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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]

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[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

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[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

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[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.

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[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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