (two and four weeks after the reading session) results evidenced that that use of a printed dictionary was the most effective in helping the participants to retain the target words in their long-term memories, while the pocket electronic dictionaries and online type-in had similar effects. This finding, however, contrasts with that of Liu and Lin (2011), who suggested that the effort involved with looking up vocabulary would hinder vocabulary learning.

Conclusion

Vocabulary acquisition occupies a key position in learning a second language. How vocabulary is acquired and what the most effective means are to promote effective acquisition are worthwhile lines of investigation in the field of Second Language Acquisition. According to the studies reported above, the use of paper dictionaries seems to enhance long-term retention of new words. However, it is difficult to generalize these results since studies of the use of dictionaries are relatively few and their methodologies, type of dictionary adopted, subjects 'native language, and the same outcomes are different. More importantly, the implicit concepts of what is understood as learning differs widely. Dictionary use as strategy of vocabulary learning deserves more attention in second language vocabulary research and pedagogy, simply because foreign language acquisition is one of the key competences also in a digital society.

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SIGHTLESS READING: CASES OF PARANORMAL TEXT CONSUMPTION

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Reading is probably one of the most influential activities in the history of mankind, and sight is its most basic prerequisite. The sense of sight has intrigued philosophers and scholars of all periods. The theory of Democritus (ca. 400 BCE), for example, held that objects emitted atoms that carried impressions to the eye, so that seeing was effectuated by means of copies or images of objects received by the eye.[1] In the nineteenth century, the knowledge of optics had reached an advanced stage but the relation of sight, and the eye, to the visual perception of the world—to the images produced in our heads—still needed further clarification. This left room for continued investigations, and speculations. Today, not only the sense of sight but also other discrete abilities required for reading, like perception and cognition, are well researched. Yet, the complex nature of reading as such remains quite uncharted.[2]

Existing knowledge builds on previous learning, some refuted, some accepted. That holds true for all prior periods. What we consider as ignorance or humbug might once have appeared to be accurate and indisputable, even regarded as sci-

[1] N.J. Wade, *A Natural History of Vision* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998), p.11.
[2] J. Holsanova, *Myter och sanningar om läsning: Om samspel mellan språk och bild i olika medier* (Stockholm: Norstedts & Språkrådet, 2010), p. 15.

entific facts. Each period has been perceived as the most up-to-date, and the knowledge of each has been the latest, the most contemporary knowledge.

Besides bygone times' ongoing contemporaneity, another historical constant is man's proneness for deception. The blurred border between fiction and "fact", between science and humbug, and between different ways of reading is a theme in this article wherein some unexpected modes of consuming texts will be presented.

Transposition of the senses: The case of Mademoiselle Melanie

In an article by the French physician Dr. Duvard in *Provincial Medical Journal and Retrospect of Medical Sciences* in June 1842, "Case of catalepsy, with transposition of the senses", the rare phenomenon of *transposition of the senses* is described in detail.[3]

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *transposition of the senses* belonged to the fields of study of animal magnetism, somnambulism, hypnosis and hysteria. Some of these areas would advance into modern scientific work, for example in studies on the function of electromagnetic impulses in the human body and brain, while others would move in more esoteric directions or turn into entertainment or simple trickery.

Transposition of the senses meant that the faculty of one sense moved to a part of the body where it normally did not belong. The faculty of smell could thus be transposed to the toes or fingertips, just as the faculty of sight could be typically transposed to the toes and fingertips or to the stomach. Transposition of the senses is not to be confused with clairvoyance.[4] While

[3] C. Duvard, "Case of catalepsy, with transposition of the senses", *Provincial Medical Journal and Retrospect of Medical Sciences* 4, no. 11 (1842), pp. 212–213.

[4] For my contemporary reader, the most well-known example of clairvoyance is perhaps Madame Yamilah in Hergé's *The Seven Crystal Balls*. In a very dramatic scene, she sees the Sanders-Hardmuth expedition's film photographer Clairmont fall victim to the curse of Rascar Capac. See any edition.

a clairvoyant can see things without sensory contact, someone who sees, or claims to see by means of the stomach or the toes, needs physical contact with the text or other objects in question.

Dr. Duvard's report concerns the case of a Mademoiselle Melanie, who at the age of 21 fell ill and developed hysteria, catalepsy and somnambulism. In order to obtain a better understanding of his patient's state, Duvard carried out a number of experiments on her. They showed that the "senses of taste and smell were not exercised by their natural organs, but were very acute in the sensitive parts."[5] When tobacco and bottles of ammonia were placed under Melanie's nose, she did not sense any smell at all, but when the same substances, as well as currant jelly, orange-flower water, wine and vinegar were put on the palm of her hand, she immediately could tell what it was. Even more surprisingly, "[w]hen a few grains of snuff were placed on the sole of her foot, she sneezed at once, and thus easily distinguished common French snuff from English snuff."[6]

As Dr. Duvard performed advanced experiments, he found that his patient could recognize any object placed over the pit of her stomach. At a sitting in October 1841, when Duvard had been working on the young woman for about 10 months, he placed a document over the patient's stomach, a piece of paper with the word *commerce* written on it. The experiment produced "great fatigue", the patient complained, but eventually she correctly identified and spelled out the word.[7]

When subsequent attempts of stomach reading failed, Duvard came to the conclusion that only the senses of smell and hearing were transposed in Melanie, whereas her ability to "see" with her stomach rather was a result of "an exquisite sense of touch."[8]

[5] C. Duvard, "Case of catalepsy", p. 213.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.

The making of sense

Medical and scientific explorations of the complex mechanisms of life progressed throughout the nineteenth century. Physiology developed into a distinct discipline, mapping the living system, part by part. The human senses, especially the sense of sight, attracted great attention. The anatomy of the eye had been studied for centuries, and some of the functions of the retina were already described in the seventeenth century.[9] Yet the exact relations between the wavelengths of light, the different parts of the eye, and the images produced in the brain remained undiscovered for the entire nineteenth century.[10] The fact that there *were* relations, and that a sense is a complex phenomenon that interconnects various anatomical and physiological entities and functions was known; nevertheless, many studies on the senses concentrated on the key organ of a sense as a separate unit. The sense of sight, for example, was often examined in experiments involving eyes from dead animals and humans.[11]

Despite its limitations, research on the senses with the help of separate organs was motivated by empirical science's ideal of objective measurability. Anatomists, histologists and physiologists were wary of entering the domain of the psyche.[12] This domain did not, however, frighten everyone. Alongside men of science, a growing number of people with interests other than scientific ones developed a fascination with the intriguing functions of the senses. The late-nineteenth century saw a craze for spiritism and the paranormal. Guided by not only leading figures like the Russian occultist Madame Blavatsky but also careless inspiration from scientific findings, a whole range of paranor-

[9] N.J. Wade, "A Natural History of Vision".
[10] J.E. Olsén, *Liksom ett par nya ögon: Frithiof Holmgren och synsinnets problematik* (Malmö: Lubbert das, 2004), p. 82.
[11] Ibid, p. 87, and passim.
[12] Ibid.

mal investigations, spiritist seances, occult performances and other abstruse specialties developed. Although not as popular as clairvoyance or talking to the dead by means of spiritualist media, transposition of the senses continued to attract interest.

In a popular introduction to "The World of the Undecipherable", published in Stockholm in 1891, the author G. Manetho (a pseudonym, probably alluding to an Egyptian priest from the third century BCE) presents a range of techniques and empirical examples from the fields of spiritism and hypnotism.[13] The third chapter deals with the phenomenon of sensitivity. Apart from clairvoyance, the magnetic sense, the dowsing rod and the *psychometrie*, we also find *transposition of the senses*. Special attention is given to the transposition of sight to the stomach. A photograph, taken during an experiment with somnambulism in Vienna of a blindfolded man reading a letter held at the pit of his stomach, illustrates the procedure.[14]

In order to assert the veracity of this unusual way of reading, Manetho claims that the German physiologist Rudolf Heidenhain (1834–1897)—renowned for his work on nerve and muscle physiology and for being the teacher of Ivan Pavlov who, with help of dogs, developed the theory of classical conditioning—defended the theory of transposition of the senses. This seems to have been a fairly common misunderstanding at the time, probably due to the fact that Heidenhain did study possible connections between nerves of the ear and the stomach, and that he had taken an interest in hypnotism after attending a show with the Danish public hypnotist Carl Hansen, who travelled

[13] G. Manetho (pseud.), *Från det outgrundligas verld: Hypnotismens och spiritismens fenomen framställda genom experiment* (Stockholm: Fröleen & Comp. förlag, 1891).
[14] Ibid, pp. 88–142. Transposition of the senses is treated in pp. 95–98, and the photograph in question is found on p. 97.

around Europe staging spectacular performances.[15] In any way, Manetho's claim and Heidenhain's interest in Hansen show that the demarcation line between science and parascience was not completely drawn—the senses were still in the making as discriminate capacities of the living organism.

Le sens paroptique – Jules Romains' discarded sense

In 1919, *La vision extra-rétinienne et le sens paroptique* by Jules Romains was published. Romains, whose real name was Louis Farigoule, is well-known as a poet, novelist and dramatist. His plays were the most performed ones internationally in the late 1920s alongside those of Shaw and Pirandello.[16] It is less known that Romains had attended courses in histology and physiology at the École normale supérieure in Paris, and that he put forward a theory of eyeless sight. At least, the Académie française, in their article on Romains, conceals this interesting part of his work.[17] To me it is unknown whether Romains was in contact with Robert Desnos and the surrealist group, but the correspondence between the former's theory of eyeless sight and the latter's experiments involving *automatic writing* deserves closer examination.

In *La vision extra-rétinienne et le sens paroptique*, Romains explains that the skin surface of a human being is capable of vision thanks to the existence of microscopic eyes—*ocelles*—under the skin, and that hence it is possible to read by means of the skin. He coins the term *paroptics* to denote the skin's capacity of vision, and he claims to perform his experiments in accordance with scientific methodology. His findings show that the

[15] Manetho on Heidenhain in ibid., pp. 95–98. For Heidenhain's interest in Hansen: A. Moll, *Der Hypnotismus* (Berlin: Fischer's medicinische Buchhandlung, 1895), p. 327.
[16] Académie française, "Jules Romains", <http://www.academie-francaise.fr/les-immortels/jules-romains>, (14 February 2019).
[17] Ibid.

parts of the body that see the best (apart, I assume, from the eyes) are, in descending order, the hands, the neck, the cheek, the forehead and the chest.[18]

Romains continued his paroptical research for some years. In the early 1920s, the neurophysiologist Louis Lapicque attended one of Romains' demonstrations of paroptical reading, and published a critical report on it in *L'Année psychologique*.[19] It immediately struck him, Lapicque states, that monsieur Farigoule (Romains) pointed out the opacity of the blindfold used for the subject, whereas he said nothing about the familiar difficulty of avoiding apertures in the blindfold on each side of the nose. Lapique discards *le sens paroptique* but declares that Romains' work was carried out in good faith.[20]

In 1924, Romains' work was translated into English by Charles Kay Ogden. A review in *The Lancet* states that "[t]here is no inherent impossibility in the idea that the skin is responsive to the wave-lengths in the ether," but the theory requires "more rigorous proof than the author advances."[21] "On his thesis in general", the anonymous reviewer concludes, "the only possible comment seems to be, 'It may be so.'."[22]

Met with ridicule, Jules Romains left academic life and devoted himself completely to literature. He continued working on his earlier theory of *unanimisme*, "a mixture," according to David Shew Wilson, "of a scientific materialism on the one hand and of a poetical idealism on the other." He probably found it easier to translate his philosophical ideas into fiction than into

[18] L. Farigoule, *La vision extra-rétinienne et le sens paroptique* (Paris: Éditions de la Nouvelle Revue française, 1920), p. 43.
[19] L. Lapicque, "Sur une prétendue vision extra-rétinienne. (Reproduction de la communication faite à la Séance du 17 mars 1923, de la Société de Biologie)", *L'Année psychologique* 24 (1923), pp. 449–453.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Anon., "Eyeless sight", *The Lancet* 203, no. 5246 (1924), p. 561.
[22] Ibid.

science.[23] I have found no indications of his own use of paroptics, and the term itself never gained ground.

Dermo-optical perception and the case of Rosa Kuleshova

In the course of the twentieth century, the designation *transposition of the senses* appears to have given way to the more scientific sounding *dermo-optical perception* (DOP), which in parapsychological literature is explained as the capacity to see with the skin. Transposition of the senses and DOP are similar but not identical—the former includes senses other than sight—and reading with the fingertips also appears to have been heard of far more during the twentieth century than reading with the stomach.

Rosa Kuleshova, born in 1940 in the Urals in Russia, was a famous DOP reader whose abilities were examined by Soviet experts and were reported in a very lengthy *Life* magazine article in 1964. The *Life* reporter Bob Brigham, who met the psychic Kuleshova in Moscow, testified that he had seen her reading a very small text on his business card with her elbow.[24] Albert Rosenfeld, the author of the article, gives a detailed account of scientific tests concerning Kuleshova's and other subjects' powers. Scientific investigations were carried out by the Soviet Academy of Sciences, and a number of experiments were planned to take place in the US at the time of publication of the *Life* article.

According to Russian experts, Kuleshova could read newspaper headlines and children's books set in large type as rapidly as if she had not been blindfolded. Ordinary text sizes were not a problem but took longer. "She was also able to describe illustrations in popular publications like *Ogonyok* and *Krokodil* as well

[23] D.S. Wilson, "L'âme diffuse: The ethics of Jules Romains", MA thesis (Montana State University, 1958), p. 21.
[24] A. Rosenfeld, "Astonishing evidence of a new hidden sense: Seeing color with the fingers", *Life Magazine*, 12 June 1964, p. 102.

as on cigarette packages and post stamps."[25]

In 1966, the psychologist Walter Makous published an article in *Psychological Review* with "explanation and demonstration" of cutaneous colour sensitivity.[26] Thermodynamic analysis allowed him to show that it is possible to sense different colours with the tips of one's fingers and so "dermo-optical perception was finally freed from paranormal connotations", as a 2006 article on DOP has stated.[27] Cutaneous colour sensitivity, however, is distinct from being able to read with anything other than the eyes, and is obviously not a question of "dermo-optical perception" but of thermodynamics, and of—as Duvard explained it—"an exquisite sense of touch".

Making sense of reading

The cases of sightless reading that I have sketched here are bizarre, and it is easy to make fun of the belief that it is possible to see and read by means of the skin. Perhaps this is why paranormal reading hitherto has not been considered in the growing and diverse field of reading studies. Another explanation for the exclusion might be that the focus of reading studies within humanities often lies on ways of using literature, and of shaping literary cultures and book cultures, while the focus of natural science-oriented research is on cognitive and neurological dimensions of reading. Paranormal reading falls in between: it is neither about literature nor about brain functions. Still it might say something about the place and force of the written word within culture and about the admiration of the ability to decode it.

As I noted in the introduction, the complex nature of reading

[25] Ibid., p. 106.
[26] W. Makous, "Cutaneous color sensitivity: Explanation and demonstration", *Psychological Review* 73, no. 4 (1966), pp. 280–294.
[27] Ibid.; P. Brugger and P.H. Weiss, "Dermo-Optical Perception: The Non-Synesthetic 'Palpability of Colors'. A Comment on Larner (2006)", *Journal of the History of the Neurosciences* 17 (2008), pp. 253–255, p. 254.

is still largely uncharted by the natural sciences.[28] For us who work within humanities there are other problems. The lack of synonyms for "to read" and "reading" severely reduces the scope of meaning production exerted by (what we call) reading. The study of rapid eye movement, for example, is perhaps not necessarily a study of reading at all, and reading a beloved poem is very different from reading a timetable for the local bus. Yet all three activities go under the name of "reading". I have used "consumption of text" for want of a better word, but even though reading is a matter of consumption, it is also a matter of production and distribution. As Pierre Chantraine and Jesper Svenbro have shown, the Greek language has around a dozen verbs signifying "to read."[29] They date back to around 500 BCE. This is not the place to recapitulate their uses and various denotations, but for anyone interested in reading, Chantraine's and Svenbro's research will prove enormously rewarding. With this article, I wish to introduce the topic of the history of paranormal reading into the realm of reading studies, both because it is interesting in itself and because it reminds us that reading is not one thing—reading can be read in many different ways.

[28] J. Holsanova, *Myter och sanningar om läsning*, p. 15.
[29] J. Svenbro, "Archaic and Classical Greece: The Invention of Silent Reading", in *A History of Reading in the West*, eds. G. Cavallo and R. Chartier (Amherst & Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), p. 38, with further references.

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READING AND THE EMBODIED MIND

HOW IS READING INFLUENCED BY THE NON-TANGIBILITY OF A DIGITAL TEXT?

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With the progression of digitisation, more and more digital reading devices are finding their ways into our daily reading habits. Over the past years, research has shown that, despite all convenience, digital reading seems to be inferior to analogue reading in some cases, especially if we want to achieve deep understanding of a text. This essay takes different aspects of former research into account, unifying them to create an overview of a fact that can be evident to some but is nevertheless all too often disregarded as banal nostalgia for "paper" by blind advocates of all things digital. In the following, the role of bodily perception for the process of reading and the value of tangible tools for our cognitive processes will be examined. Based on that, the superiority of analogue reading, which is often considered a mere preference but can actually be connected to the unique materiality of paper, can be explained. Finally, the spatiotemporal and the imaginary dimension of reading will be analysed in this context, leading to the overall conclusion that the materiality of the reading substrate highly influences our reading process and outcome.

Merleau-Ponty and the Theory of Embodied Cognition

Reading is a complex cognitive process. Given the strength of the association between reading and cognition, the thought of our

body contributing to this process might seem a bit odd at first sight. It becomes more obvious, though, if we take into account that our bodies play a crucial role in the perception of our world.[1] As Merleau-Ponty put it in his *Phenomenology of Perception*: "The body is our general medium for having a world."[2] The theory of embodied cognition is based on the idea that mind does not equal brain; thoughts neither begin nor end with the brain. Rather, "[m]any features of cognition are embodied [and …] deeply dependent upon characteristics of the physical body as an agent."[3] Studies have shown, for example, that people watching a cartoon series with a pencil in between their teeth find it funnier than people watching the cartoon without it. Even though the smile is not real, the activation of the required muscles, simply the imitation of the smile, evidently changes our perception of the world.[4] A similar example can be found in language. There is an astonishing number of metaphors that make use of the physical state of a human being, as for example being "on top of the world" when trying to describe the state of being happy or "feeling low" when we feel sad. The experience of these feelings seems to be "built on a collection of physical sensations",[5] which, together with the individual's background, form a central building block for human thought. Merleau-Ponty's theory of the "bodies-in-the-world" even states that the "world exists for us only in and through our bodies, and we exist in and through

[1] T. Schilhab, G. Balling and A. Kuzmicová, "Decreasing materiality from print to screen reading", *First Monday* 23, no. 10 (2018), <https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/9435/7599>, (21 January 2019).
[2] M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London/New York: Routledge Classics, 2005), p. 169.
[3] R.A. Wilson and L. Foglia, "Embodied Cognition", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2017), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/embodied-cognition/>, (21 January 2019).
[4] THUNK, "THUNK - 137. Embodied Cognition", *YouTube*, 10 February 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDw_1UyNTKI>, (21 January 2019).
[5] Ibid.

embodied relations with the lifeworld."[6] And, in fact, cognition makes use of "beyond-the-body-environment"[7] as well. The way we interact with our surroundings, including the handling of material objects, influences the way we perceive the world.

Reading and Its Dependency on the Substrate

The capabilities of our minds are aided and extended by particular technologies or instruments,[8] and we distribute tasks to several operators besides our brains, as we have the "general tendency […] to lean heavily on environmental supports."[9] Both Descartes and Merleau-Ponty used the metaphor of the blind man's stick, which questions where the body ends and a helping device starts by the example of a blind man who perceives his environment through the sensory expectations conveyed to his hands by his stick. As the stick is essentially the touching part and crucial for the blind man's orientation, is the stick still only a device or could it be seen as an extension of the body, enabling the blind man's mind to perceive the world? Clark and Chalmers call such a two-way-interaction a "coupled system", in which all components "play an active causal role, and they jointly govern behaviour in the same sort of way that cognition usually does."[10] As we grow up in a text-based world, we rely heavily on tools for knowledge transmission. For example, we rely on pen and paper to structure and develop complex thoughts.[11] Those tools "have become so thoroughly enmeshed with our internal cognitive machinery that they now count as part of the machin-

[6] A. Mangen, "What Hands May Tell Us about Reading and Writing", *Educational Theory* (London: John Wiley & Sons, 2016).
[7] R.A. Wilson and L. Foglia, "Embodied Cognition".
[8] N.S. Baron, *Words onscreen: the fate of reading in a digital world* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 413.
[9] A. Clark and D. Chalmers, "The Extended Mind", *Analysis* 58, no. 1 (Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 8.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

ery of thought itself."[12] Just like the blind man would be quite helpless without his stick, our performance would drop if one of those embodied extensions were removed.[13]

Reading relies on bodily perception as it is a physical interaction with the text, mainly executed by "the most important bodily factor in reading and writing: the sensing, moving, and feeling human hand."[14] Both the human hand and the brain are crucial for the perception of a text. "Thus, what we think of as human intelligence becomes embedded in the hand just as it is in the brain."[15] When handling a book, we notice the weight of it, which correlates in our mind with importance,[16] and we get a tactile impression of a text. But we also recognise the typographic appearance or – to give a merely screen-related example – the light of the display. Our hands hold "[…] the text in the focal area and [we use] our fingers to turn pages or scroll computer screens, sometimes pointing to the text itself." [17] We register when we encounter a piece of information and where and how our body is situated during this encounter. Humans are biologically and cognitively adapted to multimodal and multisensory (not only visual) perception and thus naturally

[12] J. Kiverstein, M. Farina and A. Clark, "The Extended Mind Thesis", *Oxford Bibliographies* (2013).
[13] Nevertheless, the external tools and devices can in fact be removed, which is why the embodiment theory and the extended mind thesis have sharp critics. The external tools are not seen as an extension of the mind, but as aiding and simplifying add-ons. However, it is crucial to note the asymmetric influence that externals have on our cognition process. When one is stripped of one's notebook, one might not be able to remember every entry by heart. The notebook was an external memory device, prompting the recollection of memory. The notebook is not itself the memory, but simply a tool for the externalisation of an internal process.
[14] A. Mangen, "What Hands May Tell Us about Reading and Writing".
[15] E. Yudin, "Anne Mangen on the Technologies and Haptics of Reading", *Masters of Media,* 22 May 2011, <https://mastersofmedia.hum.uva.nl/blog/2011/05/22/anne-mangen-on-the-technologies-and-haptics-of-reading/>, (21 January 2019).
[16] N.S. Baron, *Words onscreen: the fate of reading in a digital world*, p. 145.
[17] T. Hillesund, "Digital reading spaces: How expert readers handle books, the Web and electronic paper", *First Monday* 15, no. 4–5 (2010), <https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2762/2504>, (21 January 2019).

connect sensory knowledge and mental processes. All stimulations add up to form the so-called "neural correlate, which is the bundle of neurons active during the reading,"[18] out of which we produce an "episodic memory" entry. Simply said, the memory of our reading is never only a string of text, but the collection of simultaneously achieved impressions, many of them perceived by the human body. As "the reconstruction of text is [partly] based on […] the composition, layout and physical structure of a text",[19] the neuron bundle and its complexity are influenced by the reading substrate.[20] The "[…] digital technology has implications for our sensorimotor, perceptual and cognitive processes and experience of reading and comprehension for certain lengths of text."[21] Consequently, the reading outcome changes, depending on the reading substrate. [22]

Despite the digital development, many people still prefer to read on paper.[23] Empirical research has shown that readers "may not comprehend complex or lengthy material as well when they view it digitally as when they read it on paper."[24] Most peo-

[18] T. Schilhab et al., "Decreasing materiality from print to screen reading".
[19] E. Yudin, "Anne Mangen on the Technologies and Haptics of Reading".
[20] A. van der Weel, "Feeding our reading machines: From the typographic page to the docuverse", in *Beyond accessibility: Textual studies in the twenty-first century*, eds. B. Nelson and R. Cunningham (Digital Studies, 2015–2016), <http://www.digitalstudies.org/ojs/index.php/digital_studies/article/view/352/458>, (19 January 2019). Another aspect reducing the complexity of our "digital memory" might be the fact that everything always seems to be so easily (re-)accessible.
[21] E. Yudin, "Anne Mangen on the Technologies and Haptics of Reading".
[22] J. Parish-Morris et al., "Once Upon a Time: Parent–Child Dialogue and Storybook Reading in the Electronic Era", *Mind, Brain, and Education* 7, no. 3 (2013), (London: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), pp. 200–211. "Children who read print were also significantly better at remembering the content and sequence of events in a story than those who read electronic books."
[23] M.G. Torheim, "Do we read differently on paper than on a screen?", *Science X Network*, 21 September 2017, <https://phys.org/news/2017-09-differently-paper-screen.html#jCp>, (21 January 2019). This can be illustrated by the digital media markets. We consume music and films pretty much every day on screen by now and the analogue music industry has declined drastically. Not so with books. The e-book market has stabilised itself at a comparatively low 10% rate over the past years.
[24] S. O'Malley, "There's No Easy Answer", *Inside Higher Ed*, 16 August 2017, <https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2017/08/16/which-better-reading-print-or-screen>, (21 January 2019).

ple read faster when they read on a screen.[25] Naturally, this leads to a loss of comprehension. Furthermore, readers seem to lose the notion of the overall point of a text when read digitally. And accordingly, "nearly 80 percent of students prefer to read a digital piece of text in print in order to understand the text with clarity."[26]

Digital is useful, however, if a reader searches rather than browses, as it can answer such queries with much greater speed. It is when it comes to "deep comprehension and synthesis of the material"[27] that the reading performance onscreen appears to be less satisfying.[28] The fast and ever changing online environment with its countless opportunities to slip out of the text and focus on something else often keeps us from taking the time and effort required for in-depth reading.[29] Due to the given material conditions in printed texts, we are less prone to distractions and it is thus easier, especially for long form reading, to delve into a text, reach a deep reading state and achieve a good understanding when we read an analogue text. [30] This in turn enables us to form long strings of thought or reach a state of intellectual dreaming. Analogue reading thus often yields a better textual overview and reading comprehension.

The Spatiotemporal and the Imaginary Dimensions of Reading

The process of reading does not equate to the process of recol-

[25] N.S. Baron, *Words onscreen: the fate of reading in a digital world*, p. 151.
[26] Z. Liu, "Reading behavior in the digital environment: Changes in reading behavior over the past ten years", *Journal of Documentation* 61, no. 6 (2003), <https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/00220410510632040>, (21 January 2019), p. 702.
[27] S. O'Malley, "There's No Easy Answer".
[28] Ibid.
[29] A. Mangen, "What Hands May Tell Us about Reading and Writing".
[30] M. Wolf, C. Ullman-Shade and S. Gottwald, "The Emerging, Evolving Reading Brain in a Digital Culture: Implications for New Readers, Children with Reading Difficulties, and Children without Schools", *Journal of Cognitive Education and Psychology* 11, no. 3 (2012). Deep Reading is "[a] slow, immersive process in which a reader requires time and cognitive space to engage in deep thought."

lection. Whilst the embodiment clearly serves the memory of a text, which is to say the outcome of reading, Schilhab et al. state that it is less clear how it contributes to the reading process.[31] However, the different material aspects of digital and analogue reading substrates seem to play a crucial role for all: the embodiment, the process and the recollection. As embodied creatures, we have an innate preference for material, "bodily" objects. But digital texts are detached "from the physical and mechanical dimension of their material support" and are hence less tangible than analogue texts.[32] While a digital substrate acts as an intermediate between reader and text, printed texts allow us to come "in touch" with the text. [33]

To describe and analyse the role of the body in greater detail, Schilhab et al distinguish between the spatiotemporal and the imaginary dimension.[34] The former describes the bodily performance while reading, meaning every action and movement, whilst the latter refers to all "the imagined scenarios we create from what we read."[35] The spatiotemporal dimension, as the name indicates, places texts in space and time. We recognise our outer circumstances while reading and our brain connects all these impressions. The book as physical object thus gives our knowledge an address. We can extend our memory onto and situate our thinking in it. Being confronted with the book or any other element that was part of our perception as we were reading later on again, can lead to a recollection of textual content and the surrounding events. Thus, books as objects serve a mnemonic function. Laptops, tablets, smartphones – any form of

[31] T. Schilhab et al., "Decreasing materiality from print to screen reading".
[32] A. Mangen, "Hypertext fiction reading: Haptics and immersion", *Journal of research in reading* 31, no. 4 (2008), p. 405.
[33] Ibid.
[34] T. Schilhab et al., "Decreasing materiality from print to screen reading".
[35] Ibid.

screen-based reading – can serve this function to a much more limited extent since one screen or device accommodates multiple texts. A digital substrate is, at least if it is connected to the internet, the gatekeeper to virtually all possible texts.

The unique material appearance is an inherent and (thus far) inimitable property of printed texts. Think of the appearance of a book, maybe a distinct shape, layout or cover, the smell or the indication of its length by its dimensions. These material, tangible elements of the physical object contribute to the visual and tactile related recollection.[36] All these elements, the outer form as well as the typography of a book, can and do convey meaning, before and while we encounter the textual content.[37] For example, one might be able to guess the content of a printed substrate even blindfolded, just by the touch of it. Think of the distinct material and sensory appearance of a newspaper or a children's book with thick cardboard pages. A printed text, once produced, is fixed to its substrate, and its stable appearance, owed to its concrete materiality, is relatively easy to recall.[38] In contrast, reading on a digital device does neither allow for a tactile nor a visual distinction.[39] We perceive digital texts on a technological device, which is separated and unconnected to the possible textual content. Thus the "phenomenological depth, thickness and dimension are […] absent in whatever we read on the screen,

[36] N.S. Baron, *Words onscreen: the fate of reading in a digital world*, p. 137. By now, technologies have been developed that are able to generate a "book scent" on tablets or smartphones.
[37] For '*Homo Typographicus*' see A. van der Weel, *Changing our textual minds: Towards a digital order of knowledge* (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 2011).
[38] T. Schilhab et al., "Decreasing materiality from print to screen reading".
[39] P. Delgado et al., "Don't throw away your printed books: A meta-analysis on the effects of reading media on reading comprehension", *Educational Research Review* 25 (2018), p. 32. Delgado et al. have shown that there are better results in reading comprehension if people read from hand-held devices than if they read from computer screens. This underlines the importance of our hands during the reading process and for its outcome.

due to its intangibility."[40] The thought of our laptop, the sight of it or the tactile confrontation can thus not evoke a memory of a specific text, merely the memory of reading on that device. Consequently, we cannot locate the read information in place and time as efficiently as we possibly could with a printed version, which reduces the complexity of the memory-string.

An inherent property of digital text is its fluidity. The layout and typography of a digital text can be changed according to reader's preference throughout the reading process or – in case the text is accessed online – can be edited and altered at any given point in time. This can evoke navigational issues and influence our ability to recall a text. In printed texts, it is relatively easy to recall a relevant section, as we store a mental, visual picture of a page while reading. The "visual memory for the location of items on a page and within a document"[41] is weakened by the necessity of scrolling through digital texts.[42] We cannot preserve the picture of a certain page in our brain, as there is no steady page. It is significantly harder to find a specific piece of information in an (unsearchable) digital text again, as, due to the scrolling, we miss the impression of where we are positioned within a text. An analogue text, on the contrary, offers various orientational aids. The thickness of a book relates to its length and our hands have a "kinaesthetic sense" [43] of the page-by-page reading progress, which enables us to find a relevant section in a closed book relatively easily, even without having read the book (completely) before.[44]

[40] A. Mangen, "Hypertext fiction reading: Haptics and immersion", p. 408.
[41] Z. Liu, "Reading behavior in the digital environment: Changes in reading behavior over the past ten years", p. 703.
[42] E-books read on e-readers can, but do not always require scrolling. However, they do not offer a natural page-turning either, which will be explained in the following.
[43] A. Mangen, "What Hands May Tell Us about Reading and Writing".
[44] Given the case that the considered book holds a more or less predictable storyline, let's say it's a crime book, we might even be able to localize the section containing the climax of it, without ever having read the story before, whereas in a digital text, the navigational aids differ and we rely on a good knowledge of the text or the ability to search for keywords to navigate through the file.

Additionally, the scrolling process with the mouse, the keyboard or even a touchscreen cannot to be distinguished from any other task we are fulfilling on a computer or screen-based device. Every activity requires more or less the same movement and "[t]urning a page happens with a greater distance from the text than when we read a print out."[45] Turning a page in a printed book, on the other hand, is a rather specific task, only associated with the handling of paper, often the process of reading. It requires a "skillful handling by our fingers and hands"[46] and is connected in our brains with the sensual experience of the paper, the "concrete page."[47] Our body recognises that, and the sensation is added to the memory of the specific book. This physical interaction is missing in the digital world. Thus, the navigation through a text is less automated and "more physically and mentally taxing"[48] and consequently "less mental space may be left for retention."[49]

Furthermore, the physical pages in a printed book allow to hold several pages open at the same time and go back and forth through the book. This evokes a stronger feeling of simultaneous availability and accessibility of text passages, and as well as this, note making is said to be easier.[50] Annotation is important especially for in-depth reading, as the writing supports the formation of our own thoughts and strengthens our memory and general understanding of a text. One could argue that annotating and highlighting is indeed possible in digital texts as well, but

[45] A. Mangen, "Hypertext fiction reading: Haptics and immersion", p. 408. How important the feeling of the page turning is can be illustrated by the iPad's marketing strategy. The "naturalistic page-turning" is one of its selling points.
[46] Ibid., p. 405.
[47] T. Schilhab et al., "Decreasing materiality from print to screen reading".
[48] A. van der Weel, "Memory and the Reading Substrate", in *Memory in the Twenty-First Century: New Critical Perspectives from the Arts, Humanities, and Sciences*, ed. S. Groes (United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 127.
[49] Ibid.
[50] M.G. Torheim, "Do we read differently on paper than on a screen?".

in fact, this traditional form of working with printed text has not migrated as such into the digital world. [51] Even though the underlying technology has greatly improved over the past years, digital annotating still appears less natural to many readers. Annotation with pen and pencil allows – again – a type of physical interaction with the text, which cannot be imitated in the digital world.[52]

Conclusion: The Materiality of Reading Matters

Overall, the spatiotemporal dimension of reading is weakened when reading onscreen, inevitably leading to a decreased capability for text recollection.[53] The reduced tangibility lowers the number of "material anchors"[54] with which we could possibly connect the textual content. Screen-based reading thus relies mostly on mental associations. As we are used to a different reading mode, a multimodal one relying on several associations, not only the mental one, it is no surprise that the memory of a text and thus the reading outcome, including the general textual overview and the in-depth understanding, are better when a text is read in analogue form.

The imaginary dimension focuses more on internal processes than on the surroundings.[55] It is responsible for the engagement with a story. On a macro-level, we are mentally constructing an entire world when we read a book, as we are forced by the textual content to imagine the described events, which enables the diving into and reliving of a story. This can be well observed in the

[51] Z. Liu, "Reading behavior in the digital environment: Changes in reading behavior over the past ten years", p. 709.
[52] S. O'Malley, "There's No Easy Answer".
[53] T. Schilhab et al., "Decreasing materiality from print to screen reading".
[54] Think of a child, only being able to count with the help of material objects, even if it is just their fingers. An abstract thought process becomes more concrete and gets a shape when we can make use of such "material anchors".
[55] G. Ghosal, "The hound of baskervilles mind palace", *YouTube*, 16 July 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0FSKTndbwVo>, (21 January 2019). Sherlock Holmes makes use of the mnemonic tactic combining imagination and embodied objects in a mental map, his "mind palace".

sensation of immersive reading, which mainly takes place in fictional texts and invites us to delve into the story. This possibility of immersing ourselves in another world is the main reason we enjoy reading those texts so much. Nevertheless, we can experience immersion when reading non-fiction texts as well. Schilhab et al. give the example of reading a recipe and being able to picture tools and ingredients, even recalling the sensory experience of fulfilling the recipe steps.[56] We connect our experience and basic knowledge to what we read. Even though none of them is actually present or handled, the brain sections referring to the featured object or situation become activated. This knowledge is added to the neuron bundle, contributing to a more complex reading comprehension. We can be immersed in a fictional story phenomenologically or in a computer game technologically, but, due to the absence of sensory-motor affordances, the lack of materiality, struggle to do so in a digital text. [57]

Besides this, the imaginary dimension suffers due to a shallower onscreen reading behaviour. We cannot delve deep enough to evoke our fantasy. [58] This "[...] shallower, more fragmented, and less concentrated reading"[59] behaviour can again be connected to the properties of the substrate. Digital devices enable us to browse and scan a text more efficiently. We tend to read non-linearly and selectively, jumping from one hyperlink to the next or searching for keywords. "Such a reading mode is highly vulnerable to distractions […]."[60] Just the potential to click distracts us enough to prevent us from an immersion in a digital text.[61] When we read a printed text, the "technologies involved do not themselves provide any alternative (external) stimula-

[56] T. Schilhab et al., "Decreasing materiality from print to screen reading".
[57] A. Mangen, "Hypertext fiction reading: Haptics and immersion", p. 408.
[58] T. Schilhab et al., "Decreasing materiality from print to screen reading".
[59] Z. Liu, "Reading behavior in the digital environment: Changes in reading behavior over the past ten years", p. 700.
[60] A. Mangen, "Hypertext fiction reading: Haptics and immersion", p. 409.
[61] Ibid., p. 413.

tion",[62] and thus self-control is easier. We either stop the activity of reading entirely, or we force ourselves to refocus, whilst digital text allows us to trick ourselves. We are still sitting in front of the computer and the tab with the text is still open somewhere in the background, while we are actually delving into social media and not into the text.

After all, the "materiality of reading matters"[63] and marks a distinct difference between reading onscreen and analogue reading. It remains inevitable that screens are increasingly part of our reading world and, despite their seeming inferiority to analogue texts in regards of the reading outcome, they are being increasingly used in classrooms as well. Consequently, it is necessary to develop and acquire a new reading mode. Some techniques have already been introduced to enhance the reading performance, all relying on the individual's self-discipline to minimise and resist distractions and reassure oneself of the reading comprehension.[64]

However, this is not the first time a knowledge system has changed profoundly. All reading technologies were new at one point in time. The invention of writing ended the tradition of memorising, highly honoured by the ancient Greeks, as text took the place of knowing things by heart[65] and, of course, the invention of printing with movable type had profound effects on our society as well. It must be acknowledged that we are in the middle of a transition right now, and because of this it is not yet possible to clearly envisage the outcome of the process. But there is no need for alarm. Certainly, a new reading mode will gradually develop.

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[62] Ibid., p. 410.
[63] E. Yudin, "Anne Mangen on the Technologies and Haptics of Reading".
[64] T. Schilhab et al., "Decreasing materiality from print to screen reading".
[65] L.A. Freeman, B. Nienass and R. Daniell, "Memory | Materiality | Sensuality", *Memory Studies* 9, no. 1 (2016), pp. 3–12.

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Schilhab, T., Balling, G. and Kuzmicová, A., "Decreasing materiality from print to screen reading", *First Monday* 23, no. 10 (2018) <https://first-monday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/9435/7599>, (21 January 2019).

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HOW FEELINGS MATTER FOR READING

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From Aristotle to now, when people talk about literature, they talk about their feelings. Consider the experience of one nineteenth-century reader:

> Before leaving New York, I bought Bulwer's new novel, "What will he do with it?" —which I soon finished. I could not have made a more agreeable selection of a travelling companion. With that in my hand I could not think myself alone, for did I not admire and revere the noble character, the splendid talents, and generous impulses of Guy Darrell? Did I not love the sweet face of Sophy, and admire and adore that noble woman, Caroline Monfort, pity and admire the sweet simplicity, the noble generous devoted love and manful struggles against adversity, of poor Waife—noble "gentleman Waife?"[1]

This reader, George Dashiell Bayard, describes his reading experiences in terms not of a plot summary, the author's artistry, a moral message, or the novel's language. Instead, for him, reading is feeling, as his verbs underscore: "admire" (three times), "revere", "love", "adore", and "pity". Such emotional links are

[1] S.J. Bayard, *The Life of George Dashiell Bayard* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1874), p. 140.

so vivid for Bayard that they turn the book into a person, an "agreeable . . . travelling companion".

For many years and for different reasons, neither cognitive psychology nor literary criticism had good ways to analyze Bayard's response. In cognitive psychology, the metaphor of the mind as a computer kept feelings to the side as noise to be filtered out or left to social psychologists. Early cognitive psychology continued a longstanding bias against feelings for supposedly interfering with higher-order processes like generalizing, reasoning, and decision making.[2] For literary criticism, emotions like Bayard's were a relic of impressionistic older criticism that academic scholarship renounced for scholarly respectability. Close analysis of figurative language pushed emotional responses to the side.

Yet within the last thirty years, advances have been made in both fields in the study of feelings. Affect theory has become a busy area within literary criticism, though it is less a unified field than a bundle of interests and approaches.[3] Within cognitive psychology as well, feeling has come to life. New technologies like fMRI fueled some of this interest, because they allowed new answers to the question of whether different feelings had distinct and generalizable hemodynamic traces in the brain. For psychologists, the distinction between feeling and cognition no longer appears as absolute as it once did: "Affective reactions, in the form of emotions and moods, exert a far-reaching and

[2] M.W. Eysenck and M.T. Keane, *Cognitive Psychology: A Student's Handbook, 4th ed.* (East Sussex: Psychology Press, 2000), p. 489.

[3] See, for example, R. Terada, *Feeling in Theory: Emotion after the 'Death of the Subject'* (Cambridge/Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001); E. Kosofsky Sedgwick and A. Frank, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2003); M. Gregg and G.J. Seigworth (eds.), *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

largely functional influence on cognition."[4] This quotation foregrounds two issues that will be important throughout this essay: first, finding a workable set of terms to define the array of human phenomena that can fit under the wide umbrella of "feelings"; second, recognizing that feeling's relevance to reading involves not only feelings that arise during reading but also the feelings that readers bring to the reading experience and those that they take away from it.

Despite the common interest in feelings in psychology and literary scholarship, the disciplines have not interacted. This essay is meant to begin such an interaction by introducing literary scholars to cognitive work on feelings in general and then by focusing on reading. This is a large, complex topic, and this essay will do little more than sketch the terrain, but we hope that it will open a path for more detailed investigation.

While it is difficult to generalize about feelings in literary criticism, core issues have involved how conscious or unconscious feelings may be, and how people evaluate the feelings. Marta Figlerowitcz outlines major topics:

> I can become angry at or attracted to another person without knowing that my attitude toward her has changed. This is to experience an affect un- or preconsciously. I can also be aware of my anger or attraction and weight it as a potentially reliable phenomenology, as a potentially true indication of what this other person is like and how I should treat her. This experience is what most theorists understand under the term *emotion*. Or I can attend to my anger or attraction without believing that the perspective

[4] J.R. Huntsinger and S. Schnall, "Emotion-Cognition Interactions" in *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Psychology,* ed. D. Reisberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 571–84; p. 581.

it gives me is reliable, focusing primarily on these feelings' movement within me.[5]

She describes three options: unconscious feelings, feelings taken as accurate information about the world and feelings analyzed for their own sake. Awareness is always the central issue. For literary critics, what matters is whether subjects are aware of feelings and, if so, what happens to that awareness. Such concerns lead to questions about how art can register feelings barely understood by those experiencing them, how responses to literature create knowledge about the literary text, and how literary texts, especially the lyric, invite feelings freed from function or use.

While psychology is not indifferent to topics raised by literary criticism, its focus on generalized mental systems leads to different emphases. Literary critics are more used to a certain fuzziness in the description of feelings, one that acknowledges how complex feelings often are and how difficult it can be to describe them precisely. For psychologists, good experiments require clarity about the object of investigation, and psychologists respond to this need for clarity by generating categories. Concerning feelings, there are four different categories that psychologists employ: affect, emotion, mood, and personality. While literary critics focus on awareness, key distinctions for psychologists are duration and specificity. To move from affect to personality is to move from the briefest to the most enduring of the categories and through varying degrees of specificity. As in any field, terms are up for debate, and psychologists sometimes use "affect" to describe the entire range of feelings. I, however, will follow Clore and Robinson in using it as a term that may come closest to what Figlerowitcz means by "uncon-

[5] M. Figlerowitcz, "Affect Theory Dossier: An Introduction", *Qui Parle* 20, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2012), pp. 3–18; p. 5.

scious" emotion: it is an automatic positive or negative reaction to a stimulus and arises from a basic attraction / withdrawal polarity. Affective responses happen so quickly that they may be hardly registered by the subject. Emotions, in contrast, are conscious states that require the recursive appraisal both of external events and of somatic reactions to them (heart rate, sweating, breathing speed).[6] It may be a challenge for literary critics to accept that emotions involve appraisal, since emotions in art have traditionally been presented as a "spontaneous overflow," in Wordsworth's famous formula, an eruption that seems to exceed rational thought.[7] Yet what counts as appraisal varies significantly between literary criticism and psychology. For literary critics, appraisal is a labor-intensive, time-consuming activity that takes hours or days. For psychologists, the appraisal of stimuli that leads a subject to an emotional state takes longer than the automatic processing of affect, but it still can happen quickly, within seconds. In that time, the appraisal may involve both conscious and unconscious elements, a combination that can help explain why the same stimulus can lead to different emotional responses in different people.[8]

For psychologists, mood differs from emotion in that emotions have a specific trigger, and take a specified form (e.g., anger, joviality, fear). Mood, in contrast, is more diffuse, does not necessarily have a specific trigger, and may be longer-lasting. Events in a work of literature may induce passing emotions, but the overall experience of reading may also produce a mood less easy to charac-

[6] G.L. Clore and M.D. Robinson, "Five New Ideas about Emotion and Their Implications for Social-Personality Psychology" in *The Oxford Handbook of Personality and Social Psychology,* eds. K. Deaux and M. Snyder (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 315–336; p. 325.

[7] W. Wordsworth, "Preface (1802) to *Lyrical Ballads", William Wordsworth: The Major Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 595–615; p. 598.

[8] For a discussion of appraisal theory, see C.A. Smith and L.D. Kirby, "Putting Appraisal in Context: Toward a Relational Model of Appraisal and Emotion", *Cognition and Emotion* 23, no. 7 (2009), pp. 1352–1372.

terize than minute-by-minute emotional experience. In addition, psychologists also explore a phenomenon that literary critics rarely take up: a reader may come to read a book with a pre-existing mood, and that mood, quite apart from the book, may deeply affect the reading experience.[9]

Finally, personality is treated as a stable collection of traits characterizing individual behavior. One well-known model, the Five Factor Theory, measures individuals on a scale of five key traits: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. These traits are less as causal factors in how people behave than general trends in their reactions to events. The point is not to divide everyone into only one of these categories. Instead, people have a distinctive combination of them, and each trait can be measured on a scale from low to high.[10] Although literary scholars may be quick to scoff at this theory because it seems so reductive (and not all psychologists like the Five Factor Theory either), its point is not to provide an exhaustive description of any individual. Instead, it offers a rough means of differentiating many individuals from each other that, however clunky it might seem, offers considerable nuance because of the many different combinations that can result. It can be especially useful when thinking how people evaluate what they have read and the aesthetic judgments that they make about it, a large topic beyond the bounds of this essay.

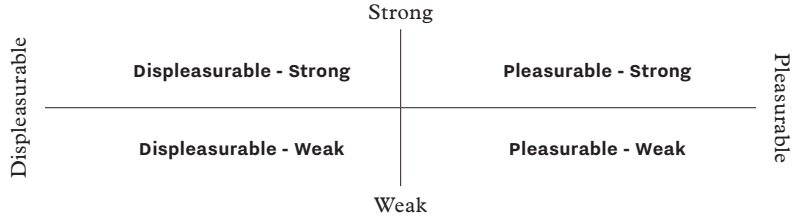
The distinctions I have made among affect, emotion, mood, and personality are not absolute, and psychologists disagree among themselves about where to draw the line between them. Yet, as I have noted, they point to key issues in the study of

[9] C.M. Bohn-Gettler and D.N. Rapp, "Depending on My Mood: Mood-Driven Influences on Text Comprehension", *Journal of Educational Psychology* 103, no. 3 (2011), pp. 562–577.
[10] For an overview, see T.A. Widiger (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Five Factor Model of Personality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

feeling: duration and specificity. Reading is interesting in relation to these factors because reading can be a means either of prolonging a feeling (reading a sad book when you are in a sad mood) or of shortening it (reading a funny book to cheer oneself up). Similarly, reading can sharpen an unspecific mood into a focused emotion but can also produce an overall mood that does not quite cohere into an easily identified emotional state. The subject of feeling draws attention to reading as a process in time: reading can interact with pre-existing feelings, in addition to generating feeling during the reading process. It also can leave the reader with a variety of feelings that, again, can change with time. In some cases, memory of the reading experience may be enough to allow the reader to recreate those feelings. In all cases, the specificity associated with those feelings is highly variable, arising from complex interactions between reader, text, and context.

Beyond duration and specificity, two other factors key in psychological analysis of feeling are valence and arousal. Valence involves whether a feeling is pleasurable: it moves on a scale from extremely pleasurable to extremely displeasurable. Arousal, in contrast, involves the degree of activation associated with the feelings; some feelings produce a powerful physiological response (such as anger), while others do not (such as bemusement). The poles of valence and arousal create four possible combinations:

Feeling Scale



Within a quadrant, different emotions can be located at different points, so that they are closer to or further away from other quadrants. Such an option gives flexibility and nuance to the system of valence/arousal.[11] For literary criticism, I find this model helpful because it organizes the wide array of feelings to allow comparisons among different texts or among moments within the same text. It also characterizes different manifestations of the same feeling: for example, melancholy can be a strongly displeasurable emotion or a weakly pleasurable one, depending on the situation.

Duration, valence, and arousal become further complicated when we move from feelings in general to feeling in relation to literary reading. It is possible to read many texts without any feelings at all, such as a road sign or the instructions on a box of detergent. But, as I have noted, literary reading has long been distinguished by its association with strong feelings, e.g., readers cry at death scenes, feel their hearts race during ghost stories, or turn the pages more quickly to find out if the hero can rescue the heroine. The challenge is to figure out how feelings, when they do occur, interact with the more neutral cognitive processes necessary for comprehension.

Feelings can matter for a reading experience before, during, and after the actual act of reading. Psychologists distinguish the mental processes that happen during reading ("online processes") from the final memory representation that remains after reading ("offline product"), although (again) the distinction between the two is not absolute: the "offline product" is not a static construct but one subject to constant revision over time and one that will look different depending on the reasons for remembering a text. Although they are only occasionally con-

[11] See I.B. Mauss and M.D. Robinson, "Measures of Emotion: A Review", *Cognition and Emotion* 23, no. 2 (2009), pp. 209–237.

sidered by psychologists, I would also add "pre-reading" processes to the understanding of reading generally and the role of emotions in reading. In much writing about emotion and reading, the assumption is that emotions stem purely from the reading experience itself, as if reading happened in a vacuum. Yet readers read with goals, attitudes, and expectations, and those may affect emotional reactions during the reading process.[12]

Although some psychologists have assumed that readers' choices would be guided by a search for emotional equilibrium (if you are too excited, you will read to calm yourself down; if you are sad, you will read to cheer yourself up), considerable evidence disputes this assumption.[13] Readers just as often want reading to reinforce their feelings, especially negative ones.[14] When students are assigned books to read, their attitudes toward reading, unsurprisingly, have significant effects on how well they comprehend what they read: an enthusiastic attitude toward the reading event predicts higher degrees of understanding. Catherine Bohn-Gettler and David Rapp analyzed the differences between readers in happy, sad, and neutral moods when they read excerpts from *Scientific American*.[15] Although this experiment did not look at literary reading, the results are suggestive: readers in an emotionally-valenced mood, either happy or sad, were more similar than neutral readers. Happy and sad readers paraphrased more and remembered more important details in the text. This may suggest that coming to reading with a valenced mood, even with a text largely devoid of strong emo-

[12] P. van den Broek, R.F. Lorch, T. Linderholm and M. Gustafson, "The Effects of Readers' Goals on Inference Generation and Memory for Texts", *Memory & Cognition* 29, no. 8 (2001), pp. 1081–88.
[13] D. Zillmann, "Mood Management through Communication Choices", *American Behavioral Psychologist* 31, no. 3 (1988), pp. 327–340.
[14] M.B. Oliver, "Tender Affective States as Predictors of Entertainment Preferences", *Journal of Communication* 58 (2008), pp. 40–61.
[15] See Bohn-Gettler and Rapp, "Depending on My Mood".

tional content, can itself matter for the reading.

Feelings during reading intersect with the processes of comprehension. Comprehension is a large, complex topic apart from any consideration of feeling. The core puzzle in comprehension involves relating memory and understanding. Limitations of human memory mean that, after having read even a short passage, readers will have a verbatim recollection of almost nothing that they have read. Faced with this huge loss of information, skilled readers develop strategies to remember what they consider important; in traditional narratives, for example, they may track location, time, protagonists, goals, and motivations. These, rather than a verbatim reproduction of the text, become part of a reader's long-term memory representation. In addition, as they read, readers bring to the experience many things not explicitly mentioned in the text: they draw on background knowledge to explain events described elliptically in the text and to connect earlier and later parts of the text. Such inferences, if they are important, may also become part of a long-term memory representation, even though they themselves are not in a text. Processes like inference generation exist on a continuum from those performed so many times that they happen automatically and with little effort (such as recognizing that the letter combination "s-k-y" spells "sky") to those that require considerable effort, such as following the dialogue in late Henry James.[16]

So, the question about feelings is how they enter these processes. A point of debate has centered on how active the reader is, with positions ranging from those advocating for highly active readers to those positing minimalist readers who do enough only to make sense of what they are reading at a local level. In response to this debate, an important experiment showed that

[16] For an overview of the comprehension process, see A. Elfenbein, *The Gist of Reading* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), pp. 83–109.

readers do indeed make inferences about character feelings and do so without an unusual amount of cognitive effort, a finding that seems intuitively obvious but made an important intervention in a larger debate about what readers do while reading.[17] Since then, psychologists have done a considerable amount of work around the ability of readers to recognize and understand the feelings of characters.[18]

Yet understanding characters' feelings is not the same as experiencing feelings, although the first may be a precondition for the second. Researchers have noted that characters are not the only source of readers' responses: readers can respond to aspects of the work itself, such as its style or overall tone. In an important article, Raymond Mar and his associates detailed the varying kinds of feelings that can be present in literary reading, including sympathy (feeling sorry for characters), identification (feeling that you are in the character's position), empathy (feeling the same emotion as a character), and remembered feelings (feelings in the novel that call up autobiographical memories).[19] David Miall has gone so far as to argue that emotional responsiveness is the distinguishing characteristic of literary reading.[20] Yet research suggests that the picture is more complicated. For example, one experiment showed that readers had a diminished emotional response to a narrative with foregrounded literary

[17] M.A. Gernsbacher, H. Hill Goldsmith and R.R.W. Robertson, "Do Readers Mentally Representing Characters' Emotional States?", *Cognition and Emotion* 6, no. 2 (1992), pp. 89–111.
[18] See H. Komeda and T. Kusumi, "The Effect of a Protagonist's Emotional Shift on Situation Model Construction", *Memory and Cognition* 34, no. 7 (2006), pp. 1548–1556; H. Komeda et al., "Beyond Disposition: The Processing Consequences of Explicit and Implicit Invocations of Empathy", *Acta Psychologica* 142 (2013), pp. 349–355; and M. de Vega, "The Representation of Changing Emotion in Reading Comprehension", *Cognition and Emotion* 10, no. 3 (1996), pp. 303–322.
[19] R.A. Mar, K. Oatley, M. Djikic and J. Mullin, "Emotion and Narrative Fiction: Interactive Influences Before, During, and After Reading", *Cognition and Emotion*, 25, no. 5 (2011), pp. 818–833.
[20] D.S. Miall, "Emotions and the Structuring of Narrative Responses", *Poetics Today* 32, no. 2 (2011), pp. 323–348.

devices compared to a version of the same narrative without those devices. The conclusion was that those devices induced a more analytical mindset in readers, whose feelings were more engaged by the less overtly literary version of the text.[21] In some cases, foregrounded literariness may be as much a barrier to emotional response as a catalyst for it.

Two phenomena about feelings and reading have received attention, especially in the work of Richard Gerrig. The first is what Gerrig calls "participatory responses", such as when readers watching a character about to make a bad choice may think, "Don't do it!". Such responses go beyond a simple inference because they do more than just retrieve information from background knowledge. Instead, they involve readers taking the fiction seriously enough that they wish to intervene in it: strong reader feelings are a prerequisite for participatory responses and act as a sign of emotional engagement. Gerrig has shown that they are widespread in the reading of fiction.

The second is what Gerrig calls "anomalous suspense". Here, Gerrig is interested in how generic expectations affect reader feelings. For example, when reading a standard piece of genre fiction, one can expect that the protagonist will get into dangerous scrapes and that he or she will survive them. If one were to imagine perfectly rational readers, they should not feel any suspense during the hero's scrapes because they know that, in the end, the hero will triumph. Similarly, perfectly rational readers should not, upon rereading even the most suspenseful work, feel any suspense in light of their knowledge of how everything turns out. Yet Gerrig showed readers did indeed feel suspense even when reading short narratives that made the outcome of well-known historical events (the presidency of George Washington,

[21] A. Mangen et al., "Empathy and Literary Style: A Theoretical and Methodological Exploration", *Orbis Litterarum* 73 (2019), pp. 471–496.

the stardom of Elvis Presley) seem briefly questionable. After reading such narratives, it took readers significantly longer to verify the historical version of events than it did for readers who had not read suspense-inducing stories.[22] What is most provocative about Gerrig's findings is that feelings like anomalous suspense have the power to reduce a reader's access to background knowledge: strong engagement with a story can, at least temporarily, make it harder to know what you know. Both participatory responses and anomalous suspense can contribute to reader engagement with a text, although engagement, like feeling, is a large term with multiple possible causes.

To help put findings like those of Gerrig and others in a larger perspective, Catherine Bohn-Gettler has proposed such a framework in PET, which stands for Processes, Emotions, and Tasks. Bohn-Gettler makes the point with this framework that the relation between reading and feelings varies along three major axes:

- cognitive processes: emotions may affect higher order, top-down processes differently than more automatic, bottom-up processes;
- emotions: positively valenced emotions may work differently from negatively valenced ones, and arousal likewise may have varying effects;
- tasks: readers can have completely different feelings about the same text depending on their goals in reading it and the actions they expect to be able to accomplish through reading.[23]

Within literary criticism, affect theory has neglected processes and tasks: feelings are often imagined in a self-sufficient

[22] R.J. Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds: On the Psychological Experience of Reading* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).
[23] C. Bohn-Gettler, "Getting a Grip: The PET Framework for Studying How Reader Emotions Influence Comprehension", forthcoming, *Discourse Processes*.

bubble. Bohn-Gettler's framework complicates this by reminding us of key elements that need to be considered when investigating feelings in reading.

In terms of processes, previous research suggests an important distinction between negatively and positively valenced emotions. One might assume, in general, that positive emotions would be better for cognitive tasks than negative ones. In many experiments, psychologists have found that positive emotions do indeed foster certain tasks, such as finding creative solutions, generating inferences, remembering behavior in narratives, and learning categories. Yet positive emotions are not always the best: a positive emotion has the potential to induce a false sense of mastery, leading people to think that they performed a task better than they have. As it turns out, negative emotions have cognitive value as well. They have been associated with better accuracy, more care in responding, and less reliance on rules of thumb (as opposed to reasoned arguments). At a broad level, positive emotions seem to foster wide-ranging creativity and innovation, whereas negative ones foster careful local analysis.[24]

To understand how these broad trends might relate to reading specifically, Bohn-Gettler and I performed an experiment in which we altered previously existing short stories to provide happy, sad, and neutral versions of each story. Participants (n = 114) read one happy, one sad, and one neutral story. They read them in three different conditions: a control condition, in which they read at their own pace; a dual-task condition, in which they recited nonsense syllables ("ba be bi bo bu") at the rate of one syllable per second, while they read; and a think-aloud condition, in which they spoke their thoughts after reading each

[24] K. Fiedler and S. Beier, "Affect and Cognitive Processes in Educational Contexts", in *International Handbook of Emotions in Education*, eds. R. Pekrun and L. Linnenbrink-Garcia (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 36–55

clause of the story. In the control condition, reading the stories had a significant effect on the readers' emotions: reading the happy story produced more positive affect and joviality than the neutral story, and reading the sad story produced less positive affect and joviality than the neutral story as well as greater sadness than the happy or neutral stories.

The point of the dual-task condition was to explore how cognitive load affects processing. The brain's capacity for cognitive processing is limited: the more activation that is used for certain resource-demanding processes, the less is available for other processes. So, if participants had to perform a simple task like reciting nonsense syllables, it potentially could affect their emotional response. As it turns out, it did. As expected, those who read the sad story felt sadder than those who read happy or neutral stories. But there was no difference in positive affect or joviality for those who read happy stories and those who read neutral stories, as there was in the control condition. A similar finding occurred in the think-aloud condition: the sad story produced greater negative affect and sadness than did the happy or neutral stories, but there were no differences for positive affect. The point is that the tasks we imposed upon readers (nonsense syllables and thinking aloud) diminished the happy-making effects of the happy story. Only the sad-making effect of the sad story survived. The results suggest that sad reader emotions may be less susceptible to cognitive load than happy ones. Sad stories make sad readers, no matter what, whereas happy stories make happy readers only if the readers can concentrate fully on the story.

The dual-task condition also produced significant differences depending on emotional tone. Admittedly, the task that we asked participants to perform (reciting nonsense syllables) was an obviously artificial one. But its purpose was to explore an

aspect of reading not often acknowledged in literary scholarship: readers often read while they are distracted, either by their environment or by other tasks that they need to perform. Such distractions put a strain on the mind's cognitive capacity because, as I have noted, the mind is capable of only so much processing at a given moment. So, the question of how feelings affect reading under conditions of cognitive load is a genuine one, however artificial the experimental task may have been. When the reader was distracted, happy stories were easiest to read, followed by the sad and neutral stories.[25]

Such results connect with a larger negativity bias that psychologists have found. Egidi and Gerrig gave readers stories that, for the most part, were neutral but then had either happy or sad endings. They found that readers read the sad endings more slowly. Reading time is often used in psychology as a behavioral measure of a psychological process. The challenge is knowing just what process it is measuring. Egidi and Gerrig suggest that slower reading times indicate either that the sad endings were read more carefully by readers or that they were harder to read, in the sense that it took more effort for readers to integrate the sad ending into their mental representation.[26] Bohn-Gettler and I had a similar but not identical finding: we found that sad stories had slower reading times only in the dual-task condition, which meant that readers were under increased cognitive load. Yet, as Bohn-Gettler's PET framework stresses, different findings may arise from different processes, emotions, and tasks. In the case of Egidi and Gerrig, the task was somewhat different from that in our experiment. Their readers had a positive

[25] C. Bohn-Gettler and A. Elfenbein, "Emotional Tone and Text Processing", Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Text and Discourse, Chicago, July 2014.

[26] G. Egidi and R.J. Gerrig, "How Valence Affects Language Processing: Negativity Bias and Mood Congruence in Narrative Comprehension", *Memory & Cognition* 37, no. 5 (2009), pp. 547–555.

or negative mood induced before they read the stories, whereas the readers in our experiment did not. In addition, their stories were mostly neutral: only the conclusions of the stories were sad or happy. Our happy and sad stories, in contrast, had a marked emotional valence from the beginning. As a result, the negativity bias that we found only in the dual-task condition may have been present for their readers because of the mood induction manipulation and the different tone of the endings, which were not present in our experiment.

The bigger point is that, in both experiments, sad stories stood out as having more marked effects on cognitive processing. These findings may help to explain why readers often find that sad stories feel more meaningful and important to them than happy ones. On the face of it, the propensity for sad stories seems counterintuitive: people should want to increase pleasure and decrease pain. Why, in such a case, would people submit themselves to unpleasant experiences in literary reading, often an activity associated with leisure time and choice? The answer is that sad stories invite greater effort. It may be that people interpret this greater effort as enabling a more meaningful experience and accomplishing a difficult task is more rewarding than accomplishing an easier one.[27]

The distance from feeling that once helped cognitive psychology and literary criticism to cement their places as academic disciplines is no longer as necessary as it once was, and this development has allowed both disciplines to explore new questions about what it means to be human. As a literary scholar, what I find most valuable in the psychological study of feeling is the ability to find key points that allow for the comparison of emotional experiences. In literary scholarship, the assumption

[27] R.B. Cialdini, *Influence: Science and Practice, 4th ed.* (Needham Heights, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, 2001), p. 79.

has tended to be that, although all readers have feelings, each reader's experience is irreducibly unique. Part of the attraction of the affective turn for literary scholar may be the challenge of trying to evoke in language the tangled complexity of individual feelings. Valuable as that endeavor is, psychology offers an alternative perspective that opens possibilities for understanding feeling on a larger scale: the historical role of feelings, their collective effect on a group or community, and varying feelings that readers may have in different historical periods about the same text. Categories like duration, specificity, activation, and valence can provide powerful conceptual tools for literary scholars as they strive to incorporate the complex welter of feelings aroused by reading into their analyses.

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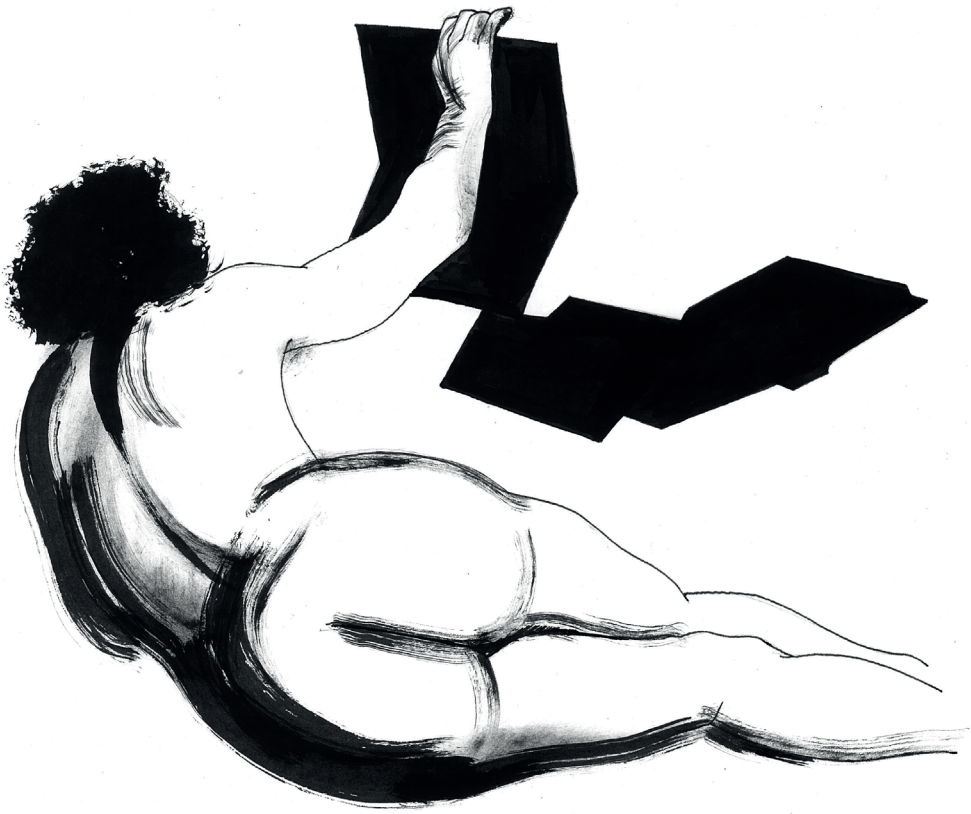

UPDATE SOON!: HOW READERS SHAPE ONLINE FANFICTION

Ellen Barth
Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz

I'm liking this story so far [...] Can't wait to see more!
Intriguing if a tad too fast paced. [...] Please continue this story.
I love your story and can['t] wait to see what happens next, please update soon![1]

Comments such as the ones above are typical of reader reviews left on digitally published fanfiction stories. Beyond their encouraging sentiments, reader comments such as these have the ability to do much more than support and give feedback to a fan author. These, and other forms of online reader interaction, have the power to influence and change the text of a story—before, during, and after publishing.

The Internet and digital technologies have influenced reading in myriad ways. In addition to the classic role of "construing texts and making sense of life",[2] readers now have digital tools that allow them to interact with authors and influence texts.[3] According to John B. Thompson, digital technologies bring

[1] FanFiction.net, "Reviews for 'a Will for Miracles'", <https://www.fanfiction.net/r/6598965/> (2 January 2019).
[2] R. Darnton, "First Steps Towards a History of Reading", *Australian Journal of French Studies* 23, no. 1 (1986), p. 6.
[3] Skains gives the example of how digital tools allow readers to have contact with authors, by which he means traditionally published authors, through author blogs and websites. R.L. Skains, "The Shifting Author-Reader Dynamic: Online Novel Communities as a Bridge from Print to Digital Literature", *Convergence* 16, no. 1 (2010), p. 96.

with them potential digital added values to book and textual communication.[4] He speculates that there are at least nine—and likely more—ways digital technology potentially adds value to texts, including through updatability and intertextuality.[5] These added values are used to varying degrees by different communities. Academics have, for example, benefited from the searchability of digital content; however, readers of e-books may find that ease-of-access and flexibility, two more of Thompson's added values, have not been fully embraced by e-book publishers. Indeed, for some communities, these added "values" may not be seen as values at all, but rather as being detrimental to established business and cultural practices. The online fanfiction community, however, is one group that has taken clear advantage of these added values, making this community a particularly interesting case for observing the changes that can potentially be wrought by digital technology.

Fanfiction is a type of derivative fiction based on previously established mass media worlds and characters. It has existed since the 1960s, originating with passionate *Star Trek* fans. But despite its early origins, fanfiction did not achieve massive popularity until the rise of the Internet as a communications platform. Online, fans who would otherwise have been highly limited in their contact due to geographical and economic factors were able to connect and share stories quickly, cheaply, and easily. Since the 1960s, fanfiction has branched out to include diverse media inspirations (fandoms), be they television shows, films, bands, books, video games, or anime. Today, millions of amateur and unauthorized fanfiction stories have been pub-

[4] J.B. Thompson, *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-First Century, 2nd edition* (New York: Plume, 2012), pp. 339–343.
[5] The others are: ease of access, scale, searchability, portability, flexibility, affordability, and multimedia. Thompson, *Merchants*, pp. 339–340.

lished online on dedicated platforms and blogs,[6] and the number continues to grow.[7]

Part of what has made online fanfiction so popular is the community's continual innovation and dynamism. This is true not only for their storytelling—which can involve alternative universes, bizarre crossovers, and original characters dropped into well-known media worlds—but the community is also nimble and flexible in regard to digital technologies. Fans readily adopt digital features like tags, linking, digital gifts, and digital art. As a group, they have utilized the resources available to them as few other online communities have, combining social media and easy-to-use Web interfaces, often referred to as Web 2.0, with the early Internet ethos of "giving it away."[8]

A result of this technological and creative openness is a more participatory role for fanfiction readers. At various stages in the publishing process and through the use of voluntary labor, updatability, and hyperlinking, readers have the ability to influence and help shape the stories they read, giving evidence to the shifting role of the reader in the digital age.

Beta Wanted

The online fanfiction community is one of free expression, exchange, and, more often than not, support. One of the earliest and most common ways readers support authors and influence

[6] To give some idea as to how much fanfiction is published online, in 2015, more than forty fandoms each produced over 2,500 stories on FanFiction.net, with the top three fandoms alone producing over 80,000 individual works. Tumblr, "2015: A (Statistical) Year in Fandom", <http://toastystats.tumblr.com/post/137252531603> (16 January 2019).

[7] For example, between the period of 1 January through 9 January 2019, over 6,000 works were published on Archive of Our Own.

[8] One early reference to this tendency appeared in a 1994 issue of MacWorld Magazine: "The Internet is one gigantic well-stocked fridge ready for raiding; for some reason, people go up there and just give stuff away." D. Pogue. "Mega 'Zines: Electronic Mac Mags Make Modems Meaningful", *MacWorld Magazine* (May 1995), p. 144.

fanfiction stories is through editing and proofreading before publishing.

Fanfiction writers are not required to put their stories through an editing process before publishing, but those who desire to do so work with so-called "beta readers" to improve the quality of their texts. A beta reader is, simply, an amateur fanfiction editor or proofreader, and they are themselves ordinary fans and members of the community. The "beta" in the beta reader's title is a reference to beta testing, a computer programming practice of trying out a program or website in order to find and fix problems, "bugs", before a public launch. Equally, beta readers look for "bugs" in a story and make suggestions to the writer about how to correct them.[9] They "rea[d] a work of fiction with a critical eye, with the aim of improving grammar, spelling, characterization, and general style of a story prior to its release to the general public."[10]

A beta reader is tasked with revealing errors in the story as well as giving encouraging and supportive feedback.[11] When beta readers find errors in a text, it is customary for them to communicate this to the writer in a gentle fashion, an idea that is encapsulated by the fanfiction term "concrit", short for constructive criticism. Rather than concerning themselves with making the text as error-free as possible, beta readers provide fan writers with a safe environment for exploring their creativity while at the same time improving their writing skills.[12]

In this way, beta readers are in a position to shape texts

[9] H. Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), p. 179.
[10] FanFiction.net, "Beta Readers", <https://www.fanfiction.net/betareaders/>, (15 January 2019).
[11] H. Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, p. 180.
[12] R.W. Black, "Access and Affiliation: The Literacy and Composition Practices of English-Language Learners in an Online Fanfiction Community", *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 49, no. 2 (2005), p. 125.

before they are published through their correction, criticism, and encouragement. Their ideas and suggestions influence the writer and, following that, influence the text.

Beta readers work voluntarily. In fact, most everything about the fanfiction publishing process is voluntary and part of an online gift culture. Sharing stories, a common initial gift, starts a process of reciprocal giving, a "feedback loop"[13] in which gifts of labor, time, and attention are voluntarily exchanged in the online space between community members. In exchange for their labor, beta readers are given name credit and / or thanked before the start of a fanfiction story. These notes of thanks give beta readers prestige within the community as well as draw attention to their own talent and labor.[14] Moreover, unlike an editor or proofreader in traditional publishing, who performs a similar function but is rarely credited in the final work, a beta reader's name credit associates them closely with the text. On this, Angelina I. Karpovich states:

> [T]he writer is the person ultimately responsible for the story, because she is the person whose name will be most directly associated with the story once it is made publicly available online, [however] any beta readers involved with a given story are conventionally also named by the story's writer, and thus are also seen by the rest of the community as in some way accountable for the quality of the finished story.[15]

Through name credit, beta readers have their role of textual

[13] K. Hellekson, "A Fannish Field of Value", *Cinema Journal* 48, no. 4 (2009), pp. 115–116.
[14] A.I. Karpovich, "The Audience as Editor", in *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet,* eds. K. Hellekson & K. Busse (Jefferson/London: McFarland Company, Inc., 2006), p. 181.
[15] Ibid.

influencer recognized within the community, understood as being less than writer but more than reader. This is perhaps the earliest way the author / reader barrier is bridged during fanfiction publishing, but not the last.

Update Soon

Beta reading provides a way for fan readers to correct errors and influence stories before publishing; however, fanfiction writers also look to their general readers to be unofficial editors and proofreaders who can help improve the quality of a story. General readers are able to make authors aware of errors through reader feedback, given in comments or reviews at the end of stories or story chapters. And as digital content can be updated "quickly, frequently and cheaply,"[16] errors can quickly be corrected after publishing, prompting some amateur content creators to describe the situation as "not wrong for long."[17]

Fan writers are, in part, motivated to share their stories for free online because, as part of a gift culture, they can expect the voluntary but reciprocal gift of positive and encouraging feedback in return. Writers invite this type of reader feedback through their author's notes prior to the story and through tags, with prompts including "read and review" (R&R) or "constructive criticism welcome". After a writer has received reader feedback, the updatability of online content allows them to engage in "a recursive process of revising and reposting."[18] Therefore, although fan writers consider stories to be complete when they have reached their narrative conclusion, this does not mean that the content therein will remain fixed, as it would with printed material.

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[16] J.B. Thompson, *Merchants*, p. 340.
[17] J. Macnamara, *The 21st Century Media (R)evolution: Emergent Communication Practices* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2010), p. 42.
[18] R.W. Black, *Adolescents and Online Fanfiction* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008), p. 55.

And as fanfiction is often published in a piecemeal fashion over an extended period of time—generally chapter by chapter—reader feedback can affect the course of a text during publishing, as well. Feedback is varied but generally includes suggestions for future plot developments, emotional reactions the story elicited in the reader, and requests to "update soon". Reader feedback and requests for updates encourage fan writers to keep writing and posting their stories as it "creates a strong sense of an audience that is eagerly waiting for the story to continue and provides impetus for the author to carry on writing."[19] Moreover, reader reactions and suggestions for future plot developments can alter a narrative while it is in the process of being written and/or published.

In these ways, online fanfiction stories are an excellent example of Gary Hall's concept of liquid books: stories and texts that can be "continually and collaboratively written, edited, annotated, critiqued, updated, shared, supplemented, revised, re-ordered, reiterated and reimagined",[20] which is made possible through digital technology. Through these "epitextual conversations"[21] in the form of feedback and reviews, as well as through online updatability, fanfiction readers have the ability to shape fanfiction stories after they are published and while they are being written, further blurring the edges of the writer / reader distinction. In giving feedback as reciprocal gifts, fan readers not only assist in improving the quality of the texts they read, but they also become part of the creative process itself.

[19] R.W. Black, "Access and Affiliation", p. 128.
[20] G. Hall, "The Unbound Book: Academic Publishing in the Age of the Infinite Archive", *Journal of Visual Culture* 12, no. 3 (2013), p. 497.
[21] M. Lindgren Leavenworth, "The Paratext of Fan Fiction", *Narrative* 23, no. 1 (2015), p. 41.

Read & Respond

To understand a fanfiction story, it is necessary to be familiar with the given fandom; for this reason, fan writers always mention the fandom of which their work is a part. Online, this reference is made in story "headers", the area preceding a fanfiction story, and is often a hyperlink. In addition to listing the fandom, linked metadata in headers often include information about pairings, characters present in the story, warnings, ratings, and other story descriptions. With the click of a button, these pieces of linked metadata lead the reader to similar texts within the same media world or involving the same characters.

Thompson lists this under the digital added value of intertextuality, saying:

> [A] feature of the online environment is that it is able to give a dynamic character to what we could describe as the referential function of texts. In the traditional medium of the printed text, the capacity to refer to other material is realized through conventional literary devices such as references, footnotes and bibliographies: these are mechanisms for referring the reader on to other texts upon which the author has drawn or which the author regards as important, interesting and / or worthwhile. In the online environment, the referential function of the text can be made much more dynamic[.][22]

In online fanfiction, intertextuality provided by hyperlinks connects massive amounts of fan works to a single mass media inspiration—and thus to each other—creating a network of related content.

As members of a derivative storytelling community, it is per-

[22] J.B. Thompson, *Merchants*, p. 343.

haps unsurprising that fans also take inspiration from existing *fanfiction* stories. Although not the most common practice in fan circles, fans can and do look to each other's stories for inspiration. Readers may use pre-existing fanfiction stories as a jumping off point for their own works, such as by writing a sequel to a fan text or retelling a story from another character's point-of-view. Hyperlinks play a valuable role in organizing the levels of storytelling and in crediting authors whose works served as inspiration. Hyperlinks added to the derivative story guide the reader to the overarching fandom as well as the "original" fanfiction story, providing the proper contextualization needed. Links also give the "original" fan author name credit, which is, as previously shown, an important form of "payment" in the fanfiction gift culture. Name credit acknowledges their role in the creative process, and the link attached to the author's name brings attention—and readers—to their stories.

Readers of fanfiction, therefore, can affect a fanfiction story after it has been published. In posting their own "new" piece of derivative fiction in response to a previously published fanfiction story and digitally linking it to the original, these fan reader-writers change the "old" story: they continue the narrative and connect it to another text and author, extending its textual boundaries.

The genre of fanfiction could be viewed as a collective body of reader response. That these stories are derivative and base themselves on the worlds, characters, and imaginings of others provides tantalizing glimpses into the mind of the reader/writer/re-imaginer. Fanfiction stories allow for continued readings of and engagement with a source material, and, supported by digital intertextuality, fan readers become part of a linked creative process of reading and responding through creative narrative expression.

Conclusion

In the digital age, readers' voices are traveling farther than ever. Readers—especially readers of fiction—have various online platforms at their disposal for sharing their bookshelves, book reviews, and comments. However, within the fanfiction community, readers' voices do more than travel to other readers or researchers; they can travel into the text itself.

Through the use of digital added values and voluntary gift culture, readers have helped shape the stories they read. Beta readers wield considerable influence over online fanfiction stories before they are published. General readers influence texts through their comments and feedback, which, in combination with easy updatability of online texts, can shape the story during or after publishing. Fan readers can take their creative inspiration from mass media or other fanfiction works, connecting these stories through intricate hyperlinks and creating a rich intertextuality.

Online fans are not the only group to embrace digital added values, yet the online fanfiction community stands out for its size and commitment to these practices in fiction. Their texts give evidence to Hall's liquid books—changing, updatable, and collaborative—and their community practices expand the role of the reader. In their hyphenated existence as reader-editor—reader-reviewer—reader-writer, fanfiction readers shape stories and extend the boundaries of what readership in the digital age means.

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READING THE ARCHITECT'S MONOGRAPH

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Despite the emergence of digital textuality, the architecture monograph has remained a steadfast printed publication that is utilized to promote the work of an architectural firm, to add stature to a firm's legitimacy, and to encourage the cultural knowledge of architecture for society at large. This phenomenon has a unique historical backdrop with regard to marketing in the professional architectural practice. The first Principles of Practice adopted by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in the early 20th century barred architects from using even the simplest forms of marketing. They could not advertise—defined as paid publicity—or even put their names on a sign in front of one of their buildings during construction. They could not offer free services, such as proposals or sketches, and any use of "exaggerated or self-laudatory language"[1] in brochures or press releases was against the codes of conduct. When this ban was fully lifted in the 1970s, architects began to take marketing seriously, resulting in a proliferation and subsequent dedication to the architect's monograph. Now a widely recognized initia-

[1] A.M. Shanken, "Breaking the Taboo: Architects and Advertising in Depression and War", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 69, no. 3 (2010), pp. 406–429.

tive,[2] the monograph presents a persuasive tool that can promote the reading of architecture through printed media to a large audience. This essay explores the precursors of the architectural monograph, the role of reading an architect's monograph, the history of architectural marketing culture, and examples of cultural ideas that are brought forward via the publication.

The academic monograph is the starting point for the architectural monograph; it is a book written by specialists in a certain field, which deals exclusively with a particular subject. For scholars within the realm of humanities, the academic monograph functions as the primary means of research and scholarship. Publishing a monograph—for many academics—is considered important to their success; it is seen as critical to anyone that wants to be taken seriously in the humanities. Utilizing several years of research, the academic monograph is tediously assembled through interviews and studies of a collection of works, theories, or a person (or a group of persons). The academic monograph that narrows in on artworks and artists encompasses a range of subject matters from historic works, biographies of artists, iconography, and art theory.[3] This area can be further broken down into topics of study such as evaluating the quality, starting a critical dialogue, developing a shared meaning or concept, or tying the artwork to historical canons.

Taking its cues from the academic monograph, the exhibition monograph became popular in the late 19th century as a way to visually archive the development of an artist, provide a

[2] M. Rammohan, "The Architectural Monograph Is Here to Stay", *ArchDaily*, <www.archdaily.com/640615/the-monograph-is-here-to-stay>, (15 December 2018); ArchDaily, "How Has The Monograph Become A Default In Architectural Publishing?", <www.archdaily.com/632117/why-has-the-monograph-become-a-default-in-architectural-publishing> (15 December 2018); M. Lamster, 'The Architectural Monograph: A Defense', *Places Journal*, <placesjournal.org/article/the-architectural-monograph-a-defense/?cn-reloaded=1>, (15 December 2018).
[3] J. Cullars, "Citation Characteristics of Monographs in the Fine Arts", *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* 62, no. 3 (1992), pp. 325–342.

venue for connoisseurship, and provide new opportunities for scholarship. Accompanying an exhibition or event hosted by a museum or gallery, the publication is an opportunity to offer more depth, scope, and historical value to the exhibition or to the objectives of the institution. There are some museums and galleries that maintain their own publishing program to produce exhibition monographs. As with the academic monograph, the authors of exhibition monographs are put through conceptual rigour, and chosen writers are well regarded by academics or are the up-and-coming thought leaders in the world of academic discourse. Contemporary publications are thoughtfully designed, attractive, and flashy enough to convince visitors to pay a pretty penny. While not as lavish, exhibition monographs from the early 20th century included images that were otherwise hard to obtain; people who were interested in the art world relied on these publications for their representation of artworks. A common architectural anecdote—originally identified by Beatriz Columina—states that Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion only rose in popularity after it was included in an exhibition monograph published by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York. The Barcelona Pavilion—now regarded as one of the most influential buildings of the 20th century—was originally built in 1929 for the International Exhibition in Barcelona, where its audience barely noticed its alien form.[4] Philip Johnson (one of the most significant American architects and critics of the 20th century), however, did see the Pavilion and identified its avant-garde, thought-provoking design in his curation of an exhibition in 1947 at the MoMA. In the accompanying monograph (published by the MoMA) dedicated to Mies

[4] B. Colomina, "Media as Modern Architecture", in *Architecture Between Spectacle and Use,* ed. A. Vidler (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 58–73.

van der Rohe, Johnson remarks to his surprise that "no monograph treating his work as a whole has yet been published". From this point, the Barcelona Pavilion proliferated in magazines and became celebrated as the most beautiful building of the century. Until it was reconstructed in 1986, the Pavilion existed in the minds of a mass audience as a photograph (originally shown in a monograph).

In recent decades, the architectural monograph that is neither affiliated with academia or museums/galleries has gained remarkable popularity. There are a variety of publishing methods available for firms, should they be interested in initiating such a publication. This can range from a traditional/commercial publisher, to subsidized publishing, to hybrid publishing, or hiring a printer. With a traditional/commercial publisher, the author does not pay any of the cost to produce the manuscript. The publisher will pay upfront for the manuscript and will distribute the book under its own imprint. A subsidy publisher also distributes books under its own imprint; however, it does not purchase manuscripts and it asks authors to pay for the cost of publication. A self-publisher is an author who pays for the cost of designing, printing, and distributing their book. A printer would typically work with self-publishing authors to produce professional-quality books. Hybrid publishing is a relatively new term in the world of publishing, and it can be vague since most people have different definitions for the method. A hybrid publisher could be: a small press publisher that pays royalties and does not charge any author fees but does not pay advances; a publishing services provider (also called a subsidy publisher or vanity publisher) that charges fees for editing, layout, and book production; a traditional/commercial publisher that also sells publishing services on the side; or some combination of all of these. Essentially, there are two kinds of publishers available

for architectural monographs: publishers that will invest in a firm and cover the financial risk and publishers that require a firm's financial participation. Since it is relatively rare for a firm to secure funding, we will use a catch-all phrase for the latter as firm-initiated monographs. These firm-initiated books are seen by some as a bastardization of the academic and exhibition monograph, since the publishing method implies that the content had been rejected by a traditional/commercial publisher. Because academic libraries only accept monographs that have been reviewed, the firm-initiated monograph is typically ignored by academia. While firm-initiated books have outlets available to them to be reviewed, it is not as direct or simplified as with traditional/commercial publishers. Furthermore, academia does not recognize self-published books when assessing faculty members for tenured positions.[5] Academia's implied disdain toward these publications would surely trickle its way through intellectual culture to influence how we view the firm-initiated monograph.

Upon further inspection, however, the firm-initiated monograph occupies a unique interstitial space between academic and pleasure reading. To be successful, a monograph must invoke appeal through a variety of means that convey an expected experience. Sometimes, the name of the artist/firm can be enough to spark interest in the reader. For other authors, a common strategy is to fashion the book in the latest layout design trends. The result is the "coffee table book"—a publication that sits on a reader's coffee table to display to all visitors that their identity includes an interest in leading-edge design. Lifting away the cover reveals a palatable amount of text written in a Plain Eng-

[5] K.A. Cassell, "Do Large Academic Libraries Purchase Self-Published Books to Add to Their Collections?", in *Self-Publishing and Collection Development: Opportunities and Challenges for Libraries*, ed. R.P. Holley (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2015), pp. 27–36.

lish tone of voice that tries to engage the reader, all while allowing the eyes to rest on full-page, high-quality images of beautiful forms. By incorporating thoughtful artistry into the layout, the reader expects to gain inspiration from novel designs, cultural insight into the latest and greatest in the architecture sphere, and perhaps a sense of relaxation as they sift through an experience that has been curated specifically for them. Many of these monographs bring in an element of human interest, explaining the early years of the person in question. This persuasive technique makes the content instantly relatable to a general audience; everyone can understand and admire an architect's journey through life. While being guided on this journey, the reader can also pick up and brush up against some—more difficult—ideas about architecture's academic discourse. This is often fulfilled by bringing on an external writer (typically a professor, museum affiliate, or seasoned freelance writer) who can provide an objective and meaningful interpretation on the collection of works. Underneath this role is the subtle benefit that a highly regarded writer will add prestige to everything they touch. A monograph that contains a foreword written by an internationally recognized name will surely give the firm a higher status. A unique power dynamic ensues: architecture firms will spend hours developing relationships and convincing renowned thought leaders to contribute a foreword to their monograph, while the lesser-known writers will spend hours developing relationships with architecture firms to convince them that they, in fact, should be the essayist for their monograph.

This unique document—the monograph—performs multiple roles to a variety of audiences, such as students, general public, journalists, architects/designers not affiliated with the firm, and the firm itself. For all publics, the monograph is likely to perform as a coffee table book, as described above; however, there

are also specific uses for certain demographics. For the design student, the monograph may contain documentation on a project's process—from sketches to elevations, plans, sections, wall details, and conceptual renderings. Viewing these images serves an educational function that the student can use to develop their own practice. For journalists, the monograph contains descriptive text that is unlikely to be published elsewhere; for example, this would likely be information on materials, subconsultants, design inspiration, client's goals, etc. The journalist can then parse out specific details that are relevant to their article. For architects and designers who are not affiliated with the firm, the monograph describes the quality and rigor of design at the firm, which potentially can be a recruitment tool for that interested architect/designer. Finally, the monograph performs a role for the firm itself. Through mimicking the structure and authority of the traditional academic and exhibition monograph (by recruiting external authors and following a similar sequence), the architectural firm imagines themselves as reinscribed within an elite art and academic culture.

More so than other practices, architecture firms in North America have developed a special reliance on the monograph. Many firms see it as an important marketing tool, giving it an unusual amount of importance. This phenomenon could be explained by a turbulent relationship with marketing and public relations that was previously dictated by a firm's regulating organization. More specifically, in the early 20th century the American Institute of Architects (AIA) created regulations in their Principles of Practice that discouraged—even condemned—self-promotion. The same attitude toward self-promotion could be implied for Canadian firms, since it is generally understood that Canadian firms use American practice as an exemplar. However, there is little secondary documentation

on the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada's policies on self-promotion, and it would be worthwhile to investigate further through primary research. Regardless, the AIA's rationale is as follows: architects should not compete and should not enter into a game of underbidding each other, so the AIA created a fixed-fee schedule. Within the fixed-fee schedule, advertising caused an unsustainable financial burden on the architecture firm (since they were all making roughly the same profit), and it was banned so that other firms were not expected to advertise, participate in design competitions, or produce conceptual designs without payment.[6] Architecture firms could, however, allow external (and respectable) organizations to educate the public about their work. The AIA tiptoed around this distinction by allowing "public information"[7] but not allowing publicity, which understandably created a grey area. Public information was defined as the good work of architects that could be transformed into newsworthy items. This was micro-managed to a point that, in the 1910s, there was one AIA employee vetting all media relations outreach for all their registered firms in America.[8] The AIA's perspective on advertising was met with constant pushback, but the Principles remained until 1972 when the U.S. Justice Department determined that the rules restrained the profession from developing its practice. Up until the 1970s, however, architects were encouraged to participate in exhibitions and media that could educate the public[9]. As such, there were dozens of exhibition monographs published in North America during these dark ages of architecture marketing. When the ban on self-promotion was lifted, perhaps architects (nervously fum-

[6] A.M. Shanken, "Breaking the Taboo: Architects and Advertising in Depression and War", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 69, no. 3 (2010), pp. 406–429.
[7] A.M. Shanken, "Breaking the Taboo: Architects and Advertising in Depression and War", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 69, no. 3 (2010), pp. 406–429.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.

bling with their indoctrinated values on salesmanship) naturally turned toward a successful, established, and ordained vehicle to promote their work.

Despite being a consumer good, the firm-initiated architectural monograph is not necessarily dictated by market-driven concerns. It would be more accurate to describe it as a tool that inscribes the office within an elite art-related culture, which can be explained by architecture's history with marketing. As such, many firms use it as an opportunity to introduce concepts that benefit the betterment of society to their chosen demographic. By doing this, the monograph connotes the intellectual esteem that comes with an academic or exhibition monograph. We will now study a few examples of monographs that were printed neither by an academic nor by a museum/gallery publisher. It is difficult, however, to esthablish the exact contractual agreement that the firm had with its publisher, so the following studies do not discriminate between traditional/commercial publishers, vanity publishers, hybrid publishers, or hired printers. Regardless of contractual agreement, they serve as exemplars for the monographs that do require financial participation from the firm.

A highly regarded Canadian firm, Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg (KPMB) created a monograph with Birkhäuser in 2004, utilizing the prestige of an all-star team with ties to Toronto: Phyllis Lambert (Canadian architect, philanthropist, member of the Bronfman family, and founder of the Canadian Centre for Architecture) writes an introduction, Detlef Mertins (architect, writer, and professor at the University of Pennsylvania) provides an introductory essay, Bruce Mau (founder of Bruce Mau Design, and designer/contributor to *S,M,L,XL* by Rem Koolhaas) interviews the founding partners of KPMB, and Rodolphe el-Khoury (designer, critic, and Dean at the

University of Miami School of Architecture) writes the closing remarks. KPMB was founded in 1987 by Bruce Kuwabara, Thomas Payne, Marianne McKenna, and Shirley Blumberg; they are most known for the TIFF Bell Lightbox, the National Ballet School of Canada, and the Canadian Museum of Nature. Lambert, in her introduction, gives the firm high praise for their success despite their minority status: two of the founding partners are women and one is a Canadian with Japanese ancestry. It is Mertins, however, that introduces a critical challenge, arguing that KPMB is the champion of a distinct Toronto Style. To prove this point, he starts with a theory from architectural theorist Sanford Kwinter, who states that a person can have unique experiences that expand and intensify their participation of a situation if that event is designed with a new form that is not rooted in preconceived notions of style. Mertins interprets this as the classical styles (i.e., Victorian, Edwardian, Gothic Revival, etc.) being outdated terms, and that they imply a reproduction without critical thought. Within the context of Canada's relationship with modernism in the 50s-60s and the "revised modernism" reaction that came afterward, KPMB successfully fulfills Kwinter's theory by treating Toronto's history as a reservoir of styles. Instead of robotically repeating forms, KPMB designs with a historical repertoire where each element has a place in certain situations. To this, he provides Kitchener City Hall, King James Place, and Woodsworth College as examples of a "neo-modern style that goes beyond our expectations of how a style performs, beyond the signifying effects of style."[10]

Under the leadership of Kimberley Holden, Gregg Pasquarelli, Christopher Sharples, Coren Sharples, and William Sharples, SHoP Architects (the name being a combination of the

[10] D. Mertins, "Toronto Style", in *The Architecture of Kuwabara, Payne, McKenna, Blumberg,* ed. A. Sebris (Boston, MA: Birkhäuser, 2004), pp. 13–23.

founders' last initials) published a monograph in 2012 with The Monacelli Press. While the bulk of the publication was written by Holden, they employed Philip Nobel (architect and critic) to write the introduction. Nobel writes in an approachable tone, starting with the question of "what kind of architect are you", which is frequently asked at dinner parties, networking events, and any party where small talk among non-architects might be exercised. For Nobel, this is an entry point into a topic that has riddled the architectural field for most of its history. With regard to architectural pedagogy, the field has seen several moments of radical change; the most recent happened in the postwar period, when many were questioning the authority of institutional, bureaucratic, and capitalist structures. Professors and students alike were experimenting with the margins of architectural study and practice, revealing the anxieties surrounding the field's indeterminate identity.[11] For Nobel, the enemy of architecture is this crisis of method, purpose, and scope: an incorrect division between right brain/left brain, between poets and technicians, and between artists and technicians.

In 2013, Richard Meier Architect brought on Kenneth Frampton—an internationally recognized professor, architect, critic, and historian—to write the introduction for Meier's monograph, published by Rizzoli International Publications. Frampton provides an overview of Meier's work by going through two overarching concepts. He credits Meier for being successful at a challenge that few architects have been able to solve: creating a convincing transition from a smaller, residential form to a large, monumental public structure, using the Montagnola Residence as an example. This comment refers to a larger dis-

[11] B. Colomina et al, "Radical Pedagogies in Architectural Education", *The Architectural Review*, <https://www.architectural-review.com/today/radical-pedagogies-in-architectural-education/8636066.article>, (20 January 2019).

cussion on movement through dynamic spaces, which is a formalist topic that studies the visual effect of passages and stairs, ramps, elevators, escalators, corridors, hallways, etc. Frampton also remarks on Meier's obsession with rational grids that make use of logical divisions and subdivisions. Here he is invoking the idealism of the Modern movement; an early 20th-century movement championed by Le Corbusier and Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) that used the logic of optimized manufacturing as an ethos for architectural design and construction. Although Frampton's introduction veers into the direction of jargon, he is able to bring the reader into a perspective that is commonly kept hidden away from the hobbyist. From this, the average reader may be challenged, but will feel that they understand more about architecture's history, how Meier (presumably an architect they have interest in) plays into that history, and will have a greater appreciation for the relevance of his work.

A monograph is a serious undertaking; it can take between 12 and 24 months to complete and can cost a firm upwards of $30,000–$60,000 in publication fees and staff power necessary to compile and edit the content. Although firms may pursue these goals in the name of marketing, the unique history between American firms and self-promotion shows that the architecture firm is instead trying to reinscribe the office within an elite art-related culture. As a result, when deciding how to compose the book, creators of the monograph look to its precursors—the academic and exhibition monograph. Following the conceptual rigor of these ancestors, the firm-initiated monograph often includes a foreword containing ideas rooted in academia, and not driven by market demand, despite being a consumer good intended for mass distribution. This unique composition provides a vehicle for the everyday reader to brush up critical

ideas that otherwise do not have a medium. The exploration into this topic brings up several questions that could lead to further study: what is considered architectural academic discourse and where is the boundary with pleasure reading?, how is the monograph regarded in other countries?, and did Canada also have specific policies barring architects from marketing in the early 20th century? Regardless, the architecture monograph has remained a steadfast printed publication in the last few decades and shows no sign of falling out of favor with architecture firms.

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THE RESURGENCE OF AUDIOBOOKS

AN INSIGHT INTO THE FUTURE OF READING?

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According to The Guardian, audiobooks will save us.[1] No, they will not stop the apocalypse or will go against global warming. However, for the "us" in the publishing world, they could be the surprising savior we have been waiting for. Why do you ask? Because audiobooks have a great advantage: they can get non-readers to read (which is considered the biggest challenge for publishers).[2] For those people who were around when audiobooks on CDs were first introduced, this might sound odd. Some people will have memories of going on vacation by car and listening to an audiobook on a CD, but this form of entertainment never rooted itself into our daily lives. Audiobooks eventually became a thing of the past—nostalgic even. However, for the past couple of years, they have slowly made a (digital) comeback and are marketed as a modern development. For example, consider what the Dutch newspaper *Vrij Nederland* stated in their yearly thriller guide: "Sherlock Holmes read aloud, because reading yourself is so old-fashioned".[3] What has

[1] S. Cain, "We're All Ears for Audiobooks – and Here Are Some of the Best", *The Guardian*, 9 April 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/shortcuts/2018/apr/09/audiobooks-best-sales-doubled-past-five-years-commuters-men-25-44-purchases>, (28 October 2018).
[2] Ibid.
[3] Translated by Rian van den Dool. Original quote: 'Sherlock Holmes voorgelezen, want zelf lezen is zó ouderwets.' This was stated by Vrij Nederland (a Dutch Newspaper), when publishing their yearly thriller guide in 2017 with the audiobook of Sherlock Holmes as a gift.

changed in society that made audiobooks relevant and modern and what are the effects? I argue that the renewed interest in audiobooks is a result of the digital developments in our society, but that this should not be regarded as a negative consequence.

History

First, a short introduction on the history of audiobooks, which starts as early as the nineteenth century with the invention of the phonograph. Fun fact: the phonograph was invented by Edison in 1877 to record speech, not music.[4] While it was not yet used for audiobooks, it marks the beginning of recording audio to transfer information. Around 1930, the first novels were recorded in full in Britain and the United States.[5] However, the only medium for them were vinyl records (not very practical). Therefore, when audio cassettes were introduced, they quickly took over from records, and the term "audiobook" was used for the first time.[6] Not only did the invention of cassettes play a role here, but the mobility of the walkman and cassette players in cars increased the popularity of listening to books on the move.[7] When in the 1980s CDs took over, the way in which audiobooks were used remained mostly the same. Only around twenty years later, in 2002, were audiobooks made available for downloads online and later through streaming.[8]

From when the term "audiobook" was first introduced to the invention of CDs, making use of these recorded stories has been associated with children, dyslexics, or people with eyesight problems.[9] These groups had to rely on other forms of

[4] I. Have and B. Stougaard Pedersen, *Digital Audiobooks: New Media, Users, and Experiences* (New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 3.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid, p. 3.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.

(non-traditional) reading, as they had issues with processing text visually. Therefore, the audiobook had the status of being compensatory and was often treated only in regard to their ability to provide a shortcut or to overcome a deficiency. Currently, they have gained a wider audience, but mostly amongst young generations. Older generations still often consider audiobooks as a shortcut: "To many, listening to audio books is a debased and lazy way to read, with connotations of illiteracy (...); passivity (...); abandonment of control (...); and lack of commitment."[10] Regardless of whether this is the case, we must accept that audiobooks are back. But why is this the case and why is there a change in how audiobooks are used?

Changes in Society

Something nobody can escape and the biggest change within society in the last decennia is the fast-moving digital development. The increased popularity of audiobooks would not have been possible without the new devices on which we can listen to them and the oh-so-glorious power of the Internet. This has been identified by De Correspondent Publishers as well.[11] They not only publish books but also analyze the world of books while doing this. Bi-weekly newsletters have identified the importance of audiobooks for modern times and why they are suddenly more popular. In one of these newsletters, Milou Klein Lankhorst gives the five main reasons why we started listening more to audiobooks.[12]

First of all, there is a general increase in the influence of smartphones. We always have our phone with us, and this makes

[10] A. Albrechtslund, "Digital Audiobooks: New Media, Users, and Experiences", *MedieKultur: Journal of Media and Communication Research* 32 (2016), p. 235.
[11] M. Klein Lankhorst, "Wordt zelf lezen ouderwets?", *De Correspondent*, 14 June 2017, <https://decorrespondent.nl/6897/wordt-zelf-lezen-ouderwets/2891251919160-5a5b335c>, (27 October 2018).
[12] Ibid.

it easier to listen to whatever we want, whenever we want.

Second, the development of apps for audiobooks and podcasts have widened the audience for audio-based entertainment, and at the same time, increased the visibility of audiobooks. While it is not touched upon within the same list, another related point is the increased popularity of podcasts and the large investment in the listening platform Audible.[13] They paved the way for the return of audiobooks. When you are used to listening to podcasts, the logical step to an audiobook is an easy one. This development reinforces the number of apps that are available for audio, which in turn reinforces the popularity of podcasts and audiobooks.

Third, the diversifying of devices has allowed for listening everywhere, from connecting your phone to your car stereo, to asking Siri or Alexa to put on an audiobook at home. Thus, not only have smartphones become an inherent part of society, but also other digital developments have increased the ease of listening everywhere.

Fourth, the number of books[14] and audiobooks is growing exponentially. Because the competition is fierce, there is a need to distinguish oneself. Publishers can do this by making high-quality audiobooks.

Finally, you can multitask while listening to books. It has become more and more common to multitask, to always be on the move and be busy. While reading a book requires you to focus your eyesight solely on the book in front of you, audiobooks only occupy your ears. It is regarded as an equivalent to listening to music. It is thus not surprising that there are many studies (qualitative and quantitative) that show audiobooks

[13] Ibid.
[14] B.F. Lavoie and R.C. Sconfeld, "Books without Boundaries: A Brief Tour of the System-wide Print Book Collection", *Journal of Electronic Publishing* 9 (2006), p. np.

are the most popular among readers that are in motion. Have and Pedersen refer to this as "turning wasted time into quality time."[15]

Negative and Positive Sides

We have now seen why audiobooks were able to gain ground within society. Not only have they made a comeback, but they are more popular than ever before. This of course has its consequences. When audiobooks are researched, most of the time, they are grouped together with e-books: both are products of the digital revolution, both can enrich a person's reading experience,[16] both allow you to take many books with you, without the weight of the physical books, and both change the way we read.[17]

There are groups that consider this as a negative development. "Since radio, cinema and television began to challenge printed media from the beginning of the 20th century, speculations about the "death of the book" arose, suggesting that it would be slowly replaced and erased by these new technologies."[18] This sentiment is understandable and definitely not surprising, and this fear for the replacement of physical books and bookshops is shared by many. The developments seem to be too fast and losing the book as a physical object seems undesirable. But what needs to be kept in mind is that something new does not automatically mean the death of something else. And, more importantly, when you hold on to the past too much, you cannot benefit from new developments.

In addition to audiobooks allowing us to being able to listen to

[15] I. Have and B. Stougaard Pedersen, *Digital Audiobooks*, p. 138.
[16] B.A. Rogowsky, B.M. Calhoun and P. Tallal, "Does Modality Matter? The Effects of Reading, Listening, and Dual Modality on Comprehension", *SAGE Open* 6 (2016), n. pag.
[17] L. C. Larson, "E-Books and Audiobooks", *The Reading Teacher* 69 (2015), pp. 169–177.
[18] A. Albrechtslund, "Digital Audiobooks", p. 235.

books while doing other things, they have other advantages as well. Several studies show that multimodality can improve our recollection.[19] Furthermore, being able to adjust certain settings can allow us to concentrate for longer periods of time.[20] It might also help to drive away fatigue and boredom when performing tasks where you need to concentrate for longer periods of time (like driving).[21] Having more input can help you stay awake during longer drives. Also, it makes the story come alive.[22] Hearing the different voices and the special rhythm of a voice helps with distinguishing characters and the ease of following a storyline.

Schools and teachers especially have been experimenting with the benefits of audiobooks. Since they occupy themselves with methods to make students remember the most information, a combination of reading and listening to text could be advantageous. Moreover, older audiences should not underestimate what new technologies can bring:

> I've come to believe that translations from print to sound enhance access to a work. You can listen while you are driving, walking, sometimes even when you are working. You can transport what were heavy paper volumes on discs, iPods, and laptops. You can still enjoy the book privately riding on a packed commuter train, or sipping an espresso in your favorite coffee hangout. You can carry all two dozen Travis McGee novels in your purse or pockets and pull them out when you have a moment. For us older folks, the new media allow us to [...] turn up the volume in our earphones, without intruding on the privacy of others.[23]

[19] L.C. Larson, "E-Books and Audiobooks".
[20] L.C. Larson, "E-Books and Audiobooks".
[21] R.J. Nowosielski, L.M. Trick and R. Toxopeus, "Good Distractions: Testing the Effects of Listening to an Audiobook on Driving Performance in Simple and Complex Road Environments", *Accident Analysis and Prevention* 111 (2018), pp. 202–209.
[22] J.N. Berry, "A Media Message: Moving to Another Medium Makes Books More Accessible", *Library Journal* 138 (2013), p. 10.
[23] Ibid, p. 10.

Conclusion

Audiobooks are slowly gaining a prominent position in our lives mostly because of all the developments that the digital revolution has brought us. Our devices allow us to do many activities on the move, but they also have other, more negative connotations. Many fear the death of the printed book through increasingly easier access to other forms of entertainment. This should however not blind society to the advantages that digitality can bring and, as discussed in this essay, how useful some of these developments (like audiobooks) can be. Let this be a reminder for all booklovers: cuddle your physical books as much as you want but keep an open mind to the benefits new technologies can bring.

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DRAWBACKS OF CONVENIENCE

ON THE DECLINE OF THE MONOGRAPH AND THE WAYS OF READING IN THE HUMANITIES TODAY

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The decline of the scholarly monograph

2005 was the year after Facebook was launched. It was two years before the launch of iPhone and Kindle: two devices that came to mark the techno-media discussion of the next decade. *Books in the Digital Age* was also published by Polity Press. In this seminal work John B. Thompson noted that there was one key development in the field of academic publishing that stood out above all others: the decline of the scholarly monograph.

From today's perspective, the major developments of the digital revolution were hardly beginning – particularly Web 2.0 with all it entails – and in the last fifteen years or so, the shift has definitely not been gradual, but overwhelming and all-encompassing. That the old order fell away and things altered drastically came as little surprise. Advent of technology became the main event and everything else followed – or appeared to follow – as mere consequence. Thompson's analysis of the world of books is marked by the end of an era. What the digital age would bring, was at that point in time still a very exciting mystery.

The scholarly monograph, arguably the most important form for disseminating knowledge in modern Europe, was already seeing its decline from the mid-1980s onwards. Technology catalysed some changes that were already in place in the

field of scholarly communication and it introduced new ones. The digital disruption affected all facets of the production, publication, accessibility and end usage of monographs. The shift from monograph-based to article-based academia thus happened in accordance with economical dynamics of the publishing field and was then enforced by the advent of new technology. However, because publishing is in its essence both a cultural and commercial enterprise, these changes inevitably carry a significant cultural impact as well. As a consequence of the transformations of the publishing praxis, how scholars produce and consume knowledge underwent a significant shift.

My aim is to investigate novel ways of academic reading in the light of these changes, which were partly already in place before the digital era began in earnest, but were definitely enforced by it. I will argue that the transformed publishing practices together with the affordances of online article databases, were the potential drivers behind what I identify as a potential dissonance between academic production and attainment of knowledge. Admittedly, I will be taking the humanities as my focal point, even though STEM publishing could make for an equally interesting yet entirely different example.

From monograph-based to article-based academia

In the 1970s publishing scholarly monographs was more or less a straightforward matter. The publisher's duty was mainly in establishing quality control to separate the wheat from the chaff. Academic publishers would commonly print a couple thousand copies and could expect to sell them all.[1]

In the coming decade the unsold books began to stack up. In 1975 publishing scholarly monographs was considered financially viable and mostly rather profitable; in the next three decades the sales fell to a quarter or less of what they formerly

[1] J.B. Thompson, *Books in the Digital Age* (New York: Polity Press, 2005), p. 93.

were. Research libraries, who were the principal buyers of scholarly monographs, faced financial pressures by their home institutions.[2] After the Second World War, the growth of academic publishing was fuelled by the massive expansion of higher education. Budgets for new acquisitions grew and so did the demand for scholarly content. In the 1980s most universities that relied on public started being squeezed for costs. Then, two new competitors for library expenditure came into play: periodicals and IT services. The number and price of periodicals grew. This was enforced by consolidation of companies like Elsevier who gained the power to dictate prices.[3] The cost of IT services grew too; increased expenditure on technology signified proportionally fewer monograph acquisitions. Another development occurred almost simultaneously: university presses, which traditionally published a lion's share of scholarly monographs, had been exposed to previously unforeseen financial accountability.[4]

However, this is only half the story. Decline of the monograph didn't just signify a general reduction in academic production and consumption, but rather indicated a migration to other forms of writing. Namely, the scholarly article. Output across academia has grown steadily across the years – each year we see an increased output by somewhere between 100,000–200,000 articles. Books in all formats – multi-edited works, monographs, reference works – make up just a small fraction of this output, and see considerably smaller increases in growth year on year.[5] In the recent decades, the publishing field had to adjust itself to the move from monograph-based to article-based academia. A few crucial developments drove this shift. One was the rising pressures on researchers to publish. The other was increasing

[2] Ibid., p. 98.
[3] Ibid., p. 101.
[4] Ibid., p. 108.
[5] S. Grimme et al., *Digial Science Report: The State of Open Monographs* (London: Digital Science, 2019), p. 17.

specialisation of disciplines. Perhaps the most important factor was the advent of technology that made it easier to publish content as well as easier to access it. Before articles could be read via online databases, scholars had to consult the journal in which it was included; regardless of whether they wanted it or not, they had to borrow the whole journal. With the advent of technology, journals assumed a far more provisional role. Since individual articles could now be accessed via online databases without much concern for the particular container they were published in, they began to overshadow the journals. We can expect this will only be increasingly the case with the larger number of articles published in Open Access every year. Novel ways of organising an unprecedented superabundance of available texts, the ways scholars grapple with knowledge changed. More concretely, the manner in which texts generally get accessed significantly changed, which cannot but affect the ways scholars previously read and wrote. While I do not wish to jump to rash conclusions – and I will thus abstain from the conservative stance that predicts only the worst for the future of scholarly research – I want to devote this paper to briefly note some of these ways of reading that I believe might be under pressure in the current academic ecosystem.

Reading for familiarisation

Rolf Engelsing, writing about the reading culture in Germany between 1500 and 1800, makes the distinction between intensive and extensive reading, the former being the prevailing mode up until the eighteenth century.[6] Intensive reading presupposed immersion, slow scrutiny, rereading and sometimes memorisation. Extensive reading, that was stimulated by the reading revolution of the 18th century, was marked by the recourse to silent reading with no purpose of

[6] R. Engelsing, *Der Bürger als Leser: Lesergeschichte in Deutschland 1500–1800* (Stuttgart: Meltzer, 1974).

verbatim memorisation or prayer-like contemplation.[7] Rather, the purpose was that of entertainment – especially with fiction – or familiarisation (i.e. informing oneself) – as was the case with periodicals. These two outcomes of reading were well suited to new forms of texts.

Familiarisation, however, remains one of the defining and constant properties of scholarly reading today. While reading for familiarisation doubtless has its role in the multitude of reading modes, it can seriously affect the content of academic production if it becomes the prevalent mode to the extent that it replaces some forms which we would usually characterise as intensive. In this paper I argue this is an easily conceivable and indeed already observable repercussion of the affordances of the particular form of access that is available to written material in the humanities today.

We must not be fooled, however, that there was a resolute shift from intensive to extensive reading. As Guillory points out, Chartier and Cavallo objected to Engelsing on historical grounds that extensive reading existed well before the 18th century. As a matter of fact, the humanist way of reading was defined by balancing distinct velocities of reading.[8] Knowing when to accelerate and when to decelerate was paramount for Francis Bacon, who famously wrote:

> Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few are to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention.[9]

[7] J. Guillory, "How Scholars Read", *ADE Bulletin* 146 (Fall 2008), p. 11.
[8] Ibid.
[9] F. Bacon, "Of Studies", in *The Essays of Francis Bacon*, ed. M.A. Scott (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), p. 234.

Being able to switch between modes of reading obviously remains at least equally essential for scholars today. Being surrounded by a vast number of texts that may prove important, requires an artillery of different approaches to reading. However, the affordances of searchable databases and article-based academia made referencing far more convenient. While referencing in texts expresses indebtedness, the extent to which the authors are actually indebted to the texts they reference is dubious. As Guillory notes,[10] our current tenure and promotion system, which in most universities and many colleges demands more publication than ever before, was a great boon to scholarship and scholarly production but, inevitably, it also gives rise to new kinds of pressures. Academics have to write, which means they must be able to shift between two separate stakeholder positions: that of the author and that of the reader. However, while we may assume that the former role is necessary, the latter is optional, so reading is often forced to take the back seat.

In simpler words, the pressures to publish, coupled with more convenient ways of writing make deep engagement with texts, especially long texts – i.e. monographs – more easily dispensable. In the remainder of this paper I'll try to elucidate several meaningful transformations in reading and writing that characterise the scholarly culture today in comparison to the era before the advent of digital media. Namely, the lack of cross-pollination, reading for memorisation, rereading and deep reading; a list that is neither exhaustive nor detailed but primarily attempts to make a case for how far-reaching the consequences of introducing new ways of disseminating knowledge can be for its production and consumption. All of these transformations also cannot be attributed solely to the move from monograph-based to article-based academia: as I tried to demonstrate in the introduction, this move itself is part of larger societal factors.

[10] J. Guillory, "How Scholars Read", p. 14.

Obsolescence of cross-pollination

With libraries taking a self-aware initiative to transform themselves from sanctuaries of preservation to social hubs – making the transition "from collections to connections" – laptops, stationary computers and desks with electric outlets are taking over the space previously occupied by stacks of books. Consequently, computerised systems are becoming the principal gatekeepers between readers and texts. Many libraries now opt for publications that can be accessed online instead of storing physical print copies. In spite of studies showing a clear preference of students to read longer texts on paper rather than on screen,[11] the convenience of access and trends in acquisition policies of university libraries are likely to enforce more usage of online resources when reading is primarily conducted with the purpose of writing. A trend that could be perfectly anticipated, as it can optimise time that would otherwise be spent in largely unsuccessful browsing and searching, results in an experience of book selection that had become "less a matter of leisurely perusal and more of a direct, sterile transaction."[12] Not only are efficient search interfaces "devoid of joys of random intellectual discovery"[13]; they can potentially undermine the core values of humanities scholarship.

The enduring values of the humanities differ from the *Realpolitik* of academia. As the main problems of the human condition, which is the *objet principal* of the humanities, changed very little from the Renaissance until today, so did the ways we examine them. Namely, by reading and by writing but mostly by living and thinking that mediate between the two. This "living and thinking" in the past very often included leisurely perusal. Furthermore, examining the human condition is a hefty task that

[11] Z. Liu, "Reading behavior in the digital environment: Changes in reading behavior over the past ten years", *Journal of Documentation* 61, no. 6 (2003), p. 702.
[12] K. Tyner, *Literacy in the Digital World* (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 11.
[13] Ibid.

benefits from a broader outlook. Sometimes a work on botanics can inspire better ideas about Don Quixote than an article in a Cervantes studies journal. I am fully in agreement with Guillory, who writes "that too narrow specialization results in poor scholarship, for lack of the cross-fertilization provided by broader reading. The best scholarship is often produced at the interface between self-limited mastery and the most far-fetched reading." Online search interfaces afford scholars to more easily find what they look for. At times, to say it with the Rolling Stones, it is better not to get what you want in order to get what you need.

Reading for memorisation or The drawbacks of convenience

For the needs of this essay, I will provisionally differentiate between two distinct ways of reading for memorisation. The first, verbatim memorisation, had long ago ceased to be a common reading aim; even more so for scholars. In the Bronze Age, texts were copied on clay tablets from memory.[14] In the Middle Ages, memorising texts had its practical rationale in the fact that books were not in abundance. With time, verbatim memorisation became less of a practical and more of an intellectual exercise;[15] finally, it came to be considered a somewhat anachronistic mark of intellectual status. Meanwhile, verbatim memorisation also remained fairly persistent in the religious context.

Still, for this discussion, memorisation in another, perhaps weaker sense is more relevant. I'm talking about the kind of memorisation, that was Plato's concern in Phaedrus, when he had Socrates deliberate on the uses of writing:

> If men learn this [writing], it will implant forgetfulness in

[14] E. Robson, "The Clay Tablet Book", in *A Companion to the History of the Book*, eds. S. Eliot and J. Rose (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), p. 73.
[15] With rare exceptions, such as the case of Anna Akmatova's poetry, which was preserved by oral tradition in order to avoid personal prosecution and literary obliteration. Cf. M. Puchner, *The Written World, How Literature Shaped History* (London: Granta, 2017), pp. 273–289.

> their souls; they will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks. What you have discovered is a recipe not for memory, but for reminder. And it is no true wisdom that you offer your disciples, but only its semblance, for by telling them of many things without teaching them you will make them seem to know much, while for the most part they know nothing, and as men filled, not with wisdom but with the conceit of wisdom, they will be a burden to their fellows.[16]

Socrates did not lament but the potential detrimental effects written transmission of knowledge might have on memory per se; his primary concern was how prosthetics of memory could affect attainment of true knowledge. When we apply Plato's critique solely to written transmission as we know it from the past two millennia, his worries appear to us at least slightly overstated; of course, we have no way of knowing what the world would look like without the invention of writing (not that such a scenario would even be feasible) – but it is nevertheless hard to argue that intellectual fruits we have diligently stored and cherished in books aided many people in stimulating them on their route to becoming knowledgeable if not wise.

Despite or precisely because of this, Plato's critique in Phaedrus is more relevant today than ever: the convenient online repositories that enable scholars to access knowledge "by means of external marks" and also most conveniently reproduce it in writing, do not promote wisdom in the above sense, but rather perpetrate the "conceit of wisdom". To put it in other, seemingly more modern words: access to information can decrease our immediate access to knowledge. We replace knowledge with the knowledge of knowledge. It's arguable if this is a bad thing

[16] Plato, *Phaedrus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 275a-275b, p. 157.

in everyday life or even for the hard sciences; but it makes little sense to make use of these "shadows of knowledge" and try answering the fundamental questions of human existence if we do not also answer them for ourselves. Comparing the humanities scholars who make use of these repositories today – myself included – to Plato, it seems only very mildly ironic that he has written in spite of being aware of writing's detrimental effects when we ultimately wish to gain knowledge, while using tools that undermine this very endeavour.

The virtues of rereading: *einmal ist keinmal*

Another characteristic of extensive modes of reading in comparison to intensive ones is less rereading: the fewer the number of texts that assume the mark of being worthwhile knowing, the more scrutiny these texts can be expected to receive. In the late Middle Ages two works were considered especially worthy of reading (the former obviously standing above the latter): the Bible and the oeuvre of Aristotle (particularly Metaphysics). This consequently led to the development of Scholastics in the early universities, written records of which are a spectacle in the art of rereading in their own right. The Scholastics commanded very strict ways of reasoning with a clear hierarchy of references.[17] This, in turn, provoked perpetual in-depth reading of the same old texts for everyone. The humanities scholarship today is close to the exact opposite of this picture: academic hyperproduction induces extensive ways of reading and writing that don't appear best suited to standards of formal scholarly communication. It almost seems like rereading is something we should reserve for entertainment rather than lose time with it in serious research. Nevertheless, rereading might have its perks for scholars. Consider this quote from Vladimir Nabokov, who was like most great writers also a perceptive reader:

[17] A. Manguel, *History of Reading* (New York: Viking Press, 1996), p. 77.

> Curiously enough, one cannot read a book: one can only reread it. A good reader, a major reader, an active and creative reader is a rereader. And I shall tell you why. When we read a book for the first time the very process of laboriously moving our eyes from left to right, line after line, page after page, this complicated physical work upon the book, the very process of learning in terms of space and time what the book is about, this stands between us and artistic appreciation.[18]

Nabokov describes the manner in which humanities scholars traditionally read: the first encounter with a text calls for a second, more nuanced one in which what was novel and unfamiliar is revisited, now better linked with background knowledge and enriched. This way of rereading would indeed not always make best reading for entertainment: it could, for instance, dull our sensibilities to follow a plot and be mesmerised by the progression of the narrative.[19] Although, to counter this argument, the loss of interest in a book occurs mostly in literary works that have very little to offer but narrative. Whereas in bad books the lack of a general storyline can result in boredom, knowing why and when Ophelia dies does not, as it is replaced by the many subtleties Shakespeare's play has to offer.

There is, of course, rereading as in reading the text twice, perhaps thrice: an approach to reading that could be very well described by the saying *einmal ist keinmal*. Then, there is rereading as in reading the text so many times that, paradoxically, it no longer feels like reading, if what we mean by reading is decoding symbols with the purpose of deriving information from them – information that will, potentially, turn into knowledge.

[18] V. Nabokov, *Lectures on Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), p. 3.
[19] D. Galef, "Observations on Rereading", in *Second Thoughts*, ed. D. Galef (Detroit, MI: WSU Press, 1998), p. 19.

Rereading a text many times across many occasions can deplete its communicative capacities but it can also elevate its less evident qualities. Knowledge is not necessarily built by infinite exposure to new information but is facilitated by generative moments and by contemplation that are the consequence of reading – which is epitomised by the Benedictine practice of *lectio divina*, where the Bible is treated not as a source of information but as a holding ground for contemplation.

In this sense, rereading is closely connected to deep reading[20] as I will describe it in the following part of this paper. The purpose of deep reading is neither immersion nor precision in understanding (i.e. close reading). While it is if not frequent at least completely viable to scan very large corpora of texts fairly fast and still become immersed in them or read them with utmost precision and clarity, deep reading is by definition an active rather than a passive mode of reading. Rereading and deep reading overlap in at least one more sense: rereading does not strictly follow reading; as Michael Seidel suggests, it can actually take place in the midst of it.[21] Deep reading can simply be reading accompanied by reading what has already been read and rereading oneself.

Deep reading or The cardinal importance of a healthy metabolism

Deep reading is often linked to a large variety of comprehension-related processes in the field of neuroscience, such as conceptual expansion, embodied cognition and insight.[22] It is also often used without much distinction to denote any way of reading that is opposed to inattentive skimming. That is to say, it is often used interchangeably with notions like slow reading, attentive reading and close reading. Yet, I am most fond of Maryanne

[20] Cf. N. Barron, *Words Onscreen: The Fate of Reading in a Digital World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[21] M. Seidel, "Running Titles", *Second Thoughts*, p. 36.
[22] Ibid.

Wolf's definition, which distinguishes deep reading from other types of reading by its generative capacity. Deep reading is not solely an advanced modality of passive reading; the readers germinate their own insights while reading and therefore derive knowledge not by the ability to logically link and recapitulate the read information but by active engagement. Wolf remarks that, in essence, deep reading processes are "the lenses which help us peer through those peepholes to our best thoughts."[23] When we read deeply, we potentially apprehend what is even beyond the author's intention.[24]

In this way, we can achieve the feelings of happy erudition when we feel the author has genuinely conveyed our thoughts; or we find such significance in the words of the author that it seems even preposterous to quote them – which is perhaps why Michel de Montaigne, writing in his tower and not obliged to comply with any kind of academic standards or copyright law, more than occasionally omitted the reference to the quoted author.[25] When he did give the authors of cited fragments due credit, he nevertheless insisted his gesture to be understood as an authorial act: "I will have them give Plutarch a fillip on my nose, and rail against Seneca when they think they rail at me."[26] Montaigne is known by decidedly idiosyncratic writing – he is considered the father of the essay after all. At the same time he was also rather fond of quotes. Montaigne was first and foremost a reader, but he was indisputably also an original writer. By virtue of resolving the tension between indebtedness to others and novel thought, he epitomises the ideal humanistic reader-writer. His *Essays* stand as a grand example of intellectual digestion.

[23] M. Wolf, *Tales of Literacy for the 21st Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 110.
[24] Ibid., p. 112.
[25] He equally often misquoted or simply made up quotes.
[26] M. de Montaigne, "Of Books", in *The Complete Works,* ed. D.M. Frame (London: Everyman's Library, 2003), p. 359.

Time

What I here call the decline of the monograph, although largely facilitated by the dynamics within the field of academic publishing, should not be considered independently from non-scholarly reading. For the last decade and a half or so, statistics have been suggesting a push towards reading short textual, textual/visual and textual/audiovisual content on screen whilst sales and the consumption of long-form content are declining.[27] This is the case both in scholarship and in trade publishing. Should we blame the lack of intensive modes of reading on the length?

Poetry, aphorisms and essays admittedly lend themselves well to contemplation, so length cannot be a sufficient criterium. Notwithstanding, monographs as long-form texts have the space layer and develop the finer corners of the argument; something that articles usually cannot. Rather, the occasionally explicit but consistently implicit imperative of scholarly communication is that articles should be succinct, gradual, contain abstracts, present hypotheses and results, using the least space possible. Admittedly, this makes it easier to extract information but, ironically, it also doesn't require the same level of scrutiny and attention required to follow a more complex, detailed argument. There are multiple types of references (positive, negative, neutral, i.e. mentioned as part of literature review etc.) but what the vast majority of references in the humanities have in common is that they express indebtedness to knowledge. In today's scholarly environment the extraction of a wide array of knowledge is made easier than ever. Simultaneously, intensive modes of reading, such as rereading, deep reading and reading for memorisation are not encouraged by the affordances of the digital reading environment. This is likely to result in a changed semantic function purported by references. To be more concrete,

[27] M. Kovac and A. van der Weel, "Reading in a post-textual era", *First Monday* [Online], 23 October 2018, <https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/9416/7592#p4>, (2 June 2019).

in such scholarly environment referencing, which is rightly a standing feature of the academic culture, becomes marked by the ambiguity arising from the fact that references express indebtedness without giving any guarantee for it. References, therefore, become symptomatic of the gap between the claim of knowledge and actual attainment of it, inviting scepticism on the side of the reader. Doubting that the author has indeed "digested" the knowledge they convey, the reader ceases to trust the *auctoritas* – the latin word that gives us both the English author and authority.

A blatantly evident fact underpins the developments I have been describing here: articles simply take less time to read than books. In the scholarly culture today, time is a scarce commodity. But as books still maintain their prestige for those who produce them, the rewards of reading them are far more indirect. The limited space of an article demands the text to be sparing; a feature that never characterised books. Books can layer arguments atop arguments, they can attempt to say everything there is to say about a certain topic even if this a feat destined to fail, they can digress and prolong. Accordingly, reading books is not a sparing activity at all. Pressed by a deadline or unwilling to defeat your own line of arguing, it is admittedly much handier to find it conveniently laid. If all the above changes in the way scholars read have one thing in common as their sine qua non, it is time. We live in exceedingly rapid times; yet no matter how much faster the Internet, cars, rockets and even human bodies can go, we cannot rush knowledge – especially not the kind that deals with the human condition, which, again, is tangled up with time. If the hard sciences have a way of making scholarly communication more efficient and akin to a sterile transaction that benefit us all. The humanities, however, are a matter of leisurely perusal.

The purpose of this essay was to touch upon how certain ways of reading are potentially being transformed as consequence of

dynamics in the field of academic publishing. The repercussions of changes in dissemination of knowledge can be far-reaching. It is likely that conveniences of article databases with smart interfaces that make research far easier and more widely accessible will facilitate even more noticeable extensive ways of reading (and matching ways of writing).

Hopefully, the critical capabilities of the humanities will foster positive change. The advent of American consumerism that invaded and took over centuries-old food cultures in the second part of the 20th century, gave rise to the "slow food" movement in Italy – this being only one of the more direct examples of what were plenty and varied responses which countered the culture of efficiency and speed. In a similar vein, humanists are recognising how new research tools are in conflict with the established ways, comprising a provisional bundle of work dealing with reading slowly, which appears to be as popular as it is symptomatic. Umberto Eco has often voiced his affinity with slow reading, perhaps most obviously in the short essay titled "The Pleasure of Lingering."[28] His compatriot, Anna Lisa Buzzola penned a book with the telling title *Letteratura lenta nel tempo della fretta* (literally, Literature in the Time of Haste).[29] Across the pond, David Mikics has written a very similar book in English, called *Slow Reading in a Hurried Age*.[30] Michelle Boulous Walker, the author of *Slow Philosophy*, argues that reading slowly is in fact a political gesture against the creeping technological nature of today's institutions, which is absolutely incompatible with the essence of the humanities: if philosophy always knew two distinct approaches to thought – one being love of wisdom as a way of life and other the desire to know – today's academic ecosystem in which scholars read and write nurtures

[28] U. Eco, "The Pleasure of Lingering", in *Chronicles of a Liquid Society* (London: Vintage, 2018).
[29] A.L. Buzzola, *Letteratura lenta nel tempo della fretta* (Verona: Scripta, 2014).
[30] D. Mikics, *Slow Reading in a Hurried Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

neither the former nor the latter. Rather, emphasis on extraction of information, citation and relentless demand to publish, make the field of scholarly publication about efficient reproduction of texts, which is very far from the reading proclivities Friedrich Nietzsche considered befitting to a scholar, and perilously close to the practices he decried when he wrote the following passage while passing the autumn of 1886 on the Ligurian coast:

> an age of "work", that is to say, of hurry, of indecent and perspiring haste, which wants to "get everything done" at once, including every old or new book:- this art does not so easily get anything done, it teaches to read well, that is to say, to read slowly, deeply, looking cautiously before and aft, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers...My patient friends, this book desires for itself only perfect readers and philologists: learn to read me well![31]

[31] F. Nietzsche in M. Boulous Walker, *Slow Philosophy* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), p. 188.

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