University of Sussex

A University of Sussex PhD thesis

Available online via Sussex Research Online:

http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/

This thesis is protected by copyright which belongs to the author.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the Author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the Author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Please visit Sussex Research Online for more information and further details

The Impact of Digital Technologies on Reading, Readers and the Book.

Russell Glasson

PhD Media and Cultural Studies

May 2015

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature: ……………………………………..

Russell Glasson

Abstract: The impact of Digital technologies on Reading, Readers and the
Book.

This thesis investigates the developments in contemporary reading that
accompany the adoption of new reading technologies, principally the eReader
and eBook. Using methods of interview and participant observation, the
opinions and values of communities of readers have been collected and
analysed to explore how those communities describe the experiences of
reading and of books.

This research focuses on four case studies: people who are members of reading
groups, who have a reading habit which includes at least one book per week,
and who describe reading as their main medium for leisure purposes. These are
people who express a love of reading, and are comfortable with discussing
their own reading experiences. The second case is people who have adopted
an eReader for leisure reading. This group share a reading pattern that matches
that of the first case in frequency. The third case study investigates
Bookcrossing.com, a social network site which promotes a practice of sharing
books as gifts, by leaving them in public spaces to form the token for a treasure
hunt game, organised through the website. A community has formed around
the website Bookcrossing.com, which serves as a record of both the treasure
hunt game and the reading experiences for it users. Finally, using the work of
Jane Fox and Irene Mensah, the thesis explores the use of Portable Document
Format copies of books, where access to an original physical book is limited or
unavailable. Material in each case is reviewed and interpreted with respect to
the experiential, socio-cultural, and material nature of the data collected.

Having established an understanding of the experiences of the reader, based on
the interview material collected from the reading group participants, the
subsequent case studies offer the opportunity to understand the experiences of
reading with, and the use of, the replacement transitional objects, that are in

the process of inculcation in literary society. This thesis uses the concept of the assemblage, adopted from the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, as a model for the book as an object, which simultaneously denotes significance for the experience of reading, of the text it contains as well as wide significance for knowledge, wisdom and the transcendent sign. The contemporary situation is one of transition, from the singular book as an object of reading, that holds a single text or aggregation of texts towards the 'book' as an electronic device. This new device for reading has the potential to deliver any text, where format, digital rights and storage conditions are met, and where the text itself holds the potential to connect out to any and all other texts, provided in a digital material form. The research method adopts the concepts of Ludic approach to understanding reading developed by Wolfgang Iser, deconstruction of the nature of language and discourse as developed by Jacques Derrida, and utilising the concepts of Theory of Mind and Metarepresentation elaborated by Lisa Zunshine. The experiences of reading captured in each case study are compared and exposed to the impact of technological developments changing both readers and books.

Contents

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Chapter annotation: language as technology; emergence of digital as reading material; the book: assemblage: document: object of cultural fascination; Aesthetic model of reading; reading and cognition; Hermeneutics and Structuralism; Différance and the openness of the text.

Introduction

The thesis examines the transition from the codex book to the eReader. It does this through the exploration of four case studies that take reading groups, eReaders, Bookcrossing, and PDF use as their material. It engages critical frameworks drawn largely from Deleuze and Guattari, Iser, Derrida and Benjamin. Key questions concern the book as an object or assemblage, the phenomenology of reading, different modes of negotiating the loss of the object (book, paper), and reading as a form of sociality. There are two primary aims. The first is to develop an in-depth theoretical discussion of approaches to books and reading which is framed by Deleuze and Guattari's observations on books but which encompasses Iser, Derrida, Ricoeur and Starobinski to provide a synthesis of aesthetic response and reader-response theories of reading. The second is to put this into action through the analysis of four case studies which each offer a different way of understanding the experience of reading and the meaning of books at the moment in which books are going through a medium change.

The emergence of the alphabet and written language in Mesopotamia has led to, enabled and empowered the development of all text based media, and sustained human culture for approximately 3000 years (McLuhan,1962, Einstein, 2005, Ayers, 2006, Baron, 2009). In the era since the invention of writing, the technology has been adopted globally (with several examples of serendipity accelerating parallel paths of technological development). The emergence of written text has been a driver for technology and cultural practice, a token for economic and fiscal supremacy, and through the development of the universal machine or computer, become the driving force for all future technological development and bio-technological development. Without language in the form of text, we would be culturally and technologically little more than primates who formed our ancestors.

The material object for long form or collected text has been in a form of pages bound along one edge called the codex, for a period of two thousand years

approximately, in the western world. The book in this form has been a corner stone to cultures across the globe, coming to symbolise knowledge, freedom, learning and intellect, to highlight only a few of its potential denotations. Now, as we find ourselves in a period of technological disruption (Schumpeter, 1934), the physical forms of the book have become subject to digital materiality in a manner that had been considered science fiction only a few decades ago (Adams, 1979, Bova, 1989). The development of lightweight, mobile, low power consuming screen technologies and data storage, along with network connectivity provided by emerging technologies of communication, have enabled the emergence of eReader and Tablet technologies. These have combined to further undermine print media in its position as the premier reading material medium. A revolution in the methods of production, that started with the emergence of small 'personal computers' in the 1980s, has now progressed to such a degree that media previously and traditionally offered solely in the form of print, are now routinely purchased and consumed in a digital form, rather than being read within the bounds of a traditional codex form book.

The development of ePaper in the 1980s led to the development of the eReader. Sony led the way in consumer electronics with the LIBRe in 2005, while the public launch of the Amazon Kindle in 2008, provided an object of technology so synonymous with the emerging form that it has lent its name to the eReader for much of mainstream media. The aggressive marketing of the eReader and eBooks by Amazon has led to new practices for purchasing and reading literary material, much of which further supports previously expressed fears for the future of the book as the physical object (Chartier, 1994). How might the emergence of this media object, this digital commodity of text, modify the experience of reading? This introduction seeks to offer an understanding of how the book is viewed today, as it exists today as a post digital object (Ludovico, 2012). Where once the reader had a choice between hard or soft covers, or, large or standard font size, now a reader has a variety of choices as to which device they might read on, or has the possibly to read a single text across a number of networked and synchronised devices (Berry, 2013), such that they may never be more than a few clicks away from the text of their choice. In place of the book as an object, they can now choose how to view the object of the book.

A key intellectual framework I'm using to explore these ideas is taken from the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (*A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (2008)), specifically the conceptual device of the assemblage. Described as a complex machine of force/form and desire, providing order and

structure, while maintaining the ability to be both consistent while possessing fuzzy borders (Tampio, 2009). Thus the concept of the book will survive its digitalisation, as long as the diegetic object of the text it communicates continues to recreate the force and presence of the text it dwells within. The emergence of the machine to render all text in place of the machine which distributes the one text represents the emergence of a new assemblage type, and not the machinic assemblage itself. This model will allow the different contingent and peripheral attributes of the book to be considered along with the resulting pleasure of the text. There follows a substantive quotation from which I take the lead in developing the following sections.

Theoretical Directions

In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* Deleuze and Guattari (2008) take up the question of the book in a way that seems to foreshadow this shift in the object relations of the book. As part of the introductory plateau entitled *Rhizome*, the object of discourse is examined and described as follows**:**

> A book has neither object nor subject; it is made of variously formed matters, and very different dates and speeds. To attribute the book to a subject is to overlook this working of matters, and the exteriority of their relations. It is to fabricate a beneficent God to explain geological movements. In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an assemblage. A book is an assemblage of this kind, and as such is unattributable. It is a multiplicity--but we don't know yet what the multiple entails when it is no longer attributed, that is, after it has been elevated to the status of a substantive. One side of a machinic assemblage faces the strata, which doubtless make it a kind of organism, or signifying totality, or determination attributable to a subject; it also has a side facing a body without organs, which is continually dismantling the organism, causing assignifying particles or pure intensities to pass or circulate, and attributing to itself subjects that it leaves with nothing more than a name as the trace of an intensity. What is the body without organs of a book? There are several, depending on the nature of the lines considered, their particular grade or density, and the possibility of their converging on a "plane of consistency" assuring their selection. Here, as elsewhere, the units of measure are what is essential: quantify writing. There is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made. Therefore a book also has no object. As an assemblage, a book has only itself, in connection with other assemblages and in relation to other bodies without organs. ... A book exists only through the outside and on the outside. A book itself is a little machine; what is the relation (also measurable) of this literary machine to a war machine, love machine, revolutionary machine, etc.-- and an abstract machine that sweeps them along? ... Literature is an assemblage. It has nothing to do with ideology. There is no ideology and never has been. … Writing has nothing to do with signifying. It has to do with surveying, mapping, even realms that are yet to come. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1993, pp5-6)

I use this quotation to anchor other theoretical work as the thesis proceeds and come back to some of central propositions in elucidating my own work. It provides the initial definition of the book as a machine for the distribution and consumption of a text, knowledge this text represents, and the means of measuring the degrees of symmetry between the thoughts and emotional world of the reader and the diegetic object of the text itself. If writing is the measure of something, then it must be the measure of this convergence of thought, between the author and reader, between the storyworld of the text and the experience of that world by the reader of the book. The analysis of the book as an assemblage offers Deleuze and Guattari the opportunity to use their own text as a model for the concept, while still exploring the cultural significance of the book more generally. These twin tracks themselves exemplify the ability of the assemblage to retain and articulate independently active, dynamic and potential conflicting processes which share, at their centre, a material and societal subject.

This description makes no germane reference to material form nor language beyond the machinic and its role within a regime of signs. It quantifies the object of culture as a material representation of the language it contains. This conceptual understanding of the book as a composite object continues to resonant with the emergence of eBook technology. Here text is interchangeable, endlessly mutable, and the ability of the book as a material object to quantify text is shared. The object of reading is parsed from the role of signifying the experience of a text, adopting a role where it bears responsibility for the mediation of any or all text, becoming an object which grants access to the language of the text without offering up the text itself for inspection. Similarly, the text is freed of representing any specific title or authorial context. The book and its contents, here literary in context, are similarly assembled and stratified, with machinic functionality. Text as code; maintaining communication, mediating language and thought, offering the reader the freedom to make each sentence their own experience, at a constant tangent to the intentions of the author. Quantification of a text is communicated in megabytes, as a function of machine memory, and becomes only information related to the available space in your personal library; do I have to delete anything to download 'War and Peace'? (1.6MB in an EPUB format). The book no longer exists on the outside either, becoming materially indistinguishable from any other encapsulated file form.

Drawn from Deleuze and Guattari, the book as an assemblage can be thought of as a transient heterogeneous conceptual device. Modelled in this way to contain differing semantic and semiotic significance, the book, and any replacement technology, can be seen to both fulfil and modify cultural practices associated with reading. It is through adopting this model that the roles and values associated with reading, which are likely to be modulated through the adoption of eReader technology, may be fully understood.

The Book as Assemblage

The assemblage, as a conceptual model has multiple definitions, each open to further complex negotiation. This starts with a simple proposition:

> 'Assemblage ... is a concept dealing with the play of contingency and structure, organization and change' (Bogue, 2005, p77).

But this is made complicated by the process of identification, which as explained by Deleuze and Guattari, is a practice which requires patience, as:

> We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the effects of another body, either to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body (Deleuze and Guattari, 1993, p257).

Assemblages are entities that consist of bodies and objects (referred to as 'content'), as well as non-material entities. Providing both the source and location for machinic process, the assemblage provides a topological model for the causes and process of competing intensities apparent at the intersection of individual systems or 'regimes'. Neither system should be considered in isolation, but rather in the light of the resulting interactive system they become. They are finite, subject to universal forces, while remaining sufficiently autonomous to evade specifics of temporality or life-span. They have no unique essence but are composed of strata, a sedimentary like layer or belt which signifies a commonality of force or form which are 'an expression of all qualitative difference' (Marcus & Saka, 2006, p103), both within and between adjacent strata.

This is an expansive concept which speaks of the book as an object which encapsulates text, and still acknowledges the open nature of the text, and of the

language with which any book is constructed. The book is an object which enables the codex form to signify any reading experience, and potentially, all knowledge. Similarly, this book can signify the object of desire of the collector, religious piety, accumulated cultural capital, and by definition, provide opportunity for all and any reader to bestow upon the individual book meaning and significance which far extends beyond the significance of any text. This enables a book to become a token of reading for a wider community, for instance, through practices of bookcrossing, and this will be explored throughout the thesis. Here, the potential and opportunities offered by the structure of the assemblage are of keen interest:

> It can refer to a subjective state of cognition and experience of society and culture in movement from a recent past toward a near future (the temporal span of emergence); or it can refer to objective relations, a material, structure-like formation, a describable product of emergent social conditions, a configuration of relationships among diverse sites and things. In contemporary anthropological or cultural studies writing, its reference can shift from the cognition or textual plan of the analyst and writer, to the attributed cognition/experience of the subject, to a perspective on the heterogeneity of a distinctive heterogeneity of a form or object in a phase of development or 'becoming'. And of course, if not explicitly delineated, it can refer to all of these at once (Marcus & Saka, 2006, p102).

The various attributed meanings placed upon the physical book are offered to the text it contains and subsequently shared across a series of further relations. Any meaning denoted or inferred by the book, i.e., to the genre of the text, to the experience or pleasure of reading it, become specific to that text and bound with the book. This is in addition, and subsequent to any fetishistic value afforded to the book as a material object of culture (Thoburn, 2010). The culture of print has undergone a process of modulation, which started with the modes of production of the text, and that has now become materially apparent to the reader, made transparent through the various affordances granted to the text through the use of ePaper screen technology.

The emergence of the eReader and screen reading practices have deprived the book as an object of text of its universal lead as the key form of knowledge and information exchange, a supremacy it has enjoyed since the monastic orders emerged from the dark ages in the 1100s (McLuhan, 1962, Febvre and Martin, 1990, Johns, 1998, Eisenstein, 2005). The emergence of the machinic in culture has distilled the book as a cultural form, placing the significance previously identified in the book to condense around the text itself. This in turn seeks to eliminate the book from the category of objects once so closely associated with the experience of reading. Here, the experience of reading forms part of an assemblage through which cultural objects

14

are relieved of their role as knowledge referents. The form of the book becomes one rendered for historical relevance alone. We are now in a transitional period, where numerous different forms of the new object of the eReader are attaining acceptance within the wider book reader community. The thesis looks at the question of how this transition might impact readers, their sense of the cultural value of reading and pleasures of the text.

The materiality of the text versus that of the book is addressed directly by Ayers (2003). Drawing upon the challenges to our understanding of language and material art, posed by Derrida and Benjamin respectively, Ayers seeks to undermine the existing understanding of 'the location of the book as a material-cultural object' (Ayers, 2003, p760). The avoidance of question of materiality is grounded on the nature of the text, and its tendency to be located beyond the bounds of the material-commodity object that encapsulates and distributes the text. This material object of the book provides focus for production and dissemination, and while the material object itself is already 'semiologically coded' (Ayers, 2003, p763), this understanding potentially disrupts rather than enhances the practices associated with the act of reading the text itself. In questioning the material nature of the book, specifically with relation to the concept of 'aura' described by Walter Benjamin in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1999a), Ayers seeks to explore the material nature of the text as a digital object. 'Aura', characteristically described as attached to the unique and sublime, is noted for being both responsible for the drive to reproduce a work of art for mass consumption, while providing that intangible aesthetic quality which draws from the unique nature of the original object itself. Aura becomes diminished through the industrial processes of duplication, as this removes the sense of distance integral to the establishment of aura in the first instance. The once unique is rendered kitsch. In grasping the material nature of the object it is reduced to its abstract, discrete and generic origins. Here the book (or rather text) survives this depletion of aura through the labour of the reader expended in the creation of the storyworld of the text.

The book and deterritorialization

The deterritorialization of the text as a digitally distributed object of culture requiring network connected devices to read its contents and observe its ideas, might be described as the body-without-organs or BwO of convergence. Freed of form and

format the text might expand: incorporate new and discoverable text beyond the bounds of its pre-existent text; be enhanced with image or video content created to expand on the hermeneutic experience of earlier 'editions'; develop links to previous text and source material. The experience offered by the ebook belongs to the new and potentially post-digital era, with 'editions' provided in both physical and electronic versions. The book becomes the map-as-text to communications inferred by Bateson and Iser (Iser, 1994). The text identifies all of the topological domain of the book, with each textual device demanded by the diegetic object available potentially for inspection within the boundary of the map. However, only a limited viewpoint is enabled at any one time from any one place, with the structures of plot, narrative etc confining the view of the reader to the text as consumed. Subsequent iterative consumption of the text will enable the development of understanding of the diegetic object, and so the reader's understanding of the terrain of the text.

The notion of a book remaining free of ideology is more contentious, with economic and political pressures present in the materiality of both the codex book and ebook. Where once the publications of books in the USA and UK English speaking markets were controlled in the main by six corporate book publishers (Thompson, 2010), now the bookseller has taken charge of the business model and Amazon is provider of both ebook, format and services as publisher, such that their power and influence has called their business practices into question. While there seems no apparent political will to replay the industry restructuring processes which affected the film industry in the US of the 1930s, it would seem unlikely that the current situation will be allowed to remain unchallenged in perpetuity.

As a type of Document

The book is a sub-type of the cultural object of the document, being the thing which 'documents', shows and tells, keeping account of progress and accountability. Lisa Gitelman's recent book *Paper Knowledge* (2014), which features the portable document format amongst its snapshots of the last 150 years of paper document history, argues that the ever expanding scriptural economy and the documents this creates are 'central to the way people think as well as to the social order they inhabit' (2014, p5). Viewing material document types as types of sub-genres enables Gitelman to assemble a media archaeology that treats reading and reception of any text as a similar process beyond the reach of the text. While she argues that this might appear

controversial, it also demonstrates how the contextual nature of any text, and any document, with its specific relation to the reader and the embodied response this will garner, are individually, as well as conceptually associated with any document type. If the book is a sub-genre of the document, the emergence of the electronic forms of this document are rightfully individual sub-genres to be understood in their own specific terms. How successful these new sub-genres might be at enabling the text to be enjoyed to the satisfaction of the reader is the focus of the investigation here.

Books form part of a process of cultural communication, with a specific communications circuit (Darnton, 1982) which loops into communities of readership (Radway 1993, Flint, 2006, Elliot and Rose, 2009). The commercial flows of distribution from printer to reader remained largely unaltered by the emergence of global capitalism. The book trade remained relatively stable, staying largely as modelled by Darnton until the early 1980s. At this point the emergence of personal computers began to undermine the relationship between publisher and printer (Thompson, 2005). It is from this point that books begin to become digital, with print process following the paper and bookbinding process of manufacturer into mechanisation, and the beginning of a digital process flow for authorship and page layout, enabling previously complex design features such as alternative plate layout or font selection to become relatively straightforward and everyday (Hayles, 2008).

With the adoption of the de facto standard of the portable document format (PDF), which enabled the publisher to create and distribute in disc form the completed proof copy for any text to a printer, the book had become digital (Hayles, 2008). The capabilities for networked distribution appear to have developed in line with the demand for and adoption of the book as a fully digital object. The distribution and collection of private off line libraries of PDF copies started to emerge with the distribution of digital copy to third party print supply companies, and the practice of personal libraries in disc form begins to emerge with the availability of small transportable hard disc drives (Warwick, 2014). The personal library, once the preserve of ecclesiastical scholars and wealthy aristocrats has become instantly affordable, and is now available for the price of an eReader, equipped as it is with the capacity to store several hundred average sized 'books'. Where is the culture of collection that Benjamin describes in 'Unpacking my Library' (1999)? This text is now so frequently quoted that it is almost a convention of the genre that it should be included in any discussion on the future of the book.

Salience

Fascination with reading is not simply a popular act of nostalgia for an object under threat of extinction, with reading becoming a 'legitimate topic of inquiry after a long period of neglect' (Armstrong, 2011, p87). The continuing suspicion and subjection of the experience of the text, apparent in part in the critical response to the work of Wolfgang Iser, to whom I will turn shortly, forms part of the more general trope towards the understanding of the self as a socially constructed being.

Here I would agree with Armstrong in arguing for a return to a lived experience of reading for the purposes of critical engagement. This is essential in enabling the inspection of the aesthetic, form and history, literary value and cultural contexts, artistic aims, and political interests associated with the book to be further examined. Reading represents the actual production of meaning, within a circular structure, whereby the reader is actively engaged in determining meaning and context in each instance. The relationship between meaning and context is entirely arbitrary, as it cannot be prescribed or limited by language, rather, it is enabled by the very limitations inscribed in the structural nature of language as writing. A contextual approach to analysis is integral to this process, and however incomplete, it is indispensable (Armstrong, 2011). Reading, when viewed as a political act, both socially and historically related to the culture and context of an era of consumer capitalism.

In the current era of media transition, the book has become a digital material object, subject to network distribution and protocol controls of digital rights management, a situation that directly affects the reader. It places the experiences of reading, and of the diegetic object at the centre of that experience, into a series of relations which privilege the individual in a manner previously disguised by the physical nature of the book. The material relation to the book or text, as individually experienced, provides perspective to inform us about the wider experiences of reading similarly mediated, just as the technologies of the eReader and eBook are being culturally assessed as "fit for use". The book as a physical object has provided an object for the distribution and consumption of a text, which has been good enough, with technological developments diminishing irritations of weight and size, while offering the reader an experience that is repeatable and effective in supporting the cognitive distraction offered by the diegetic object of the text it contains. Provided that each aspect of this chain of interest: language, text, technology and reader, are all

social constructions, how might we frame our understanding of the object of investigation?

A Phenomenology of Reading

What we see when we Read (2014) is one of a number of recent books, aimed squarely at a popular market, that explore the world of reading and books. This is a beautifully illustrated artist's book, with simple, vivid images, which play with surrealism and modern book design to offer a glimpse into the private world of the reader. Or rather, other readers, as this is a voyeuristic exercise, with the author arguing positively for the private embodied experience of long form reading, as it has been enjoyed as a mass activity in the late modern period, with the book as a key object of culture. This is the latest book to describe the apocalyptic state of the publishing industry and its inevitable extinction of the book as an object of culture. It is part of a contemporary discourse that assumes the end of the book, the implications this will have for the distribution of knowledge and the cognitive development of those people who would have previously read. Although having distinctive characteristics in the present moment, this discursive formation has a surprising long history. It springs almost fully formed from the academic forge soon after the second world war, when there emerged two divergently aligned schools of thought. In the technology school, communications theory and the early development of computing led technologists to argue that texts currently held captive within the physical confines of the codex book might be freed, with the text, information and knowledge of the book being liberated on screen. Here the text might be opened, with connections to new alternative texts being discovered, through the ability to search the text which computation offered (Bush, 1945). In place of hermeneutics, communication science would reclaim the text as language, and the true media status of the printed word would be recognised with its incorporation into an electronic mediascape where text would be searchable alongside sound or images as part of culture (Brier, 2008, Manovich, 2001). In opposition to this technological nirvana, other scholars defended the book as an object of culture, pointing out that this form of reading had been a cornerstone of scholarly learning for millennia, and had supported the emergence of mass literacy in the later stages of the capitalist period. Modern society is a literary society, with mass media exploiting our skilled abilities to read, with the abilities of the author glorified with prizes and public acclaim. The ability to write is generally

acknowledged as intellectual, even though the vast majority of the worlds population are unlikely to read any particular book.

In 1972, the Working Party on Library and Book Trade Relations organised a seminar to discuss the implications of the potential end of books, and invited a group of contributors from academia and public life. Amongst the contributors were Marshall McLuhan, George Steiner, and Asa Briggs, with their papers published in a book called *Do Books Matter* (1972). This slender volume charts a history informed by the development of silent reading, mass culture, and the mass media and market pressure which at that time appeared to present the largest threat to the existence of the book. Having earlier exposed the likely modifications implicit in the development of electronic media (McLuhan, 1962, McLuhan and Zingrone, 1997), McLuhan here argues for future where the book is no long a reified object of a cultural past, but freed of its role as an object of distribution, becomes fluid and malleable:

> The future of the book is inclusive. The book is not moving towards an Omega point but is actually in the process of rehearsing and re-enacting all the roles it has ever played; for new graphics and new printing processes invite the simultaneous use of a great diversity of effects. Poesie concrete has inspired many new uses of older printing methods and has called for the invention of new print and paper surfaces. Photo-printing permits the implosion of letters on and through materials. Print can be moved through liquids and impressed upon fabrics, or it can be broadcast by TV and printed out on plastic sheets in the home or study or office. Thus the current range of book production varies from the cultivation of the art of the illumination of manuscripts, and the revival of hand-presses, to the full restoration of ancient manuscripts by papyrologists, and photographic reproduction. Taking Xerography alone, we find the book confronted with an image of itself that is completely revolutionary. The age of electric technology is the obverse of industrial and mechanical procedure in being primarily concerned with process rather than product, with effect rather than 'content (McLuhan, 1973, pp34 - 35).

Elsewhere, the book as an object of culture was exposed to the white heat of technology. Roles assigned to the creation of the text and its consumption were contested across academic thought in disciplines across the full breadth of the humanities and social sciences, in a dialogue, as Derrida notably identifies, with the discussion of the role of writing in culture questioned by Plato in 'Phaedra' (406 BC). Debates on the end of the author (Barthes, 1975), the end of books (various , though notably here Derrida, 1981, 1982, 1998, 2001), both formed part of a broad review that questioned and exposed the potential for the emergence of media systems which would expose the text in a manner previously impossible. The new technological developments in the 1970s and 1980s which enabled the development of small and relatively self contained computers, led to interest in the potential for new screen-

based technology to undermine and remove the object of the book from literature and culture more generally. For the sake of introduction, starting with Walter Ong (1982), this interdisciplinary discourse questioned the loss of the book as an object of reading, building on the work of historical bibliography (Mackenzie, 1999), as well as cultural and media studies (Febvre and Martin, 1958, Dahl, 1968, Roberts and Skeat, 1987, Johns, 1989, Eisenstein, 2005). The baton for the technological was taken up by Friedrick Kittler (1997), while the social associations of the book were further exposed, in both a historically and contemporaneous manner by, amongst others, Flint (1993), Hartley (2002), Long (2001) and Striphas (2009). While in no way a comprehensive list of available or relevant text, this snapshot illustrates how the object of the book has garnered attention in the 'final' century of its relevance to society.

The beginning of the twenty-first century saw the emergence of new disciplines and modes of engagement with texts, which further eliminated the need for a physical object to distribute the text. The development of the world wide web enabled the development of new textual forms which were soon adopted by innovative authors prepared to explore the potential of the new media forms it supported. N. Katherine Hayles describes the emergence of texts which are free from the confines of the material page in a series of books, starting with *Writing Machines* (2002), *My Mother Was a Computer* (2005), and culminating in *Electronic Literature: New horizons for the Literary* (2008). Hayles is building on the work of Bolter and Grusin (2000), Kittler (1999, 2009) and Hansen (2004) amongst others. Each subsequent book deals with the development of a literature that exploits the audio and visual potential of emerging media forms (Hayles, 2002; 2005; 2008). The emerging technology offered the opportunity for media forms to co-exist with rather than supersede text as a mode of narrative, using the intertextual possibilities provided by hypertext markup language. Hayles here also builds on possibilities earlier identified by Bush and explored through experimental print typography through the whole of this period (Landow, 1992). The development and sale of the first dedicated electronic readers, or eReaders, in the middle of the decade announced that portable screen-based reading, a practice that had emerged with the use of mobile phones and portable data assistant (PDA) devices, was about to emerge as a potential for mainstream readers. This finally became a reality with the development of the Amazon Kindle, a device which captured the potential market for electronic readership with its mix of proprietary closed texts and smooth systems for the purchase and distribution of books, all in time for Christmas in 2008 (Levy, 2007).

The adoption of screen-based reading, both eReader and later Tablet technology has led to the description of a contemporary literary culture being a culture in crisis. John Updike exemplified new permutations in the 'end of book' discourse. He took up the prevailing concerns in his 2006 'BookExpo' address, where he described both authors and readers as appearing to be "surly hermits refusing to come out and play in the electronic sunshine of the post-Gutenberg village" (Striphas, 2009, p2). This comes together with the emergence of "bibliomania" (Striphas, 2009), a condition identified by Nicholas A. Basbanes, which fetishises the book through a form of idealisation, which removes the book from its historical context. This debate is still busily active, signalled as such by the publication of Andrew Pipers *Book Was There* (2013), and the edited anthology given the impossibly dark title *The Edge of the Precipice: Why Read Literature in the Digital Age?* (2014). Elsewhere, the eReader has been acclaimed for the ability to supports longer periods of concentrated absorption (Jacobs, 2011).

Narrative as material force

In a work that seeks to develop a method for the interpretation of contemporary digital media based on narrative and the hermeneutic arc discussed by Ricoeur, Bassett (2007) speaks to a process, which enables an understanding of the relationships maintained between a narrative form and the technology through which it is mediated.

As Bassett points out, Ricoeur believes that narrative is central to human existence, offering resolution to contradiction or illogical disruption, through the reconfiguration of experience (Bassett, 2007). Here the interaction between human and machine is conceived 'as a distended moment in which the experience of the different temporalities and spatial dynamics' are taken up into an arc of narration (2007, p32). Bassett argues that, for digital media, while technology is activated in the production of the cultural artefact, it is narrative form that persists as material force (2007, p40).

How might the emergence of this digital media object, a digital commodity of text that replaces both medium and object, and which fulfils both functional and sociocultural roles, such that it has become taken for granted (Iser, 1993), modify the experience of reading? With the publishing industry appearing to be in a state of global upheaval, the emergence of a technology that can freely distribute the material commodity of the industry might indicate that the transition from codex format to

electronic format for books is inevitable, but as we can see from previous periods of technological development and change, cultural adoption of any technological paradigm is far from guaranteed. Questions of environmental impact, economic and political implications of the impact of any new technology, on access and availability, as well as freedom of trade and effects of competition on the freedom of readers to read as they wish, are all likely to become the subject of discourse, effecting the adoption of this iteration of reading technology. However, surely the key determining factor in the cultural choices which will effect the eventual adoption or rejection of the eReader as a mainstream object of culture, is the effect it has on the process in question, that of reading. So, while the book is rightly described by Deleuze and Guattari as an object which quantifies writing, it is the reader who will decide if the object is sufficiently transparent to enable the hermeneutic experience of the text. Such transparency is essential to enable the reader to see the diegetic object of their reading experience, and it is this experience of the text, and the diegetic object that text enables that is active in extending their immediate surroundings.

The development of digital books has been part of a technical paradigm, which itself began with the development of digital technology for the design layout and printing of material at a personal level, enabled by the emergence of personal computer technology in the 1980s (Thompson, 2005). This in turn lead to the development of formats which supported the use of laser printing, which in turn became the de facto standard for the electronic distribution of material to be printed within the book publishing industry. The object of reading is and has always been the text and the textual object this enables the reader to create. However, within the emerging post digital paradigm, how this object is presented for consumption on a unitary basis has changed, and this development has affected the iterative nature of the text and the embodiment of the object for the reader. My questions seek to uncover what, if any, effect these developments have on the reader, and their perception of the text.

CHAPTER TWO

Methods, Approaches and Theoretical reflections

Chapter Annotation: from print to ePaper; interviews; participation; schedule; analysis; theoretical approach; reflections.

Introduction

The practice of reading a text whether this is in a printed form or displayed using an electronic device, is of course, central to the use of books in distributing knowledge within everyday culture. The questions and goals of this research project are intentionally outward-looking:

- How is a text consumed for entertainment?

- Does the act of reading become an embodied experience, and if so, how might this be experienced by the reader?

- How do the physical properties of a screen or paper page effect the way any text is consumed?

These are questions that focus not on the views of any individual reader, but rely on the responses and contribution of others, such that a collective logic might emerge. With this goal in mind, the methodological approach that appeared to be best placed to capture the nuanced social aspects of textual media consumption is ethnographical in outlook and design.

In this chapter I intend to document the methods used to undertake this research. After a brief review of the research questions, which I intend to investigate, the chapter will discuss the construction of the cases studies identified to allow the social and cultural impact of the emergence of electronic texts to be explored. Furthermore, I intend to detail method and explain the logic, which is intended to support the choices in approach made. It is important to emphasise that it is the collective voice that I've tried to capture in each case. Through interviews and participant observation I have tried to get a sense of the discursive construction of experience by the participants as collectives or as collaborative engagements. It is reading as a social process and cultural experience that is the focus of this work.

The links between print culture and computers are close and complex in nature, with the book as a form currently distributed owing much of its form and content to the processing power of the personal computer (Hayles, 2005, Thompson, 2010). The more recent development of the electronic reader, supported by a network distribution

system and proprietary file format has led to the use of digital files as routine and commonplace for reading, raising questions over the future of the book as a printed object. These questions supersede earlier discussions over the future of the medium, which was thought to be under threat from other electronic media, in the form of radio and television (Baumfield, 1972). In truth, the recent emergence of electronic readers, in the form of dedicated screen-based readers as well as software that adds similar functionality to allow smartphones to read digitally secure electronic books, has enabled an expansion of the numbers of books published year on year (Flood, 2014, 2015), and for some readers at least appears to have brought convenience and comfort to the experience of reading. While some commentators and academics have questioned both the experience and material distributed in the form of the eBook (Chartier, 2004; Darnton, 2010), the form has been taken up and seemingly appreciated by a public who have adopted the products of Amazon, Apple and their competitors with such speed. Textual culture is at a turning point of sorts, with book markets still unsettled by the emergence of proprietary reader systems, and the adoption of digital rights management software, which disrupts the previous experience of book ownership to one of a service culture (Thompson, 2005, 2010). Books are provided to the reader with access rights only to the text being consumed, and the sense of ownership of the book is reduced to the transient relationship of a media consumer. How might this removal of the physical materiality of the book affect the experiences of the reader? What affect might the changes currently underway have for our textual culture, when the reader's relationship to the text is one that is modified by being accessed through a screen? No matter how personal that screen might be, how might the experience of reading on a screen be compared to the experience a reader might associate with reading a personal copy of a text, in the form of a book. Does the use of generic reader compensate for the potential significance attached to a book-based reading experience for the reader, both individually and shared across a wider reading community? It is with these questions in mind, and against the current backdrop of the developing electronic book marketplace, that this research has developed.

The questions concerning the methodology here exposes the duality presented by the practice of reading, both in itself as a practice which determines meaning and offers cultural capital attached to the process of selection, and via the object of the text as interpreted. Both are culturally embedded, and have been viewed as opportunities to explain wider aspects of culture across society, be this through the practice of

academic research (Griswold, 1987b, Allington and Swann, 2009), through the practice of selection and interpretation (Long, 1987, 2003), as self-help or therapy (Sweeney, 2008), as the glue in community formation (Sedo, 2008, Fuller and Proctor, 2009), or for the freedom and sense of identity offered in the consumption of the text (Radway, 1984). Each model for the perceived role of the text as a cultural object has attracted a different methodology through which to inspect the specifics of this cultural frame. Central is the practice of reading, and it is through the engagement with a text the narrative which each reader attaches to the experience this practice promotes (Benwell, 2006). This body of research is prefaced by the engagement with the perspectives of the audience for reading, and in particular with communities of readers, who had previously been invisible to, and ignored by, cultural research that has previously focused its attention on the text (Long, 1986).

The emergence of reader-response theory marked a shift from a purely critical interaction with the text, and provided a reference point that underpins an investigation into the cultural work carried out by communities of readers beyond academia (Long, 1986, Radway, 1984). Both Radway and Long explore in close detail, the use of text and the practices of reading, both individually and socially, as a process through which identity can be asserted and protected, reinforced by the choice of texts selected to read, and through the individual engagement with the emotional experiences shared by the author. Both in *Reading the Romance* (Long, 1984), and *Book Clubs* (2003), the practices and experiences of the common reader are explored within a culture where the personal engagement with a text is shared and forms the basis for a personal and community identity, with the bonds created and reinforced through their shared pleasure and experiences of reading.

Reading groups provide a number of opportunities to gain access to the cultural processes that surround and support reading (Long, 1986). The groups provide context for the processes of selection of the text, and the associated negotiations between the individual and the institutions of the literary cultural industry. The group environment propagates the "creative cultural work" of discovery and articulation of the values and aspirations each reader has attached to the experiences proffered by the text (Long, 2003, p145). As an ensemble, the group can engage with the intersubjectivity demanded by both the text, and this process of shared engagement, each member supporting and developing the emotional experiences shared within the group environment. The appreciation of the text enables the individual to resist dominant views of literary taste or cultural value, deriving a strong sense of personal cultural

capital and personal "cultural entitlement" through their rejections of "the pronouncements of the academy" (Long, 2003, p149). This is might form part of a wider process where the individual reader is challenged to reconcile the private experience of any text with the prevailing critical interpretation of a text (Allington, 2012). However, this top down view of cultural interpretation is too simplistic a model to account for the experiences described here. Additionally, this mode of experience focuses exclusively on the object itself and fails to explore the nature of the shared interaction with the cultural object itself.

The meaning attached to any text is, itself subject to the cultural reference points relevant to the individual reader, and forms part of a communal understanding of the subjects it describes. These acts of interpretation are socially constructed and form part of the shared understating of a text (Griswold, 1987a). As Griswold explains, the key to understanding how these shared fabrications become attached to texts is through the shared culture of the group. Here the reception of any text and the meaning attached to it, depend upon the "horizon of expectations," (Jauss, 1982, cited by Griswold, 1987a). This horizon being based on the social and cultural experiences of the individual reader, and simultaneously making reference to shared communal significance and cultural understanding. The social meaning becoming a shared significance tied to the specific cultural object, here in the form of the shared text, but which might be any form of object which positions the individual within a tangible cultural network. Each individual acts as an analyst to the object in question, receiving and consuming the cultural significance of the object, while their own cultural interaction with the object is shaped by their personal intention that presupposed the act of engagement, and the subsequent process through which they share the experience the object permitted (Griswold, 1987b). Here, Griswold describes the topological schema that supports the investigation into the processes through which communal cultural value is fabricated and sustained in any cultural object, here the text (1987b, 2005).

While situating the evidence for the expression of the cultural experiences of a text in a social environment, the practices associated with its investigation reify the cultural exchanges shared by each contributor here in a manner different from the production of critical or academic text, which themselves to attain the cultural significance of literary production. Rather, the contributions are themselves transient and ephemeral, at their most reviewing, beguiling even, when being shared oblivious to their subsequent capture and analysis. The personal unconscious thought here captured

reveals both the affective dimension of the cultural process and the intensities this represents to the reader (Sweeney, 1998).

The nature of the rhetorical discourse offers guidance and limitations to the acts of interpretation it can logically support. The nature of the corpus of material generated by the model of semi-structured interviews deployed here resulted in a series of transcripts, which explore range of interactions within the experiences of the reader. In seeking to explore the social as well as the individual, the experiences of each reader are captured in the form of a series of narrative conversations, generally focusing on a specific instance or exemplar text or social interaction. This structural device was encouraged during the interviews, as a practice which ensured that the participant retained a sense of authority within the interview, being the master of their own experiences, and supported the later adoption of a mode of analysis which supported the generation of rich meta-narrative for the experiences that each participant has described (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006).

By seeking to follow the model for cultural investigation established at the outset of the discipline of reader community (if it should be described as such), I intend to adopt a sympathetic relationship to the participants who have contributed here, shaped in part my an instinctive appreciation of the role of reader in society, as well as part of a personal reflection on the processes demanded to ensure that their contributions are dealt with respectfully. The conversations have been quoted at length to reflect the circumstances of each contribution, and the subsequent analysis has sort to engage directly with the contribution as transcribed. The editing or correcting of each contribution has been kept to a minimum and reported to make those changes as transparent as possible.

To understand how readers are reacting to the changes underway, this research seeks to ask people who read to explain their experiences. People who read with a demonstrable regularity, with reading habits, which, in their own words, are valued as an important, favoured leisure activity. To this end, four relevant cases were identified that highlight the relationship between books and reading:

- Reading groups,

- eReader users,

- Bookcrossing.com

- the Portable Document Format.

In these four case studies, I anticipated a sense of shared understanding and relationship to the book. The pleasure each participant associates with the

consumption of a text would provide the opportunity to understand how the experiences of reading are affected by the format and material nature of the book that each reader consumes. Paper, print or "kindle" electronic format; it is through the description of the experiences of reading, and those experiences which surround the cultural form of the book, that will enable the potential of the adoption of electronic texts, distributed digitally, to be understood. In this chapter I will discuss the methodology used to collect and explore the discourse of reading as shared by members of these case studies, along with the implications of the process used to collect that data. Each chapter has a slightly different approach and enables the development of different theoretical trajectories. However, each case involves some kind of semi-structured interviews and/or participant observation so I explore these two approaches here.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews provide the basis for all of the case studies and are the defining approach in chapter three (Reading Groups) and chapter four (eReaders). The practice of reading a text, whether this is in a printed form or displayed using an electronic device, is of course, central to the use of books in distributing knowledge and entertainment within everyday culture (Certeau, 1984; Chartier, 1994). By incorporating the experiences of people interviewed, the intention is to establish how the transition of the book from physical to electronic form has impacted or enhanced their experiences of associated with books, both in reading and in various cultural functions they might perform.

With the demands of gaining access to and interpreting the reported experiences of people who read, the research practice of a semi-structured interview was selected as the approach that would allow for the experiences of the reader to be recorded. However, this straightforward conclusion could overlook some potential issues in both the nature of the experiential data I am hoping to acquire and also limit the expression of those experiences to settling within a framework constructed by the questions presented through the interview.

The interview is a staple investigative tool within the social sciences, being able to "solicit stories of personal experience" (Mears, 2009, p 13). The process of sharing opinion enables the mediation of the individual and, as demonstrated by Gubrium and Holstein, can be placed into a landscape of media informed by television and print

media, along with the practices of both psychological and psychiatric practices (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002). The conversational basis of this mode of information gathering removes barriers of entry, with "everyone ... familiar with the goals of interviewing" (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002, p10).

The participants included in the research for this project are, by their self-declared practices, avid readers. They read and the consumption of books provides a major leisure activity, which is further enhanced by their participation in a social network that centres on the practice of reading (Bookcrossing.com or Reading Group). For people who have adopted eReaders and tablet devices for a majority of reading, these reading habits have been self declared to be an essential component of their daily practice. The experiences described by the participants in each case are informed by the nature of the documents they consume and are a reflection of the media world they inhabit.

Recruitment was managed through a number of processes. Reading group participants were generated in a number of ways. Bookshops who host reading groups, or who supply reading groups with books, were contacted. When a new reading group was contacted, a process of snowballing was used to recruit further members of that group. Most participants were recruited through this process. Of the three case studies where recruitment of participants for interview was essential, people who use eReaders, Kindles etc, were frequently approached in public, and proved to be the most straight-forward to recruit.

The interview schedule was created to enable open questions to allow each participant to report their responses to reading a text. Questions focused on the experiences of reading as a cherished memory or idealised experience. The participants were asked to remember specific instances where reading a book had resulting in the reader losing track of time, or experiencing the text passing significantly quickly. Similarly, participants were asked to describe how they experienced reading physically, and how else the text might be experienced, through visualisations or by hearing characters. As the participants were recruited in part due to the frequency of their reading practice, this was reflected in the interview schedule, with issues of book selection and post reading use discussed within each case study. A time limit was agreed with each participant, though this was frequently exceeded, and each interviewee was asked to participate in secondary interviewing if required.

The use of portable digital document, primarily but not exclusive in the form of portable document format (PDF) files proved to be a challenge which required a

redrawing of the methods adopted for the participant-led chapters. In place of the contributions used in earlier chapters, a specific artistic example has provided the source material to allow for the experience of the digital object to be examined.

This is provided by an interview and examination of the work of Jane Fox and Irene Mensah, whose installation projects created in 2011 and 2012, called 'Muttar Matter' explored the affective relationships maintained for the artists through books inherited from their grandmothers, and later, through the use of a text, which resulted in the use of a PDF version of a book otherwise unavailable. This material explores the dynamic effects that the use of this PDF copy had on the working practices and relationship of the artists, and this forms the basis for chapter six.

Participant Observation

In addition to interviews, I used participant observation in the case study of people who use the website Bookcrossing.com (chapter five). This provided further challenges, which required a different approach to the research process. As a member of the community for a number of years prior to this research project, and having attended the first two national conventions in the UK, I felt that the process of investigation could not rely on interview material alone. Any interview would lose the contextual basis of many of the interactions between participants, and would lead to the case dwelling too greatly on the reading practices of the members. While these practices are central to the participant's activities as members of Bookcrossing, there is a game which lies at the heart of the community and its activities. This provides significant opportunity to understand how this community of readers have modulated their relationship to books and texts (Pink, 2009). In the Bookcrossing game the experience of the text is far more significant than the actual book itself, and the practices of reviewing books and releasing texts modify the cultural capital usually associated with the ownership and retention of a book once it has been read. Bookcrossing members maintain a virtual bookshelf documenting books they have read and released, and this practice exposes how the book as a cultural object can be considered a transient gift, rather than as a significant purchase, for this group of readers.

Concerned that the presence of an audio recorder and microphone would stimulate a sensitivity to the self-consciousness of the participants present (Forsey, 2010, Pink 2009), which might inhibit contributions and limit the usefulness of the

material collected during meetings, the collection of research material was restricted to notes and photographs. The interviews with members of the bookcrossing communities were carried out separately, and were similarly documented with written notes only.

The principle site for observation was the annual UK UnConvention, which was supplemented by occasional interviews with other community members, who were met either at regular meet-ups which provide the social interaction for most Bookcrossing members, or in interviews which were arranged via the website. My Bookcrossing profile (http://www.bookcrossing.com/mybookshelf/ruse1966/) was updated to publicise the research project, and included information of the ethical practices maintained in the use of the material collected. Finally, all Bookcrossing specific interviews were carried out with handwritten notes being taken, rather than the interview being separately recorded. This decision was taken early on to enable a similar process to be followed in analysing the interview material generated. The conversations that form the interactions at conventions and meet ups, while unstructured and largely transient and passing in nature, provided a rich source of material for understanding the discourse of reading apparent through a wide cross-section of the community, which included members from Australia, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Norway, Sweden as well as the UK. All interviews and social interactions took place in English. The decision to avoid recording equipment enabled a more informal equitable structure to be maintained throughout the interview conversations, but in hindsight, the use of a recorder for longer interviews away from the convention and meetings would have been preferable to the written procedure followed, as this proved cumbersome when it came to sharing material with the participants who contributed.

Theorising the Interview Schedule

As I detailed earlier, Wolfgang Iser argues that the practice of reading is developed with four poles of gameplay, which provides here the structure for the interview process. The interview schedule looks to explore how or when a reader establishes the ownership of the text, and whether they are conscious of the different stages of acquisition. The cognitive interaction generated in the text is the component that the reader seeks to establish. The details which directly address the storyworld appear to be secondary, and can be the focus of secondary reading, as with a number of the participants included below, but are irrelevant to the reader on the 'first pass'. Common traits of the reading experience can be expected to be shared across a reading community, with shared experiences and discourse. It is this shared cultural discourse that provides a route to understanding how the practices of reading might be modified by the adoption of a digital material text.

As discussed by Iser and others, a reader takes on a state whereby their own demeanour and spatial considerations are compromised and their awareness is muted. This might be manifest to the reader in a number of differing ways, depending on their personal willingness to subjugate themselves to the characters and narrative initiatives of the author and their text. However, within a frame identifiable within the elements of gameplay discussed above, different states or instances of distraction can be identified and examined:

- ◦ Loss of spatial awareness,
- ◦ Loss of temporal awareness,
- ◦ Reaction to the negations or developments of plot,
- ◦ Reaction to the emotional landscape of a text,
- ◦ Responses to the subsequent reading of a text in either its original or mediated form, such as in the form of a film.

Further, separate traits of the text as an object, whether this is in the form of a book as a codex form object, or in the digital material form of an eBook/eReader assemblage grant the opportunity to understand how the material nature of the text might further modify the practices of reading. In this area, the interview schedule discussed the following topics:

- ◦ Choice of reading material,
- ◦ The pleasures of acquiring a text,

- Gift giving, which generally included a discussion on the role of giving advice to other readers on texts they might enjoy,
- Retention and display of the book,

Finally, the consideration of the book as a media object was discussed, with the consideration of how and where reading was considered appropriate, and at which times of in a day a reader might prefer to read. How this occurred to the reader is important, as the practice of reading as a distraction for a regular but passive journey, such as commuting or television-assisted child-minding, seemed to attain the status of ritual in some cases. In this way, each of the participants has, I hope, been given a full opportunity to discuss their pleasure and experiences of reading as a mode of entertainment. The semi-structured interviews which resulted from this processes varied in success and material generated, with some interviews lasting several hours while others lasted something more like 40 minutes. Later interviews were shorter in duration, better focused and with fewer interruptions from the researcher, with the interviewee given full reign over the conversation. The heightened level of concentration enabled each interviewee to remain in their thoughts, and resulted in far deeper, more engrossing material.

Demographics of the participants

The cohort of contributors were recruited with specific personal interests in mind. The intention was to access as wide a selection of experience, and gain access to a br oad demographic mix, through a practice of snowballing interest from one participant to the next. This approach proved to be limited in recruiting dissimilar participants, and resulted in a bias of gender and age.

The demographic range of people who contributed as members of reading groups were spread from 26 to 53 yrs, with eleven of the twelve participants interviewed female. The sole male participant of this case study offered insights in his reading practices, which reflected his participation within different social reading settings and for professional demands. However, as the only male participant within this case study, no inferences could be supported in relation to gender. This approach was followed in all subsequent research, with the interview schedule focused on the contemplation of the reading experience, rather than social setting which might reflect the gender or sexuality of the participants involved.

The demographical range of subsequent cases proved to be similarly skewed, though with different levels of participation. People who have adopted eReaders are represented by a cohort which is 80% female, with an overall age span of 24 to 68 years. The cohort of people who use Bookcrossing is more balanced, with a higher level of participation by men present at BCUK conventions, and active in the London meet- up. The age range present within this cohort is narrower, with a span between 35 - 55 years, for those members who contributed longer interviews.

Fidelity and Accountability in the Research Process

The responsibilities for the researcher to resist a conventional normative generalisation, while still retaining fidelity to data collected and to the researcher's interpretation of that data has been a source of controversy and disagreement (Cunliffe, 2010, Gobo, 2008, Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). The need to develop conceptual understanding from the diverse and complex data collated here required that participants were provided with the opportunity to review their contributions, allowing the correction of transcription errors and facilitating the completion of partially formed response to the interview. This process of participant validation enabled the confirmation of meaning to be established, allowing the process of analysis to be assisted by being undertaken against a backdrop of the participants contribution being assess and corroborated before any comparison was made to the further contributions of others. It is the intention that the findings included and examined here are representative of both the participants themselves and of the nature of the experiences they explore. The process of readings, if considered as a negotiated gameplay between four conception models of hermeneutic and cognitive experience, where the specific interactions made in response to any text are impossible to accurately reproduce, can only rightfully be explored by data treated with similar regard and open to the potential for reinterpretation and understanding.

Analysis

The process of interpreting this research interview material seeks to understand the underlying framework of interpretations and relationships, which determine the responses and interactions a reader enjoys, with the books they choose to read. These include responses to the text and the embodied/phenomenological components of the process of reading. As reflected in the wide and varied nature of the theory reviewed later, the nature of the relationship between reader and text, and reader and book, is complex and personal. The structural relation between the significance of the book as an object (Thoburn, 2010), the nature of text as an object of technology (Derrida, 1989), construction of the diegetic object of the text through reading (Iser, 1984), and its interpretation, hermeneutic and cognitive by turns (Ricoeur, 1991, Zunshine, 2010), demands a creative commitment, beyond that required in the consumption of most other forms of abstracted media. The process, described widely as immersive, was compared by Maurice Blanchot as one akin to swimming, with the whole body saturated with a fatigue like 'staying too long in the salt water' (1973, p9). Reading demands the reader's attention in a near-complete fashion, while remaining possible within an everyday environment. For such a common, yet particular, mode of consumption, it seems appropriate to assume that a similar discourse will be consistent within and between communities of reader, as well as being apparent within society. If there are any modulations in the practices of reading triggered in response to the adoption of electronic texts, this will be reflected in the conversational discourse captured within this research project.

Each area of investigation chosen here indirectly approaches what the book and/or text signify for the reader. This significance is the determining factor in whether a reader is prepared to provide the labour required in the consumption of the book. Once the reader has started to consume the text, will the ludic aspects of reading (Iser, 1993) be sufficiently stimulating to coax the reader into completing the text, or will some aspect of the text or its general significance, provide too great a distraction from the reader's construction of the textual object to allow the reader to remain enchanted, fully absorbed with the fascination of their textual co-creation? Will the mode of engagement, i.e., reading assemblage used, enhance or detract from this source of fascination? Will the type of technology used to encapsulate and present the text have any effect on the role of the book as a transient object (Winnicott, 1971)?

Where the authenticity of the text is threatened by the removal of the material object that uniquely points towards that text (i.e. printed book), will the nature of the textual experience be sufficiently distracting to overcome the displacement of the previous assemblage? The exchange of the regime of signs that represent 'the book' with a new regime which acts as a cultural placeholder for the experience of reading, would be expected to be reflected in the significance attached to the book by the reader. Taking a lead from Roger Silverstone (1994), the practice of reading is viewed as a media consumption practice, where the reader uses a text as a transitional object, filling the space of between subject and absent material affection (Winnicott, 1980). This is an argument recently utilised by Stiegler (2013), where the role of transitional object is identified as the key role now fulfilled by technology, primarily in the form of consumer media electronics. By extending the concepts of play enabled by 'Différance' enabled by the absence (or denial) of any transcendent signified explored by Derrida in the specific technology of writing, applying these to the wider frame of technology generally, Stiegler demonstrates how technology has become a modern universal transitional object. For each case study, different selection criteria apply to the role fulfilled by the book, with relation to both the personal reading experience and the social role performed by the book as an object.

The material generated, either recorded and transcribed from interviews, or collated from conversations and observed in social interactions which took place at Bookcrossing social events, were analysed textually for content, using a process of interpretation influenced by the techniques of critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2010, Fairclough, 2012). Usually focused on relations of power and resultant inequalities, the practice of CDA enables language to be examined with the intention of exposing active and passive roles assumed by the speaker. Common discourse is shared across communities within the everyday processes of communication. This process leads to common understanding, with collectively agreed structures of language offering insight into the shared definition of the roles assumed by the objects discussed. In this case there were commonly held meanings attached to the book, eReader and text experienced. Power is explored in a personal manner with the management of the ownership or use of the book significant in exposing the participant's relationship to the various types of potential capital embodied in the text and book. How participants of the case studies explain their experiences of reading, and their responses to the culture of book and literature in a wider cultural sense, can be analysed, and will demonstrate how the relationship to

the text has been modified by the adoption of different technologies of the book. Participants who engage socially with communities of other readers feature prominently, with the expectation that the practice of discussing literature will facilitate the discussions required for their contribution to be engaged and useful.

The names of participants have been changed to protect their anonymity, and a copy of the transcription has been shared to allow the participant to retain editorial control over their contribution. In a number of cases, they have been kind enough to proofread and correct my erroneous transcribing. The control list of names and the transcribed interview material they contributed have been carefully controlled, with all copies retained in an encrypted form. All participants were offered a copy of the conditions of control agreed with the ethical review of the University of Sussex, and these conditions are available on both my Bookcrossing profile, and on a website used to share information about this research project.

While being led by the contributions of the participants, the research project seeks to explore the nature of any changes have been experienced by the reader due to the transitional nature of the text's relationship to the eReader. The Reading Group case study is populated with readers who have largely continued to read from a paper-based book. This case study is intended to provide access to readers who read books where there is a one to one relationship between book and text. This group was limited to people who describe themselves as 'avid readers', who would read at least one book per week and would prefer to read over any other media-based distraction. By this I mean that they will read at least two books per week for pleasure in the normal course of events, and the activity of reading is generally their favourite media practice.

The case study of people who have adopted an eReader for leisure reading offers an opportunity to explore the experience of readers, for whom the eReader provides access to multiple books, or a one-to-many-relationship. A process of semi-structured interviews enabled the collection and analysis of the participant's descriptions of reading, collating material of both the phenomenological experience of reading and the affective experiences which relate to the material object of reading, including choice of reading material. Finally any embodied experiences associated with an idealised experience of reading, which allowed for the consideration of the experiences of distraction, both temporally and spatially, that might be associated by the reader to the practice of reading.

The case study for Bookcrossing.com enables the analysis of a discourse for readers for whom the book has multiple uses. For this community, once the book has been read and crucially reviewed, the book becomes a token for a reading treasure hunt. Here the book, with a potential multitude of readers, and reviews shared, becomes a different type of book to that read and retained by the reader.

Finally, the use of a portable document format book to replace the original paper form version is explored through the work of Jane Fox, who, working in partnership with Irene Mensah, developed a multimedia work called *Muttar Matter* (2011-2012). Here, the work of Fox and Mensah directly addresses the issues of the continuity of experience between the paper book and the digital form object.

Approach

This thesis places the responses of the reader at the centre of its investigation into the potential impact of the material nature of the book. Therefore, it is pertinent to consider any model of reading which similarly focuses attention on the response of the reader to the text. An intense academic debate over the aesthetics of the text undertaken during the 1970s and 1980s saw the development of reader response theory, where the aesthetic demands of the object of the text are open for a process of ludic construction by the reader. Wolfgang Iser developed a comprehensive theory of reading, encapsulating game theory and aesthetic response to the diegetic object of the text. While influenced by phenomenology and structuralism, Iser offers a model that incorporates the influences of hermeneutic and psychological research, to enable the development of a model for reading as a creative act. Reading is active by and for the reader, where the influence of the author, while acknowledged, is contained within a dance that demands constant micro adjustments to incorporate any shifts apparent in a text into a storyworld manifested by the reader, as the reader seeks to fulfil their desire for cognitive expression (1980, 1993). While the walled garden of Iser's reader might be problematic in a connected world where authors are actively engaged with their audience, his willingness to engage with complex modes of literature, including the experience for the reader of philosophical texts, does lend itself to the potential for the model to considered to be a generic or universal model for the act of reading. This model seeks to clarify how a process of ludic exchange between reader and text provides the cognitive stimulation to enable the reader to support a storyworld for the text.

How reading, as a function of language, is experienced by the reader has separately become the object of study for other neurological reasons. The universal nature of language has supported theories of grammar, and linguistics which in part were responsible for the adoption of structuralism. Elsewhere the universality of these processes have led to theories of evolutional psychology, and the development of theories which seek to enable an understanding of conditions that might inhibit both the development of, or curtail the use, of language. This research has, in turn, been adopted elsewhere to enable the development and support of models of study that attempt to incorporate both cultural and cognitive aspects of the experience of language (Perfetti and Tan, 2013).

The approach to understanding the process of reading, along with the material and social aspect of readership shared by the participants here will use a combination of approaches which I contend provide for the potentially conflicting play of force and form apparent within the assemblage of book and eBook under consideration. The development of technological mediation has called for the development of theoretical frameworks which utilise multiple concepts and approaches (Eede, 2011) to provide insights into a process which is itself complex and incorporates several different cognitive and social practices. This thesis attempts to capture the experience of reading from the perception of the reader.

Reading is composed as a ludic game structure with a combination of two interjecting and counter-intuitive games iteratively distracting and revealing themselves to the reader (Iser, 1980, 1993). Each of these stages draws upon a different potential or characteristic found within language, in the form of writing. Individually, they may form an intellectual stimulus that describes the ability for language to communicate effectively between humans, while in combination, these attributes have enabled the reader to discover the infinitely limitless experience of the diegetic object.

Crucial to the processes of reading explored by Iser is a four sided ludic structure described in *The Fictive and the Imaginary* (1993).

Reading as communication consumption

Wolfgang Iser, over a period of three decades, developed a theory of reading and of the imaginary constructs it demands, that while attacked in some quarters and considered conservative in others, has contributed greatly to the understanding of the processes of reading (Thomas, 2000). Formed within the tradition of hermeneutical and phenomenological reflection on aesthetics, Iser examines a number of works by key English-speaking authors, constructing a complex model, which describes a four-sided interplay of the mental attitudes and processes which are demanded by and activated within the process, or act, of reading. His work, using a canon of English language classic texts to illustrate the processes he identifies as active for the reader, takes its lead from the work of Hans Robert Jauss, and incorporates the work of Gadamer, Gombrich and Merleau-Ponty. The primary concern here is to explain how aesthetic experience generates reader's experience of "something new", separate and

original, while influenced by and understood through experience, and what faculties of the mind might be demanded to fulfil this task (Thomas, 2000).

Drawing inspiration from the four game strategies identified by Roger Caillois (1958/2001), Iser identifies four corresponding textual strategies. These allow the reader to organise a sense of perspective within the storyworld of the diegetic object as manifest by the imagination of the reader. Perspective within the storyworld of the text is mirrored by references to the world external to the text, enabling the reader to establish a sense of perspective relative to the storyworld of the text. Thus the reader is able to negotiate meaning pragmatically through selection, rather than under any repression of understanding enforced through the absence of sign, or related semantic structure (Iser 1993).

As noted by Theisen (2000), the models for reading, detailed in both *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic response* (1980) and *The Fictive and The Imaginary: Literary Anthropology* (1993) should be read together, each providing an insight into the structure of Iser's four sided relation (Theisen, 2000). The roles identified by Iser for the imaginary and the fictive universe of the text this grants access to, are essential to, and impossible, without the external activation provided by the code and semantic elements supplied by text. Play, as a product of the activation of the reader, and conditional for any productive engagement with the text, holds a central role for the reader, in both the constitution of the storyworld-making facilities of the text, and of the cognitive involvement of the reader. Initially outlined in *The Act of Reading*, it becomes plain that the experiential phenomena documented in the first book are essentially exploring the same paradigm of activities detailed within *The Fictive and The Imaginary*.

The four adopted attitudes that describe reading are: semantisation, gaining experience, the activation of faculties, and the 'pleasure of the text'. Each corresponds with, but in turn reformulates, an activity of play identified by Caillois (agôn, alea, mimicry and ilinx). These ludic processes detail the to-and-fro nature of the pattern of play supported, to a greater or lesser extent, by any text, whereby the 'real' and 'non-real' experiences of play are more or less dominant in turn. To explain further, I will take each in turn (Iser, 1993, p260 - 262).

'Semantisation' is the initial reader response, where the text is grasped as text and the reader superimposes their own code of understanding on its contents, referencing external experience, in an effort to control the text and make sense of it. Here, the reader learns the rules of the text and the structures that organise the text, seeking to

expose its limitations. Iser draws parallels with the communication theories of Niklas Luhmann (1984), whereby meaning is discovered through a process of selection, with the reader constructing a model of the 'reality', or storyworld of the text, from a repertoire of available referenced experiences, with any rejected, negative or non-dominant possibilities being retained as part of a continuous-contingency retained within the system of the text.

Throughout the reader continues to 'Gaining experience of the text', enhancing their understanding as they continue to read. As this knowledge develops, rules and norms become established within the text. The reader is further able to anticipate the storyworld, which is inherently contingent and unforeseeable; such is the sequential nature of the text as it is read. Semantic positions implode with the consumption of the text, where each literary facility (narrative, character, plot, etc.) may surprise and extend the understanding of the reader, emphasising the playful nature of the experience it provides.

The 'activation of faculties' relates to the reader engaging with the textual storyworld as if it were 'reality'. The power of the text to establish and maintain perspective within both its internal storyworld and externally to the world as experienced by the reader of the text, such that the mimicry this demands masks the perceptions of the reader, thus enables the storyworld of the text to become as-real. This is essential for any sense of aesthetic validity to be present for the reader, and demands an affective emotional response in the reader.

The 'Pleasure of the Text', as the final exploit of the text for the reader, is produced in part by the re-emergence of the process of play, and the resulting acknowledgement of this state by the reader. Described variously as 'vertigo' or 'disorientation', this reveal of the text as play, both enables the experience of the reader, and further establishes for the reader access to new experience, free of existing code or norm. Through these iterative interactions between a reader and a text being read, a reader superimposes on a text their own understanding of what represents 'the normal', through their own experiences or where these are insufficient to bridge the gap, their own imaginary response to the challenges found on the storyworld of the text. Where the semantic text undermines or negates the expectations formed through the reader's active construction of the storyworld, the disruption undermines the processes through which the reader creates this storyworld, forcing the reader to be aware of their own curious references. Iser associates this sensation with the game

strategy of Ilinx, a game structure that disrupts the stability of perceptions, subverting determinate textual positions, and undermining the flow of the textual experience.

Iser fuses a constructivist process of reading to a deconstruction of language, whereby the semantic linguistic model, while active and determinate in the early process of interpretation, is supplemented by an active engagement and manifestation of a textual object in the form of the storyworld it promotes (Theisen, 2000). The form of this is indeterminate in the text, exposed as it is through the chance interaction between textual triggers and reader perception, forging a world resilient and contingent, dynamic and transformed within a textual structure, where hierarchy and serial perspectives oscillate through a series of paradoxical interactions.

The role of play in reading cannot be overstated. This paradigm of rule-governed, open-ended play, releases the text from the constraints of structure, while still acknowledging that constraints exist and are negotiated. The reader is essential to this culture-forming process (Armstrong, 2000).

The component of any reading experience identified by Iser, and potentially the easiest to assess and discuss away from literature, is the mental images associated by the reader with a text as they read. These are not images directly controlled or contributed by the author, nor are they stimulated by the visual sense, but are triggered by codes found by the reader in a text, which form a complex reality, such that the traditional distinction between subject and object disappears (Iser, 1980). How these images are identified and manifest in the imagination of the reader is an act that is subconscious and subliminal. Iser coins the term 'ideate', as a close translation of 'vorstellen', the german verb meaning to evoke the presence of something which is not given. Elsewhere, 'vorstellen' has been translated as 'conception' or representation (Lovitt in Heidegger, 1977, p4). For the reader, this activity is essential for an understanding of the characters, their motivations and actions, within the confines of a fiction (Thomas, 2000).

The mental imagery contributed by the text is synthesised in an indeterminate manner with the absence of the object enabling an open and playful construction of the character or scene being evoked by the text. In situations where the reader has visited a location or knows the town in which a story is based, they might take a pleasure from situating the narrative within the storyworld they have experienced, with the memory of the geographical area triggered from the description provided by the author. This bears direct comparison to the experience of watching a film version of a previously read novel, where the images offered of the characters of the text might, as

observed by Iser, disappoint, with the characters on screen failing to live up to the earlier ideated storyworld of the text.

 This process of ideation renders an aesthetic object, which is subject to frequent review and reassessment, with each subsequent piece of information as to the nature or circumstance of a text being assimilated into the imagined whole. This imagined version of the reality of the text is personal, it is the reader's and theirs alone, residing within their presence and them in it (Iser, 1980, p140).

Within the semantic interpretation of the diegetic object, the reader must determine both the meaning of the text and the significance of that meaning, with relation to the object and themselves. This hermeneutic arc of interpretation is progressively maintained, with two phases or poles of understanding: first, the reader must identify meaning in the textual object, then and only then, can the reader discover significance in the text (1980, p151).

Here drawing on an essay by Georges Poulet, Iser argues that the process of capturing the thoughts of an alien subject, through the actions of ones substantive consciousness, with objects appearing to 'rise up from the depths of consciousness' (Poulet, 1970, p57). This activity demands that the reader denies the subject-object divisions usually apparent as the reader takes on the thoughts of the author in the action of manifesting the storyworld of the text. This process rendered in thoughts described by Iser as the 'foreground' with the reader's own concerns and disposition moving to a background, thus acting as the perspective for the subject of the text, or, as Iser identifies, creating a system which entails the subject and self (Iser, 1980, p155).

The process of reading is a realisation of the text. Elsewhere, Paul Ricoeur compares this process to the performance of a musical score, a description where the techniques of language itself is laid bare for inspection. Ricoeur describes this "enactment of the semantic possibilities of the text" (1991b, p119) as the final feature of the text, most important as it is a condition of both the process of self interpretation for the reader, and a process of overcoming of any cultural distance between reader and author. It is with this step that Ricoeur sets in place the 'hermeneutic arc' and with it, his conception of reading, where as the text is 'actualised' in the world of the reader, and as audience for the text the reader becomes subject to it. The text "becomes like speech" in that the discourse of the text is realised in interpretation, a process that bestows a semantic dimension to the text (1991b, p119).

As a stage in the interpretation of text, Ricoeur views the process of structural analysis, as detailed by Levi Strauss, as an essential stage between a surface and a deeper interpretation of any text. This analysis reintegrates the practice of radical questioning into the reader's assessment, in taking account for the deeply held doubts about human existence, typically given form in the narrative of myth: "[T]o interpret is to follow the path of thought opened up by the text" (1991b, p122).

This process of interpretation is dynamic, as it mediates through several layers within the same text being read. The text provides the object for interpretation, with the semantic structure of the text disclosed through analysis with the sign, and the interpretants, as there are many, functioning as a "chain of interpretations" (1991b, p124) dynamically in the text in the process of being read. Appropriation is postponed until this hermeneutic arc is completed, providing the path to return to the lived experience. "[R]eading is the concrete act in which the destiny of the text is fulfilled" (1991b, p124), discovering and restating the meaning of the text being read.

The book as a transitional object

The experience of the assemblage of the book, along with the experience of any culturally acknowledged object, maintains the potential for significance at some level. Regardless of whether personal/singularly peculiar or communally significant, an object may and must attain cultural resonance and attain the role of signifier, as acknowledged by Winnicott in his work on transient space and the use of an object to fill the void left by the absent mother figure (Winnicott, 1980). Technology and media specifically have been identified as significant objects used to enable the distraction of the mind from the absence of immediate sustenance in this way (Silverstone, 1994, Stiegler, 2013). That the book would fall into this category of object is probably too obvious to dwell upon here, but will be returned to in later chapters. The textual machine grants access to the experience of reading, and to date, access to this has been granted to the reader through their experience of the book.

If the experience of reading has changed in the descriptive discourse of the participants who have contributed here, then this change can be attributed to the modification to the reading experience, and to the language experience contributed by the adoption of a new reading technology. Similarly, if the experience of reading a text is a negotiation of the impossibility of reading, the person, for whom books have been a source of solace and distraction, is actively engaged with the secret of the book as

an object. How they describe this object, through their experience of its use and personal value of the texts they contain is germane to the experience of reading as a mainstream cultural experience.

That the cultural object of the book is structurally informed by its materiality is probably too obvious to labour to any constructive degree. However, the reader of any 'book encapsulated text' must be positioned, and this experience is in part given by their embodied response to an act of reading. This includes cultural memory of, and response to, the book/text read and potentially reread over time. The presence/absence structurally given by the nature of language itself offers a metaphorical response to the act of reading for the reader. The significance of the book for the reader, indicates a relationship to the book as an object, which distributes stored knowledge (learning). It represents the act of reading, in signifying the memory of the text previously read, and offers access to the storyworld of the text which was known but is now forgotten. The ownership of the text indicates knowledge, and access to this knowledge as a personal asset, is a statement of ones capabilities as well as taste, all of which is indicative of being part of a cultural epoch that has lasted all of the common era (Certeau, 1984, Manguel, 1997, 2010). Does the development of a digital alternative to the printed book represent the end of an epoch? The book as a printed object has frequently been described as approaching extinction in a manner more usually reserved for natural phenomena, as if the book is itself an object of nature, given to culture by an act of god. It is not of course, but the nature of the role performed by the book is such that it has formed a key component for the material of history, as signified by the institutional relationships to the Book as an object to be curated and controlled, and for the individual, where this cultural relationship states as much about the personal as the economic (Darnton 1982).

Language is incorporeal, not materially constituted, signs are based on difference from other parts of the system of significance, and their referential nature, rather than on any positive element which can account for the difference between signs, regardless of whether they are spoken or written (Derrida, 1998). The diegetic object of the text, or storyworld, made manifest by a reader conducted by an author's text, is composed with relation to the significance structurally present within the text as read, and in response to the reader's own cognitive responses, stimulated in response to the content read. This is an aesthetic pursuit, in that the reader constructs or manifests the textual object, world of the text, minds of those characters who people the narrative environment, and maintains attribution of ideas and actions to the cast as presented.

Physical aspects of the storyworld pale into insignificance besides the choice and intention of the characters of the plot, with the text providing access to the game this imaginative play of creation offers.

Ways of (Story)worldmaking

There is a distinction to be explored in the distance between the virtual and the transcendent, or to quote Nelson Goodman: 'how can versions of nothing [...] participate in the making of actual worlds' (Goodman, 1978, p103)?

The world of the 'virtual' text is one sustained computationally, distributed as communication within a network of peer to peer hosts, be they desktop computer, iPhone or dumb display objects such as the typical eReader. However, a text distributed digitally in this way does have a material presence (Hayles, 2005). While this is limited to the data stored on a hard drive platter or random access chip, the nature of digital materiality is tangibly real, with the virtual aspect of this type of digital object rendered or produced by the computational systems that support the data being made real for inspection. However, the storyworld created through reading the virtual text as presented enables the reader to manifest the transcendent, creating a world neurologically 'real', such that sensory perception is fulfilled and perception, as demanded for the media consumed, is complete.

With respect to the use of the term virtual, while the library of an eReader is virtual in that the text it supports can be rendered in numerous places and ways, the text it supports develops story worlds which are narrative in a fashion contiguous to those worlds experienced by the reader of text before the virtual became synonymous with the computer and its ability to conjure from code a world of infinite dimension.

The process of world manifestation carried out by the reader of a text is not genre specific or biased to poetics of literature over philosophy or technical documentation. The role of metaphorical truth and the storyworlds its interpretation manifests for the reader are not the realm of art alone, but might be considered actual worlds, in fiction and non-fiction alike (Goodman, 1978).

The diegetic object of the text (Ryan, 2009), is here used to describe the elements of the text which evoke the narrative of the text for the reader (Herman, 2009) using the phrase 'storyworld' for the object. The practice of reading is part of a media landscape, where each media type utilises different components to evoke a storyworld on the reader/viewer/player. The realisation that media types rely on different ludic

practices to enable consumption, such that the labour required to maintain the storyworld demanded by the text becomes inconsequential. Here, reading is considered a cognitive ludic practice, which engages with the mind of the person enjoying the mediation of the storyworld, regardless of the genre or fictive nature of the text read.

The elements of play, identified by Iser, are essential for the manifestation of the diegetic object of language. This has been tangentially discussed by Jacques Derrida, particularly through an early series of publications, which related to the distinctions he finds between speech and written language (1982, 2001). Here, we will focus on the two major components of deconstruction that Iser considers directly effects the experience of the reader, with a view to understanding how these features of language collaborate to support how any text is maybe infinitely understood. These two concepts to be considered here are 'Différance' and the 'Supplement'.

Derrida

Jacques Derrida offers a detailed and complex model of language within his close reading of the schools of Phenomenology and Structuralism. The relevance of the sign as a quantum component for any social science, as explored in *Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences* (Derrida, 2001) has informed his understanding of both the nature of language and textual objects of culture. The rejection of a transcendental signified removes the ability for the significance of language to ever be resolved. The signifier present within the structural quanta of the sign becomes an object impossible to separate from the signified whose presence elsewhere it indicates. Its significance is only available within the context it is currently being observed within. The 'possibility' of a text for a reader is the presence of the textual object and its aesthetic experience this indicated to the reader. While the reader's own previous experience of reading are likely to be situated in relation to the technical mediation that granted access to the text (print, eBook or otherwise), it is only within the hermeneutic experience itself that the text becomes an object available and present for the reader. How this regime of signs is manifest within the emerging technological paradigm where the presence of the text is complicated by the presence of all texts and the rejection of the specific pragmatic text of a book threatens the existing resolution is central to the material of interest here.

Elsewhere, in '*Signature Event Context*' (Derrida, 1982), Derrida explores why the removal of the transcendental signified implies that the notion of the 'Real' must be considered to be dependent on the context in which it is observed. Language, as marshalled by an author, and described by Derrida, becomes potentially eternal, code, offering the reader experiential access to ideas: 'To write is to produce a mark that will constitute a sort of machine which is productive in turn, and which my future disappearance will not, in principle, hinder in its functioning' (Derrida, 1982, p316). Writing is a machine, and our operation of it here, our reading, facilitating further machinic activity, is similar in context and actuality to that found in *1000 Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari, 2008). Writing and their object of distribution are provided in separate machinic strata, one reterritorializing the other, ensuring that the written words are available for the commodification of the text as an object of copyright, accruing rents accordingly.

Derrida extends his purview from language to culture with the removal of the transcendental signifier. 'I shall even extend this law to all "experience" in general if it is conceded that there is no experience consisting of pure presence but only of chains of differential marks' (Derrida, 1982, p318). Life, the daily requirements for survival, become the consumer choices attached to a lifestyle, leading to the potent mix of ideology and significance explored by Stiegler (2013). For now we will look to explore the impact of the chains of absent signs Derrida identifies with Différance and Supplement.

Différance

Iser identifies that the deferred nature of meaning structurally apparent in written language is essential to provide the reader with the play essential to enable the manifestation of the Storyworld of the text (1980). In stark contrast to the semantic nature of meaning found in reading by Ricoeur, Derrida identifies the authority given to the structural elements as a paradoxical aspect of the written word. The ability of a text to provide the reader with the opportunity to appreciate the content it mediates is unconstrained by any accommodating factors. Rather, play is associated firmly with the 'disruption of presence' identified in the closing remarks of *Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences* (2001). Play provides the space within the frame of references accumulated by language, sufficient to offer definition and meaning to any text. Iser draws on Derrida in understanding that this is the basis of the

open nature of any written text. Without this open-ness, no reader would be able to gain access to the text, and without this space, there would be no opportunity for the reader to either manifest their personal response to a text through the process of reading, nor would there be sufficient information to distract and disorientate the reader sufficiently, to enable the reader to find oneself again, outside and beyond the storyworld of the text. The pleasure of the text would be denied in a very real sense.

> A certain alterity ... is definitively exempt from every process of presentation by means of which we would call upon it to show itself in person (Derrida, 1982, pp20).

The alterity identified by Derrida here is the role of the unconsciousness of language. In its ability to communicate multiple meanings, the reader is forced to select and define for themselves the intention and motivation of the author, as well as the characters within the narrative of a text, and to do so dynamically. This is described by Iser as 'Passive Synthesis' (1980, p 150), but Derrida places this feature of written language and its interpretation within a frame which is larger than simply hermeneutics. Rather, it refers to the limits of active cognition.

> "Older" than Being itself, such a Différance has no name in our language. But we "already know" that if it is unnameable, it is not provisionally so, not because our language has not yet found or received this name, or because we would have to seek it in another language, outside the finite system of our own. It is rather because there is no name for it at all, not even the name of essence or of Being, not even that of "difference," which is not a name, which is not a pure nominal unity, and unceasingly dislocates itself in a chain of differing and deferring substitutions (Derrida, 1982, p26).

In keeping with the lexicon of deconstruction, this structural interpretation of language is fundamental to humans as a species, such that the very notion of deferred meaning within our system of communication is hidden in plain sight, and similarly ill defined. Beyond language, this structural deferment of understanding is apparent in the regime of signs that is the book. The knowledge of the diegetic experience requires the labour associated with the consumption of the text, and to overcome the deferred nature of this experiential understanding, paperback cover design is significant in granting the prospective reader with some understanding of the text. This mimetic transmediation is commonly understood, and frequently frames some part of the subsequent experience of the diegetic object. The design of classic books have become icons, reprinted and sold as prints, framed and enlarged to enable a contemplative consideration of the illustration of the text.

After reading, the experience of the book is modified by the experience of the text. Here the knowledge of the text informs the assemblage, with the strata of the text as a whole perceivable by the reader. However, this is not to say that the text as a whole is available for recall. While some will be able to recount with minute detail the plot, characterisation and narrative structure of any text, others will lose details almost as soon as they have been read, such that a particularly enjoyable text will be reread immediately, so that any textual reference or particularly delightful turn of language can be captured with nothing missed. Elsewhere, the issues of memory will be discussed with relation to the spatial dimension of the physical printed book versus the plastic dynamic electronic text, as conveyed by the eReader (Chapter 4).

Supplement

A supplement, a concept Derrida introduces to the reader, through his reading of the work of Rousseau in 'On Grammatology' (1998), is an additional to an already complete whole. By this, Derrida refers to the supplement as something added to the originally complete object, making good a deficiency, or, 'a surplus' (Derrida, 1998, p140). It is beyond the whole, as an additional factor, but also with the complex or compound object. The object in question, and its status of being viewed and understood as being considered complete, is as with any textual construction, one of relative perspective. Elsewhere Derrida explains supplement a little more succinctly:

> Every conceptual breakthrough amounts to transforming, that is to say deforming, an accredited, authorised relationship between a word and a concept, between a trope and what one had every interest to consider to be an unshiftable primary sense, a proper, literal or current usage. (Derrida, 1983, cited by Royle, 2003, p 49)

The supplementary nature of written language, denied presence in offering the mediated thought of the author, exposes the reading beyond any authorial control or countenance. Indeed, this is the space which enables the development of critical discourse and understanding to develop. This practice is essential to any reader, as this enables the freedom to read a text over time and age, making relevant readings for a text which would have been impossible for the author to comprehend, generating life for old art forms, and through which a text is said to speak 'to our era'. It is in this space that a member of any reading group, indeed any person who has experienced

reading, will discuss their experience of reading itself. It is here that we will find the discourse of reading generated and shared. Royle further describes this quality:

> As the possibility of being able to produce meanings even when the writer (or speaker) is dead, 'writing' takes on an uncanny new significance: with this word, 'writing', Derrida provisionally names something that is not linguistic or discursive, even as it makes language or discourse possible (Royle, 2003, p53).

The text is open for the consumption of the reader, with sufficient space for play maintaining the trace of the text for the reader, distinguishing the text from the space beyond the text, while maintaining the connections with the text beyond. The essential nature of the exterior for language, active through the referential nature of difference exposed here, and perceived unconsciously by the reader, supports the very manifestation of the text which the text demands. The internal and external incomplete structural nature of the written word enables and facilitates the practice of reading. It is the willingness of the reader to read and manifest the diegetic object of the text, this storyworld, which enables the complete text to come alive in their imagination. Here the language of the text contrives to enable the thoughts of the author to become as-real, with environment and characters conjured from the semantic evidence offered by the text, along with the experience to the reader, with such conviction, that the reader, for a time at least, becomes unaware of the fictive nature of the world they have created.

The Gaze of the reader on the assemblage of the book and within the storyworld of the text

An influence on Iser, and indeed quoted in *The Act of Reading*, is the work of Jean Starobinski, and most particularly *The Living Eye* (1989) which contributes to both Iser's description of the experience of reading, as well as to his explanation of the process which the reader undertakes, as then observes the material object of the book. However, the cautious note Starobinski adopts with regard to the ability of literary theory to form a definitive understanding of its object of research is of particular use here. In this collection of essays published between 1961 and 1970, Starobinski considers the critical gaze and its object, and through a careful consideration of the relevant sources, determines where the limitations and self-understood conditions that, unless respected, might lead a particular critical approach to fail. While exploring the

nature of the critical gaze, Starobinski reflects on the active gaze demanded within the practice of reading, with its paradoxical relationship to the experience offered to the reader by the practise itself. Rather than allowing the reader to maintain a critical distance, the diegetic object demands contact and intimacy (Starobinski, 1989, p11).

Starobinski sketches a process based in several stages of abandon and realisation, not unlike the ludic experience identified by Iser, or the hermeneutic arc described by Ricoeur. Here, the abandon demanded by the text, or rather demanded by the pursuit of the text by the reader, is essential for the practice of reading, and is demanded by the reader themselves. This is the condition they seek to enjoy, the source of the pleasure of the text itself, and the state of enlightened distraction which drives their reliance on the book. Basing his understanding on his own experiences of reading, Starobinski similarly looks to describe the sensations of distraction experienced by the reader resulting in the emergence of a free and autonomous object of language. Here as the diegetic object takes shape, it is 'endowed with the power to add to reality' (1989, pp116-117).

Without identifying the material consistency as such, Starobinski describes a state of language, which bears comparison to the supplement, where the fictive once manifest for the reader becomes a fully formed storyworld, which appears to be self-sustaining to the reader, an object fit for discovery rather than creation. The manifestation of the storyworld such that the diegetic object becomes real and available to the reader to visit, rather than a created manifestation which, demands any labour of maintenance on the part of the reader. This friction free experience obtains an almost kinetic nature, with the free fall of the reader towards the text. The pleasures of the text passing in a rush, safe from the full effects of gravity, but fully exposed to the dangers and thrills of the diegetic experience.

A reflection on the difficulty of theoretical relations

The process of shaping the theoretical framework and approach contained here reflects the complexity of the objects involved, in the book and the language it distributes, along with the historical development of the codex book and literary industries. The combination of theoretical work used to explore the phenomena of reading, and through that experience, the potential apparent in the status of the book, might raise questions of how the potential conflicting political and philosophical stances of the various academics included can be reconciled. While I acknowledge

that there are instances where the containment of the potentially divergent concepts described here might be considered problematic, I argue that the concept of the assemblage was designed for this very circumstance (Tampio, 2009). The object of the book is a technological device of distribution, free of any attribution of the consequences of this action. The collected descriptions of the experience of its use grants access to an opportunity to explore how these are modulated through the material developments currently in transition.

The initial stimulus that demanded this attempt to find a means to suture these ideas together was found in Iser. His approach, which is prepared to reconcile difference of method and intent to enable the possibility of a new logic to emerge, has provided the guiding hand for the framework . The concept of the assemblage provides a frame sufficiently robust to contain the energy demanded by the simultaneous process of both language and cognition. That the hermeneutic process has been so widely used and keenly observed further supports my reuse of the process, which itself drifts between poles of understanding and imagination, much in the manner of the ludic drift explained by Iser. As such, I maintain that the apparent compromise and contradiction apparent in the positions of both Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (amongst others) is acceptable. The conditional nature of the use of their work should be noted, and understood to be relevant in context to the similar extensions of Derrida mounted by Stiegler, collusion of ideas by Darwin and Derrida championed by Spolsky (2005) and acquisition of process demanded by Iser himself.

While understanding that each of the concepts I attempt to incorporate here are well established and frequently seek to address concerns which appear to clash when viewed in such close too proximity to one another, this approach has been adopted here to address concerns I have about the nature of language and the consciousness it helps induce. While I have adopted a strictly limits and repetitive nomenclature with regard to the experiences inspired by text through its consumption, sticking to Storyworld to describe the place of diegetic object, for instance, the need to wed aesthetics and reader response to the poststructural objects of deleuzian, through the four sided game structure provided by Iser, thought made the act of assembling the mosaic of theoretical interpretations detailed above, to my mind at least, the only comprehensive framework which adequately represented each component of language as text when re-enacted through reading. So, while there are areas of disagreement discernible within the ranks of the theoreticians referenced above, I seek not to ignore these discontinuities, and would argue that the nature of the project

demands a flexible and contingent approach, where theory as outlined enable an understanding to the experience of reading in a fuller sense, rather than from a single, universal, or utopian model.

Structure of the thesis

The thesis explores whether these changes in reading cultures have had any significant effect on readers and their experiences of reading, and provides an exposition of key theoretical resources. A core dimension of this project is bringing empirical material from interviews and participant observation together with the rich theoretical work in critical theory on reading, knowledge formation, phenomenology and philosophy. To this end the thesis develops a critical synthesis of the work of key theorists together with the case studies.

Chapter Two: methods and approaches, explains the methodology of the field work and brings this together with the development of a theoretical platform, 'On reading'. The first part of the chapter takes a pragmatic approach and the second part builds up a platform constructed from a synthesis of key theorists.

Chapter Three: Reading Groups. In this chapter I explore reading practices as play, communication and consumption through a case study of reading groups. This group described their current experience based on a reading material of choice that is still catered for by the use of paper based books. This group was chosen for their 'ludic' habits and expertise in discussing the experience of reading and communicating with a shared understanding of how they experience any text.

Chapter Four: eReaders. This chapter explores the take up of eReaders together with ideas about printing and the materiality of the text, digital materiality and the absence of the book. It focuses on the question of how the eReader might change the reader. These ideas are explored by talking to people who had adopted and used eReaders for the majority of their reading material.

Chapter Five: Bookcrossing The community of people who use the social networking website, Bookcrossing.com, are all generally avid and ludic readers. However, their relationship to the book is modified by their use of the book as an object of the text it contains, which they share in the form of a treasure hunt game which is the goal of the community. This chapter explores the question of the object of the book in the context of a community in which this has already been reformulated

and provides a very different account of the virtualization of the book to that of eReaders.

Chapter Six: The Portable Document Format (PDF). This chapter explores the history and contemporary use of PDFs through a case study focused on two artists for whom PDFs became central to their project. In this case the loss of the page, as well as the book becomes relevant and the concept of trace and transitional object are further explored. The emergence of the portable document format in the 1990s, with its adoption as the format of choice for technical documents, archival material and as well as the format for final proof copies of books to be printed, has led to the widespread distribution of material previously unavailable due to age, commercial or security restrictions. This in turn leads to potential issues around providence and accuracy which are tested through the interpretation of the descriptions used to explain these issues by the artists involved.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion. The final chapter brings together the four case studies and the theoretical material of each chapter. It returns to the opening with Deleuze and Guattari to come back to the questions of assemblage, the body without organs of the book, the phenomenology of reading taken here. It provides a platform on which the emphasis of the thesis comes together to make a contribution to knowledge about reading and books in the transitional period between one reading economy and another.

Books are shared or 'released' in a public space and are freely available. In return for the book, the 'member of bookcrossing' asks that whoever finds the book registers their find or 'catch' on the site and reviews the book prior to re-releasing the book elsewhere. The book is said to be travelling, as it hops from reader to reader, and a member's ability to secure catches and successful releases are measured as statistics which are shared on the site. In this chapter I suggest that the ludic experience of the game supplements the experiences of the text, and replaces the traditional personal library of the collector (exemplified by Benjamin). The site offers its members a virtual bookshelf, decorated with the books released and reviews of those books, and this is augmented with the experiences of the subsequent readers of the book. Each subsequent reader updates the record of the book and adds the book to their own bookshelf. Rather than the spore-like memories of the experience of reading the book they have retained, they enjoy the pleasure of the vicarious experience of sharing a book they have enjoyed (Certeau, 1984).

The interview material, supplemented by participant observation material collected to reflect on the experiences of members of the Bookcrossing community, where I have been a member since 2005, will be subjected to content discourse analysis. The active nature of the language used to explore and describe the experiences of reading will be analysed, such that any modifications can be explored.

The next four chapters explore each case study in turn, beginning with people who are members of reading groups.

CHAPTER THREE

Reading Groups Chapter

Chapter annotation: what is reading; book as an assemblage; Aesthetics of diegetic object; Ludic practices of Reading; Storyworld; the Supplement of the text; The Gaze and the diegetic object; Negation and the Pleasure of the Text; choice and prior knowledge; social reading; the 'reality' of the storyworld.

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the experience of reading as shared by participants who are members of reading groups. This group of people were attractive as they tend to be people who read avidly, and the participants here all described their reading habits to be their preferred leisure pastime. Additionally, they have the advantage of being experienced in discussing their reading experience, with the practice of describing a text and critically engaging with a book being part of the function of a reading group. In most cases these generalisations proved to be accurate, with only a couple of taciturn participants finding the experience of sharing rather more personal than they had expected.

Reading as an act of creative consumption, as schematically explored by Iser, is explained as an act of play, where the reader is constantly creating and assessing their response to the text and the storyworld they manifest with the different coded and structural elements they find there. Should any modifications of the experience of, or access to, the diegetic object being read become apparent in a subsequent modulation of the reading act itself, this is expected to be apparent in the conversational discourse of people who read. This discourse is likely to be similar and shared within communities of people who share social practices, associated either with the practice of reading itself, or with the practices based around the object of the book itself. People who self-identify as members of each group included in this research project were invited to share their thoughts and experiences of reading, in an individual interview, which took the form of the semi-structured interview described above. The responses of these participants form the body of research for this and subsequent chapters. For ease of interpretation, the responses are clustered according to the following common areas of experience: Experiential, Socio-cultural, and Material.

The assemblage of the book, and its implication for reading

A question that has to be addressed in each of the case studies which are considered here is how does the physical object that is the book, as an object of culture, and as an object that enfolds text, form part of a regime of signs, which contributes to the nature of the future storyworld experience the text mediates?

As previously mentioned, the book is explored early on in the introduction of *A Thousand Plateaus* (2008), with Deleuze and Guattari offering this definition:

> Therefore a book also has no object. As an assemblage, a book has only itself, in connection with other assemblages and in relation to other bodies without organs. ... A book exists only through the outside and on the outside (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p4).

The materiality of the book expressed here is neutral, an object of culture, which provides the text to the reader, mediating the immaterial diegetic experience of the literary text. Elements of design, relevant to the diegetic object only where demanded by the author, have long been associated with the text. However, these mimetic interjections act only to supplement the experience of the text, with the noted exception of the use of blank space associated with both literature and poetry (Derrida, 1981, Iser, 1980, Ayers, 2003). Hayles argues that digital design has supplemented the diegetic experience of the text, and that the process is closer to the remediation found within the poetics available to more recently established digital media (Hayles, 2005, 2008). While excepting that the nature of the interface provided by any reading experience will differ, the different mode of interpretation relies upon the central component to communicate a message: language, in the form of writing.

The Experience of Reading

In each case study, the majority of participants chose not to address directly the experience of reading, but rather explained how they experienced the act through a series of descriptions and metaphors. This metaphorical language explores the opportunities of the pleasure of the text itself, either through its aesthetic appeal or lack there of, and through their own relation to the world it manifested. As these aspects of reading are difficult to recreate, each interview started with a discussion of an idealised reading experience. Exploring the experiences of specific moments of reading, each participant involved was able to discuss an exemplar text, and from

there move on to a broader discussion that related to both text and 'book' (RG denotes my contribution to the interview material throughout).

Olivia: I love it, I really love it, it's a huge part of my life. If I couldn't read anymore, that would be such a loss. And I remember when I was doing my first degree, probably for the last year of it, because that was a lot of reading to revise and to be ready for the finals and stuff, reading literature got squeezed out and I missed it so much. I couldn't wait to get back to it when I had finished my finals. That's probably the only time when I have gone an extended period of time without reading fiction. I absolutely love it. Yeah, I absolutely love it.

Chloe: My reading habit is an integral part of my lifestyle and I read every day and I probably read about two books a week.

RG: Have you always read that kind of volume?

Chloe: Yes I have done. I've been involved with, probably since I was about 17, I have probably been in a book group, because otherwise I would just read the things I am particularly interested in and, for instance the reading I am Involved with at the moment, I read lots of books I would never of picked and that's been fantastic. It's just something that I do on a daily basis. Where other people might exercise, I am always reading really. It's just the most ... it just feels quite self-indulgent. I probably am quite a high maintenance person, but it is for me, I just lose myself really. And I have done since I was a child. I had quite a chaotic upbringing and I think it was just one of those things, it's awful and cliched but I remember reading Jeanette Winterson, who was saying similar things about her childhood, and I can remember I could quite relate to it. I ... is something, I don't know, it's just something that I do I suppose. And if I was feeling slightly, if I was to have a duvet day, then I would definitely be spending it with my book, you know. I believe in exercise and fine wines, but reading... is something that I do, for myself, and honestly hours could go by. I suppose that it is probably quite antisocial, but I am very lucky that I married someone who is equally interested in lots of other things, so, its... I don't now how I would manage it if I had a family, to be honest.

Ruby: Yes, I have to read. I think I'd be quite put out if I didn't have access to something to read, I always make sure that there is something to read.

The compulsion described here is similar to the description of necessity described by Nell in his work in studying ludic reading (1984), and participants here all express a regular habit which encompasses the reading of at least one complete book per week, and in all but one case this includes reading more than one book in a normal week. The drive to read, and its personal role as a means of distraction and cultural expression is found in each research group included here, with the passion for books and reading at times appearing contiguous, part of a singular compulsion for the textual medium, regardless of the genre preferred by the reader. The manner and potential explanation for this dependence will be addressed again in further chapters, but for now it will be sufficient to note its presence and mode of discourse.

The philosophical complexity associated with the description of the phenomenological experience of reading seen above is indicative of the discourse commonly associated with the conversations found within reading groups and reported elsewhere (Hartley, 2002, Long, 2003), with the opportunity to express an opinion and give free rein to the imagination was willing accepted in a majority of cases:

Olivia: It depends what I am reading obviously, it massively depends what I am reading, but at its best its hugely absorbing, its compelling, I do really have that experience of not wanting to put a book down, finding myself picking up a book when I've only got ten minutes because I just want to be reading it all the time, I don't want to go asleep until I have finished it because I am so into the book. Or, I've nearly finished it and the train pulls into the station, and I will sit on the station and finish the book rather than go where I was going to go because I just really, really, want to know what happens. And it can almost be, when I really, really love a book, that the characters become my friends, so when I finished *The Time Travellers Wife*, I was sad to get to the end of the book because I was sad because I had fallen in love with the characters, I just loved them. And I still wanted to be part of their life.

Mia: I guess it's the stages of the escapism I guess. The getting inside someone-else's head and staying there for a period of time. So its partly escapism and its partly about the practice of empathy. Empathising with someone else's problems and set of situations and imagining how I would respond. Yes, thats kind of the central ...

RG: OK, so its very much about ... is that in relation to the characters and the plot or creation of the story?

Mia: Its partly character, but particularly reading fantasy and the weird and wonderful situations and different cultures that these people live in, and what they do in a world where there is magic or unicorns. And the kind of differences in relating to each other and all of that, that are associated with all those variables being introduced.

RG: So, do you find yourself thinking through the implications of those variables within your own space?

Mia: Yes, very much so. I find them very much, metaphors, they are not really analogies, but metaphors for problems or solutions. Politically, I find them politically, those kind of solutions helpful I guess. I mean science fiction, it's quite obvious, that politically, imaging a future world where "this and this" has happened, and these are the repercussions. It's quite obvious that there is a sort of ideological set of ideas at work, and they are fascinating to me. But it's partly, too what's fascinating is ... I am really interested in what people can imagine, and I am also interested in what they can't imagine. I will say that I find realist literature irritating, or I am less likely ... they seem so, kind of, unaware of the fact that what they are doing is world building and they are making assumptions of what the world is like and what people are like, and they do their best to make that seem like it's not a creative or whatever process where I feel that with Science Fiction, it's totally on the table, bam, I am creating a world, these are the rules, blah, which I find much more sort of, I find that honesty, whatever, much.

The descriptions of character, motivation and the implications of their associated actions exemplifies the cognitive exploration of the storyworld provided by the diegetic object of the text as read (Zunshine, 2010). While her genre of choice is different from the detective novels Zunshine uses to outline her argument, the character-centric, mind-reading behaviours of the reader are clearly in evidence. The opportunities provided by literature to practice the social skills of attributing affect and ideas to another mind are a key motivation for the pastime. Participants across each of the studies included in this research project use the discourse associated with addiction, habit and dependancy, that describes and seeks to explain their motivation and enjoyment of reading. The habit of reading is described as essential, and the denial of the pleasure of the text would be to rob life of one of its central and eternal pleasures. Mia associates her pleasure, not only with the process of composing the storyworld of the text, and in those fleeting moments of self-awareness, but also as the literature she reads to enable deeper understanding of the mind of the author and the ability for the writerly mind to construct elaborate imaginary worlds. The moments of the pleasure of the text enable these instances where the scale of the diegetic object is perceived as a feat of imagination, to be marvelled at, prior to re-commencing its diegetic consumption.

Along with the repetition of the language of addiction and habit, the practice of reading, and its cognitive pleasures associated with the meditative ludic process, can be seen as a component of 'lifestyle', with its association with individuality, personal choice and freedom in the modern age (Ziehe, 1994). Reading is still associated with the intellectual freedom first realised in the reading groups of the 1880s (Long, 2003).

Reading perceived as like a lived event

As part of an earlier response, Olivia had described the process of relaxing after completing a text as 'letting it settle', an expression I asked her to explain:

Olivia: Yeah, there's a sense of like [the story] embeds itself in my brain, as I finish processing what there is to process in that book. Sometimes I will finish a book, and in that settling period, I'll think 'what did she say to him then?' or 'how did that bit of the plot get resolved?' and then I'll go back to the book and check that. And I don't think I quite want to start another book until I finished that really... And I seem to have a very good memory for where things happen within

a book. That's not necessarily where they happen within a narrative, because a narrative can be broken up within a novel. So when I meet with my book group, quite often we will get into some discussion about 'didn't this happen or didn't that happen' and 'oah well that's interesting', or if somebody has got a different interpretation of a scene, and I can usually find the scene quite quickly ... I can find the scene and the other members of the book group are usually surprised I can do that, as it's not necessarily in the chronological order that it happens in the book. So I've got a memory of how the book was structured somehow. So, the settling period we were talking about, so I just need a bit of time, for all the questions I might have about the book have been answered before I move on. That's quite quick, but I want to be sure I have finished with that book before I start another one.

The ability to consume and retain a narrative structure for the text as history, as if this was a lived experience, is both explained and valued by Olivia. The ability to explore the diegetic object, and make reference to confirm or correct errors, is a process through which she restructures the memory of the text, and while this takes place, she is unable to commit to a new textual experience. The process of tracking characters and their emotional worlds within the storyworld of the novel have depleted her cognitive resources. This was not always the case:

Olivia: When I was younger, that wasn't true at all, I used to have maybe books into double figures on in one go. And I remember my mum commenting on it saying how odd it was, but it wasn't odd to me, it was just normality. She would laugh and say 'I don't know how you can read more than one book at once', and I would say 'Oh really?' I would have lots of books on the go at once, and I don't just really remember how I would choose which one I would pick up at that moment. But I would finish them all, it wasn't like any of them would get abandoned. But I could be in the middle of ten or twelve books all at one time. That's something about how your brain ages, that's inconceivable to me now, I would never have two fiction books on the go at once.

Along with the enjoyment of the text, there is the understanding that one's time with the storyworld is, in some terms at least, limited:

RG: Do you ever wish a book wouldn't end?

Olivia: *The Time Travellers Wife* was like that. Not often, but I like to get to the end of things, not just books, everything. I am not hung up on that completion thing, or maybe I am hung up on that completion thing, but in the opposite way to the way William Hurt['s character] means in *The Big Chill*, in that I love completion. On landmark course they often say that people will drop off an not make the last session, thats not going to happen to me, I will make it to the end of everything, thats part of my personality. And when I'm reading a book, I am constantly looking at how far through it I am, so I am almost wishing it away. That's a little bit like the list of books. You know I have this list of books that I'm reading, and I'm almost wishing it away, I want to get to the end. So mostly I want to get to the end. But if I'm absolutely loving it, I sometimes don't want it to end and *The Time Travellers Wife* was an example of that.

RG: How did you feel when that was finished?

Olivia: I mean there is a sense that you have got to the end as you have got the whole story, well as far as the book tells it, but there was also a sense of loss, I wanted to go back into it. I remember with *The Time Travellers Wife*, it was a sense that I was going to miss them, almost like my friends had moved away, because it was such a beautiful story. It's a love story, told in a very unusual way, and the love, it was lovely to be part of that love story, with two people who just love each other, and to be pulled into that, I mean how often, unless its your own love story, that's not going to happen, you're never going to be part of someone else's love story in that way, you just won't belong there. So to be allowed, to be totally intimately into the love between two people was just beautiful. It was a really lovely experience, and then that comes to an end and you're just like "oh, I want that back". Yeah, really lovely. I was going to talk about *Love* by Toni Morrison, which is possibly the only book in my life when I finished it I immediately went back and read it again. I am trying to remember why I did that. I think, as I remember, I think the main character, or my experience of it was that, and I think it was deliberate, this is my experience of it was that the, as you read it, the main character isn't in it. It's all other peoples descriptions of this character who is no longer alive, so he does feature all the

way through but you're never in his point of view and it's always people talking about him. And it was my opinion that you have one opinion of him at the beginning of the book and another opinion of him at the end. Not even that he gradually reviews but you start putting things together; so you start off and you really like him and by the end he's a nasty paedophile, incestuous, abuser but its all a bit subtle and your kind of like "Oh God!" so I think I went back to the beginning after thinking 'did I miss something at the beginning?' and before I knew it I read the whole book again straight the way through. I don't know how relevant that is to what we are talking about really but, kind of not wanting to finish it is part of that. So I definitely have that, sometimes have that sense that I don't want it to end.

Olivia: *We need to talk about Kevin* was a bit like that but you really do want it to end; there's a big twist at the end and you could feel that coming, you really want to know what happened and yet at the same time I really didn't want it to end. And yet at the same time I did want it to end as its such a distressing story. That's a world that you don't want to be in whereas with *The Time Travellers Wife* that's a world you do want to be in.

The need to allow a world to settle was common within the group, with each reader finding that they want to experience the storyworld of the text to last, with most readers here unwilling or unable to relinquish the storyworld at the point when the text is exhausted. Each of the participants expressed this sensation as one of post-consumption reflection, where questions about the text were processed, as if a dream had passed, allowing the reader to reawaken (Blanchot, 1988). That the reader might require some time to rest is not unimaginable, few people aside from a professional film critic might feel the need to see more than a couple of films back to back, but the need to process and manifest a storyworld for the diegetic text is different to the more representationally mimetic experience supported by film and television (Bassett 2007, Herman 1998, Ryan, 2006). Rest or reflection, a period of recovery before embarking on a further reading experience was considered essential and beneficial for the reading experience.

Visualisation

For both Nelson Goodman and Wolfgang Iser, the aesthetic nature of the manifest object is beyond question, with only its unconscious nature defeating the visual nature of the object. Interestingly, in each group, only a minority of readers state that they hold a strong visual model of the storyworld they create. While this is intrinsic to reader response theory, and a factor in cognitive models of reading, not all readers perceive the visual nature of the model, such that they can describe the sensation of either the model or its negation. For Olivia the reality of the storyworld is beyond question and fulfils the contention of the reality of the manifest object of the text to the reader:

RG: You described [the characters] as friends.

Olivia: Yes I do, but then if you were to say to me "What do they look like?" I'm not sure how detailed; it seems like it's really detailed, it seems like I would recognise them if they walked down the street, but then if you asked me to describe them, it gets quite hard. Mind you I probably find it quite hard to describe anybody, I don't feel I am good at describing what people look like. But that might be the only reason. I feel like Henry and Clare, the characters in *The Time Travellers Wife*, particularly Henry, rather than Clare, that I would recognise them, I know what they look like. And that is partly why I don't enjoy films of books that I've read, because they don't, the character never looks like they looked in my head.

Olivia: I care about them. I become engaged with them, so I care about what happens to them. If I haven't enjoyed a book, often I won't care about what happens to a character as I haven't engaged with it and that's why I'm not enjoying it. So either the character isn't developed enough for me to care about them, or I don't like them. And its not impossible to enjoy a book where you don't like the characters, sometimes you are intended not to like the protagonist and that can work, but if you're meant to like them but I don't or if they're just under developed, that can prevent me from liking a book, because there's not enough for me to cling on to. 'Cling on to' is probably the wrong phrase, but to engage with. So, that's how I engage with them I guess; if I come to really care

about their lives, in life and it matters, and I know what they look like, and its moving. There's something really moving about it. They can be a flawed character, in fact usually they're the best. They're not a perfect person, they've got some faults or whatever you want to call it. But that's what makes them human , so you relate to them as a human. Believable, I need to believe that that person can really exist. It's feasible that there could be a person who could behave that way, in that situation.

The engagement described by Olivia is clearly cognitive, and the expression of the pleasure of the text is associated with not the actual experience itself, but relates to the experience of the effect the diegetic object has for the reader. This is not the actual engagement itself where Olivia finds a sense of satisfaction, but her ability to relate to these characters as human. This connection is essential for the text to be considered successful, and that success is grounded in the cognitive reality the text enables for the reader. The image is apparent, and still illusive. This is common with other participants, who resist the idea that they create a vision for the diegetic object, while relying on visual metaphor and explanation for the experiences they describe.

Chloe found the characterisations vividly retained between readings:

RG: Do you see the characters at all? Do you see the place?

Chloe: Yeah, definitely. Sometimes I have the characters... this is going to sound a bit mad, sometimes I have the characters, you can live in a book, you can live with a book for a couple of days, almost that book takes part of your brain away really, for a little while. I don't now how to describe it, but you almost escape into that book for a little while, and until you finish that book, everything else is pretty much on the back burner. I can become like that. Not to say that I wouldn't be doing anything, or that I wouldn't be living or wouldn't be teaching, but you can kind of exist in that, and I know that thats escapism really. But I don't have a too awful life that I need to do that but, it is, sometimes I just get so caught up with it really.

RG: But you obviously love that experience.

Chloe: Yeah, I love it. I think its so powerful. One of the best things is you could do is to would be to write a fantastic book, but I personally am not ready to do that. I don't know if I would really want to do that, but I think it is an amazing thing to be able to do, too be able to transport somebody somewhere else. Definitely places, and characters as well. And I think its ... erm ... I work with lots of people, I do lots of work with personnel, I do lots of training, and I think often, understanding characters can be quite helpful in your sort of personal development. It can be really useful.

The sense in that the reader might inhabit the storyworld of the book is not dissimilar to the need for reality sort in characterisation that enables a text to be consider a success by a reader. The model, for the success or failure of a text here is extremely personal, being based on the pleasure of the text alone, without the demands for the critical engagement introduced by Starobinski (1989). There is a line drawn here by the participants, in that they are able and willing to offer critical assessments for the texts they read, and have practiced this process within the social structures they have created for this activity. The process of critical engagement with the text appear to be secondary to the experience of reading itself (Poulet, 1969, Starobinski, 1989).

Negation

The tendency of a literary text to undermine the predictable expectations of a reader to negate the natural expectations of the reader is essential to the generation of awareness to the act of reading separate to the process of the reader being aware of the object of the text. Iser (1980) observes that this tendency frequently observed in modern literature through the use of such devices as the inauthentic narrator, which act to unsettle and disorientate the reader, in a manner that Iser identified as instances where the author exhibits control of the third stage of the ludic reading model, undercutting a reader with the text. The re-emergence of the textual nature of the object has a tendency to jar, causing confusion or disturbing the reader. But like saying 'Boo' to a baby, this emotional response soon gives way to a sense of safety, and recognition of the power and pleasure present in reading.

RG: Would you have the same visual impression of other aspects of a text?

Olivia: Like a landscape? Yes I would, I would also have a sense that its probably wrong a lot of the time. I am currently reading *Housekeeping* (*Housekeeping* by Marilynne Robinson) which was made into a film with (Christine Lahti) and the house in *Housekeeping* is an important part of the book, its described in some detail, so I have pictures of it in my mind, but I've got this sense that I've probably got it wrong, and its slightly irritating that I haven't got a proper picture of it and I also think that actually it probably doesn't matter as long as I have some idea, actually the characters are more important. And actually, that's, I sometimes like, and I've only just noticed this during this conversation, but I sometimes like to see a film of a book that I've read because I get that question answered. "What was the landscape supposed to look like? What was the house supposed to look like? Ah, that's what that was meant to be!" Whereas with the character I'm like" NO thats all wrong!", with the house I'm like "OK, now I get what that was meant to be like!"

RG: So for aspects of "the world" or objects of the plot (meaning location, house, etc) the film is an aid?

Olivia: Well, but it's interesting isn't it, as it's probably more about my perception, the way they have made the house could be completely wrong. But because I don't trust my vision of the house, I think "Great, thanks for explaining that". Where I trust my vision of the characters, so I think "No, they weren't like that!". When I saw the film if *Bridget Jones' Diary*, which is trash literature but quite funny, it's interesting, because if you want to make it right or wrong, my image of Bridget Jones, [which] I suspect you could say was wrong actually, after having read the book, my image ... I had her as very attractive, slim, successful woman with poor self image, so that when she is worrying about her weight and everything, she is perfectly slim, but every time she puts on a pound she worries about it. And in the film they portrayed her as a bit overweight and a bit like everything falls apart around her. And actually, having seen the film, I think that is probably how she [the author] intended it. Looking back at it, I get it, but that's not how I read the book. And I think the film was rubbish anyway, and it grated on me for that reason as well. I didn't want Bridget Jones to be like that, that wasn't who she was for me. Normally it doesn't give me that perception,

normally I just think that the film is wrong. In Bridget Jones, I think the film was probably right and I'm wrong.

The diegetic/mimetic textual experience is usurped by the later mimetic experience of the film, with negative consequences, the filmic image undermining the memory of the text and the storyworld created during reading. For Olivia, this has resulted in her questioning her ability to read the text with the same level of precision available to the scriptwriter or director of the subsequent film. The fragile nature of the memory of the text is such that even a recent reading experience was open to such upset. However, during the process of reading itself, without external image, or mimetic vision, to interfere with the personal experience of the text, the story word of the text is created with total satisfaction. Details of sensory stimuli are considered to be important or insignificant, in line with the real world experiences and prejudice of the reader and their everyday experience. Rather than experiencing any deficit in the experience of the text, the partial and yet complete experience of the text, if considered as a map (Bateson, 1972) merely emphasises how the momentary nature of negation found within a text is consumed and accepted, where this negation is viewed to be consistent with experiences of the reader.

For each of the participants, the characterisations of the novel, the emotional landscape of the text, dominates the storyworld, proving both the motivation for the narrative plot and for the reader. Ruby describes her motivation and pleasure in understanding the emotional motivation and mental landscape of the characters of a text:

Ruby: I get a visual sense of most aspects of a book. And also I am by nature a psychologist, so I am interested in motivation and insight, but then I think a lot of people are. I want to know motivations, why they are doing something and does it ring true[sic]? Does it resonate and does it connect to you? Does it resonate in your own life. What do you feel are truths or not? I like books that really do personally resonate.

The presence of some sense of a visual component to the diegetic object and its maintenance is interesting here. The aspects of the text which are present for the reader are the characters and actions which have a cognitive component, both within the text, being character lead or character specific, and are the components of the text

which offer cognitively relevant material for the reader. That a sensory experience included in a text might grate or negate from the expected narrative trajectory expected by the reader in a manner which adversely effects reading triggers the critical gaze, being external to the cognitive triggers enjoyed by the reader. That these sensory triggers are personal and individual, while also being shared and understood within the wider reading community is essential for this understanding of the text. Synesthetic representations of sensory experience prove to be considered problematic, with the willingness to interpret the sensory description as valid or in line with the reality of the reader compromising the experience as described within the text.

Time, spatial awareness and embodiment

The ability to become lost in a text is potentially indicative of the effective nature of a text, and the ability to feel transported in this way is frequently associated with a specific book and reading experience. The trance-like nature of the experience of reading provides a measure of the efficacy of the medium, as well as of the text, as this distraction, which every participant in the research groups were all familiar with, was a sought-after outcome of an idealised experience of reading. This was the case, even in those cases where the lost of temporal awareness has consequences:

RG: When was the last time you found yourself lost in a book, such that you lost track of time?

Ruby: Well, I had flu last winter, and I happened to read *Shantaram* , I had that, and I got completely lost in the Indian culture, so that I went out and booked a flight to India as soon as I was well. I remember that I discovered *Lord of the Rings* when I was at university, and I spent two weeks holed up in my room. I didn't go to lectures, I just lost my life in Middle Earth for two weeks and read the trilogy. So, yes its possible, sometimes you can just switch off from the rest of life. I do get very absorbed in books. But with *Shantaram* last year, a year ago, that was completely, as I was sick so I couldn't do anything else but read. I was totally immersed in that and I didn't have to do anything. Apart from read.

RG: do you remember if you had a physical reaction to catching yourself?

Olivia: God, yeah, horror. I had missed a meeting. I was due to catch a train to go to a meeting for a very important client, and the train pulled in and out of the station and I sat there and read my book. And then I looked up and everyone was gone. So I was like "aaahhhh" and as this was pre mobile phones, I had to run to a phone box and make up a lie. Actually I wasn't going to see my client, I was going to see someone on behalf of my client, so I didn't have to do this, but I did; I phoned the people I was due to see and lie about why I was late. I said that the train had been cancelled. It was horrendous. And the times I can remember it happening, is usually because there was an impact. There was a time when I was due to go round to see a friend and I was hours, hours late by the time ... I know what I was reading as well, it was *Adrian Mole* (Sue Townsend). And I looked up and I was beyond late, I had to phone up and say sorry, I didn't come. Often what does that to me is humour. The book on the station was *A Walk the Woods* by Bill Bryson. And actually Ben Elton's *Stark* did that to me on a journey from Manchester to Brighton. It went in a flash reading that. Quite often if it's a humorous book I can lose track of time with.

The experience related by Blanchot, embodied and disembodied by turns, enables the willingness of the reader to avoid responsibilities or to simply lose track of time in the manner expressed here. The pleasure of reading, and the ability of the text to convey the sense of security offered by the transitional object is itself triggered by the pleasure of the text, with the ability of the reader to become consumed with the diegetic object their labours manifest from the text. A further consideration, which Sophie raised is the willingness to rearrange the day to accommodate her reading habits, with the understanding that this will effect her perception of the time she is spending with a book.

RG: Do you get lost in a book, do you lose you self in it?

Sophie: Yeah, time goes very fast, if it's good

RG: have you lost track of time when you read?

Sophie: Oh yeah.

RG: Recently?

Sophie: I can't think of the last time I did that actually. Certainly not all the time, but yes, occasionally, or I get obsessed with a book and think "Oh, when can I start reading this again?"

RG: So, if you read a book you enjoy or are getting a lot of pleasure out of...

Sophie: Yes, and I will do things like, wake up early and read, so I will get up at six o'clock in the morning and read before work.

So, the consumption of the text can become sufficiently attractive to demand that sleep be avoided, as well as consideration of time being spent reading to be lost, and appear to pass differently to periods of time spent on other things. (Deleuze, 2000) The sense of losing time to the text, or creating time for the consumption of the text in this way was common to each group of people who participated here. The manner of the experience shared here is important, in that each of the experiences discussed was considered favourably, with even the missed meeting discussed as part of a treasured memory of reading, with the ability for a text to disrupt the temporal sense of a reading viewed as a measure of the potential of the text to be considered successful for a reader. Each participant could recall exactly the text involved, the location and spatial details of the experience of reading, and where, like Sophie, the latest specific experience was beyond recall, the experience itself was still considered to be the height of pleasure.

Whether to reread?

The question of whether to reread a text is tied more to the experience of reading than to the choice or quantity of the text, with some participants avid re-readers, choosing pre-known material for specific strategic reasons, while others describe the practice of rereading to be a waste of the opportunity to read, with the experience itself the source of scarcity, assured that the availability of new texts to read is not under threat. Considering first those participants who reread a text, the different readings have different roles for the reader, focusing on different aspects of the diegetic object of the text.

Mia: And the fact that I am a quick reader, means I do reread a lot, because usually the first time through I am whipping through trying to find out what happens. So the second time I'm more kind of chilled out, and I pay more attention to descriptions of characters, and that sort of thing. I like revisiting, particularly with fantasy, revisiting the world and the characters

RG: Yes, I was thinking about the speed of the first reading

Mia: That's about the plot,

RG: And then you reread so you can indulge in the characters,

Mia: So its about taking note of all the stuff that I missed because I was trying to find out what happens

RG: So, when you say you reread a lot, is it something that you uniformly do on any text that you enjoy?

Mia: No, there are particular kinds of text that lend themselves to it. Particularly long series, because I'm mean, its so easy to forget stuff. Where as if it's a little novella, you can remember what happens relatively easily. It's mainly series, so I have reread *Harry Potter* quite a few times, I am almost through the second time reading *The Hunger* games series...

RG: So, how close together were you're two readings for that? (*The Hunger Games?*)

Mia: Well, I read the whole series, in three days, it might have been two days actually, well I finished read it at like two am one morning, so then I reread ... it was probably a week later, that I kind of decided, I want to revisit them, yeah. And I am now up to the third book and I've stalled a bit.

RG: It's interesting that you differentiate between the readings, with the first iteration is kind of primary reading,

Mia: It's where I disengage my inner critic and its totally, I mean I can only disengage her to a degree. Clearly, if a book is particularly irritating, then, yeah. But the first reading I usually wear my kind of critical hat, and then I put it on for the second reading. And third or fourth! It was really interesting once I started marking, as this semester I did lots of marking, and for a while there I couldn't read trashy books, because I kept wanting to underline, awkward sentences, and tick good things, and that sort of thing. so that was disturbing. So I was hoping that they hadn't ruined my super power of being able to read the trashiest trash ever, and be able to get through it and be able to say intelligent things about it. I feel that when it comes to literary scholars, there are quite a few that, the reason we don't talk about bad books is that once we have been taught to value a certain lot of aesthetics, it's very difficult to read the really, really bad kind of stuff, with a critical hat on. Because, a) we don't have the system or whatever to value what's going on in these texts but also, I mean, in terms of critically engaging, in terms of, its difficult to critically engage as it feels that you are stating the obvious. When you read Angela Carter, you know there are so many layers in all that.

Mia, an academic and media scholar in Australia had a strongly developed love of being immersed in a text, and the success of the text to provide that level of distraction and rich cognitive experience meant that the book was a favoured text, one which could be revisited on numerous occasions. The availability of further or future texts has an impact on the immediate reading of any text, and the tendency to enjoy reading a series of novels, where the experience of the text can be taken as likely to be consistent and where the non-cognitive diegetic components of a text can be understood and skipped with confidence appears to be important to the enjoyment of the text. The ability of the novel series to offer a consistent transitional object should not be underestimated, with each novel providing a signified reading experience being an important element for a reader. The ability of the text to initiate the mimicry game associated with the active engagement of mental capabilities with the diegetic object in preference to the environment of the reader, with its heightened sense of detachment and isolation is essential for the experience of reading to be considered enjoyable. While this approach to reading a text that has provided the ludic reading experience the reader hoped might sound like an academic close reading practice, the

tendency to reread almost immediately was not uncommon, nor restricted to people in academia. Sophie enjoys rereading sections of novels recently completed, usually a novel where the experience of reading took some time to become captivating.

Sophie: Yes, I am quite a re-reader of books actually. So I do re-read it, as I always think that you miss stuff, well I miss stuff first time round, as I, in a way gobble it all up, and its only on the second reading that I notice other stuff, so I tend to. Well, I wouldn't do that with *Barchester Towers*, for example, I would probably just get through that and that would be the end of it. I might reread it about 10 years later or something. But something that is quite quick to read I suppose I tend to read again, if the books is very good. So I would re-read it, but that's quite dangerous, as you've actually read it, so if the group don't like it, you can take that as a bit of a slight really. Whereas if you choose something in good faith and then it is awful, which does happen, it's a bit embarrassing as you have made a load of people read that book, but at least you not saying 'oh, I thought you would have liked it as I have read it myself and it was great' or something. (...) Sometimes, because I read through things so quick, I might want to get onto the next page so I might skip out half a paragraph here and there. Just in rushing. That's why its good the re-read, as I re-read quite slowly. Because its ... I don't know why I do that, rushing. (...) I think I sometimes lose interest actually, that can happen, I think oh maybe the next paragraph will be a bit better.

RG: Do you ever forget what you have read?

Sophie: Yes I'm sure I do. And I can really see that it would be possible to re-read a book years later and not realise that I had read it already. I can't ... well maybe I have done that and don't know. {laughs} I am entirely capable of that I'm sure. And in a way that quite nice with re-reads, isn't it, as you kind of maybe forgotten, if it's that long ago. You have forgotten the story or something, so it is like a fresh book. If I really liked it, I won't, or I might think I will go back to that one day. For example, I read *Middemarch* about 25 years ago, and really liked it, and I keep meaning to go back to it, and I haven't got around to it yet. No, but I will, at some point I hope. There are books where I make a mental note, I must get back to that. Yes, if I really like them, and that sense that I haven't quite

taken it all in as well, probably. I will probably go back on that basis. Probably read it again.

Here, the reader is distracted by the second stage of reading, as described by Iser, with the reader taking longer to process and understand the rules of the text being read. This process of assimilating the specific social cognitive and textual semantic structures in any text are essential for the later elements of reading to be present. For some readers, this process of assimilation can represent a significant hurdle, with the success or failure of a text to be measured in the reader's ability or willingness to discern the codes and rules which compose this ludic stage.

Social as personal

While being a creative pastime, reading for pleasure is largely unproductive, and as identified by Iser, an act of play. Readers designate time for the practice, which with its demands of concentration on the text, demands that it must stand to one side from other everyday activities. The ludic model of reading (Iser, 1993) reminds us of this quality of the pursuit for the diegetic object. The reader engages with the text for its own sake, spurred on in seeking the pleasure of the text. Such readers identify reading as an essential pastime, an element which makes life worth living, and one where the reader will frequently describe their relationship to the practice with high emotion.

The social aspect of reading is significant to the participants of this reading group, and must be considered as, while the participants were recruited on the strength of their reading habits, these are structured and sustained within a social structure that cannot be ignored. Each reader here is a member of at least one reading group. In most cases, these groups have no underlying manifesto or motivation behind their reading choices. Several participants are members of academic reading groups, with the groups they are part of focusing on genre specific or subject matter. This is noted and discussed where appropriate. Besides the nature of the material discussed by each groups, the reading practices and experiences of the participants matched each other closely, with only small differences described by the participants involved. The habit of reading is profoundly social (Long, 2003), demanding both social infrastructure and support practices to enable the outlet of social discussion, relying on the social interactions to understand what books would be of the moment or 'in the air'. The variety of these connections, social, cultural and commercial, all play a part

in determining what might be considered for reading material as well as how these texts might later be described and discussed.

As Radway addresses in the later editions of *Reading the Romance* (1994), the process of reading must be considered as complex, constructed from a series of interrelated actions that might be considered to involve questions, relevance and comprehension when considering ideological issues surrounding genre and meaning. In an attempt to side step issues around reading community issues based on any particular genre of text, participants have all been asked to discuss their own favoured texts to form the basis of any examples they might raise. As an outcome of this approach, many of the texts named here and in subsequent chapters might be considered mainstream, frequently being among the best selling or prize winning title of those years covered by the research project. I view this as a strength in the project, as the material discussed cannot be dismissed as elitist or niche, but is instead taken from the material which would widely be viewed as everyday reading material.

Choice and Social aspects of reading:

RG: How do you chose what you read?

Ruby: That's a good question, I have a book a month with my book group, so I have to read that. I have been in my book group for twelve years. I read books on recommendation. My mum used to recommend books. When I go to Ireland a friend of my Mums, who used to be in a book group with her, or other friends there will recommend books to me and I like to get a different perspective, I like to know what's what in Ireland. Not necessarily that they are Irish books, but I like to have, to know what people of other generations are reading. Likewise, if my niece, who is thirteen, if she recommends something, so I will sometimes read children's books before I give it to her, or my other niece. Relatives might recommend a book. I have a lot of unread books in my house. A lot were gifts. A lot were books that I bought to read at some point, but I don't necessarily buy a book and read it immediately. So I have a bookshelf that is completely dedicated to unread books. I actually did a bit of a purge and got rid of some that I thought I would never ever read. I am hoping that they don't come up on a book group so I have to pay for them again. And reviews, I do read *The Guardian* book reviews and will quite often buy books on the basis of that. I

have got favourite subject areas but the joy of a book group is that you go outside of that. I think I am quite eclectic. Sometimes I will just pick something up in a book store, especially when I go abroad, I buy books a lot when I am in America. Again, stuff I couldn't get here, or that wouldn't be visible here. I could probably order it here, but book stores can give you a choice of scanning things that you can see when you're aboard.

The willingness of the reader to collect books has been widely discussed in relation to digital culture, with the material aspects of the collector taken from Benjamin and his engagement with the role (Benjamin, 1999a). While most participants willingly discussed the nature of their collections of books previously read, a willingness to discuss the number of books still to be read and retained by a reader was markedly absent from the conversation around choice. The process of acquiring a text appeared to be disconnected from the choice of a text to read. When raised, the structural changes to book distribution and nostalgia for bookshops was apparent, but within this case at least, the anxiety associated with the absence of the text was not discussed within this group of participants. This anxiety, associated with the absence of access to a transitional object, will become more apparent in later case studies. Elsewhere, the process of selecting a text for others is a source of anxiety. Chloe, feels the pressure of selecting a book for her book group, and similarly is happy to receive suggestions from trusted others (Long, 2003):

RG: How do you choose a book for the book group and how do you choose a book for yourself?

Chloe: With trepidation for the book group! Because the first book I chose was the worst book ever. And I was thinking. 'Oh My God, won't do that again...' For myself it's really about, I would read newspapers recommendations, I listen to Radio 4 and they always have lots of recommendations on there, like Book of the Week, which I often think, 'Oh, that sounds really good. I have become such a radio 4 bore actually, it's ridiculous. Also, if I have read something that I am interested in, I might find a book that perhaps covers that. I like some Russian history and so I have read quite a lot of Russian novels, because of that, you know. But I wouldn't of necessarily done that. I think I read ... It often spun from what I am feeling or what is happening in my own life, so my reading can often

reflect what is going on. But my reading group (sighs), it's so studied, it makes me feel quite nervous. Because, they were all friends before you see, so it's ok for them to choose a crap one.

The other person who is quite influential on my book reading taste is my Dad. We are not very close, apart from through reading, Which I actually realised recently, because he hasn't been very well for a long time, but he reads a lot and he is very well read, and I would say very well read, not in a sort of … oh I don't know, that is a horrible statement to make, he has more opportunities, because he is retired, to have more input in his reading, he goes into online searches and is very [active], so I am … he will even give me a book, and say 'I've read this, you should read it'. That acts as quite an important part of our relationship really. Its quite a useful tool of discussion, and of getting us together, so the recent thing he gave me was '*Reading Lolita in Tehran*'. Probably you would say, well your dad might not recommend you that, but that was just something, so that has opened up lots of discussion and we have very different viewpoints of how women should behave. So that's quite an important part of my reading still I suppose, and I don't always enjoy his books, but I always love, if he chooses poetry, I always really enjoy that. Because I am not very good at choosing poetry myself, so there is quite a lot there actually really, in influences on my reading.

The social pressure sensed by Chloe in choosing material to be read in the social environment, exposing her taste and literary knowledge in a manner with which she is clearly uncomfortable offers a sense of the depth of her appreciation she feels for the willingness of her father to be active in risking similar discomfort. The common bond found within the shared enjoyment of reading elevates the nature of a relationship, which she describes as 'not very close' with this marked exception. Chloe, an active reader, who as well as being part of an active reading group, has instituted reading groups in the school where she is a English teacher, privileges the practice of reading above other cultural pursuits, but finds the process of exposing that knowledge excruciating, being a source of near physical discomfort.

The need to be assured of the cultural capital associated with any individual text leads Chloe to use the media and specifically BBC Radio 4 to be a source of reading material. Olivia delegates her reading material to the selection processes of the literary prize:

Olivia: For the last few years I have tended to read those books that have been nominated for those lists that I mentioned. That's mostly what I read. ... I have some reservations about that approach; I like the fact that I have this long list of books, I've always got a next book to read, but I am very conscious of how that kind of book list thing is just a marketing exercise, so I am just allowing myself to be completely dictated to by marketing people. I've become more and more conscious of that, and I read stuff about, and I don't mean critical stuff, but articles that are in the paper when the Booker list comes out and I find myself thinking that there is something cynical about this. So, I do have some reservations about it, but I like the fact that I've got a long list of books. And actually, I wouldn't do it if I didn't find that most of the books are very good.

Mia is an active social reader, with selection criteria which are lead by the nature of the reading groups of which she is a member :

Mia: Two of the reading groups meet fortnightly, and have kind of merged. There is a feminist reading group and a fairy tales reading group, so we kind of have all the same members for both. Which means we meet every tuesday. We talk about fairy tales one week and the other the other week. And there is usually a really long lunch afterwards. I have found that with reading groups, they tend to lose momentum, particularly when it comes to the reading and then discussing it. I find that you need to, if you are just a group of friends, meeting up to talk about books, chances are that you won't read it, people won't necessarily read the whole lot, and then the conversation will range all over the place, whereas the queer theory group I am going to is organised more top down. We had an academic who was like, "we need a queer theory reading group" and she runs it. She asks the pertinent questions, she plays the facilitating role, which is laking from the other groups that I am part of. So she... thats much more about the texts, talking about the theories. The others are much more about talking about our weekends, boyfriends and people who are annoying us and students (often the same thing)...

The issue of momentum and intentionality is contingent to the selection process, with the target text meeting as closely as possible the ideal for most members. The

processes for book selection for the reading groups follow negotiated rules set internally to the group (Hartley, 2002), which are also contingent with the reading of the participant away from the group:

Mia: Ah, right. Well, for fairy tale, the text are chosen largely by, we rotate. Both fairy tale and the feminist one, they kind of rotate who allocates books or texts. And usually, with fairytale particularly we will work on a theme, for a while, and so we will read different versions of snow white. That lends itself to a kind of particular project reading.

A similar process of selecting a text selection is followed by Sophie:

Sophie: For example, I chose a classic once, and it didn't go down very well, because it was quite hard work really, and I found that it was probably...

RG: What was it that you chose, if you don't mind my asking?

Sophie: It was *Barchester Towers*. and it is interesting, as if you are reading things like *We need to talk about Kevin*, those *Waterstones* bestseller type of books that everyone's reading, which is mostly what we do, I had forgotten what hard work it is to read something that is not written in your time. Its quite a weighty tome really. And when it came to it, I think there was probably myself and one other who managed to finish it. Others said things like they didn't like it, or that it wasn't very good. Reasons for not reading it, for not getting through it. And I kind of thought, Yeah, this is not the right book group for this kind of text really, and it just kind of highlighted that to me, where I hadn't really considered that before.

RG: So do you have a process, how do you choose your book now?

Sophie: Yes, that's a good question, now, so after that one went down so badly. I suppose I look for something that I like, very occasionallyI will have liked a book that I have read so much that I will want the book group to read it and I can discuss it with people. So its almost like, retrospective, that's quite dangerous though.

The metaphorical weight of the book being read is still synonymous with the style of the text it contains. The popularity of the contemporary bestseller is considered lightweight when placed in comparison with the text that was published two centuries previous, and which has acquired a cultural perception which differs markedly from the more recent, and contemporary text. The pleasures associated by Sophie in re-reading a text she has treasured for an extended period were not available in the same way to the other members of her reading group, which was here a source of surprise. The willingness of the reading group to question the success of the text might be influenced by the difficulty for the reader of assessing the social codes and rules apparent within the text itself, causing the reader to stall in the 'alea' component of reading, depriving the reader of the later meditative and vertiginous stages of the ludic experience of reading. Denied the sensory contact with the diegetic object of the text, pleasure of the text proves to be infinitely deferred, with the reader denied access to the play associated with reading, reducing the process of reading to one of the associated labour alone.

Personal and Group reading

The social nature of reading within a group demands that the books read in the group are completed and this sense of duty (Hartley, 2002) is understood and clearly followed here by each contributor.

Sophie: Yes, I like to finish, when you do those surveys about how do you work in a group and things like that, yes I do, I am a finisher. It's an element of anxiety and not being able to delegate or something like that. That's the down see of having to finish.

Chloe: I suppose its important for me to hear the voice as much as to enjoy, you know, I love beautiful language, but also equally I love great characterisation. And I read all different things for different reasons. I don't ever not finish a book though! Not really, it's been very rare that I have not finished a book. But that becomes a challenge doesn't it.

The social rules, frequently unspoken, become attached to the rigours of reading within the community of a social reading group. Each text should be completed whenever possible, and this in part is caused by the esteem in which the participants hold the book as an object. This is a thing of value, one which should not be tossed away without consideration for the labour which the author has placed in its creation. This case study again offered divergent practices with relation to the book as an object. For some, the book was less important to the reading experience, while for others, books were a guilty pleasure to be retained. Where a book will not be retained, a clear strategy is used to decide how the book will be 'cared for', with books being used in various ways, from gifts to charity donation.

Chloe: I still love books. But mine [love of books or the book] is a bit deviant, because I love buying them and keeping them. So my upstairs, is just full of books, so, I do let people borrow them, obviously, I encourage it, but woe betide you if you don't give me the book back. Now I remember there was one book, years ago, which I absolutely adored, and I gave it to someone, and I was absolutely devastated when I didn't get it back. It's pathetic actually, but I love the reading experience.

Mia: I haven't told you about my library! Well at our last house, we had three living spaces, and one of them was a library. And we bought pretty book shelves, flat packed by we bought matching ones, and then Damo had two and I had two. We kept our books separate, and I tried not to do things like double stack or horizontally stack mine. And then I had book shelves in my study, where they were stacked in the smallest kind of space possible. So, in the front room I tended to have my theory books, so I put Derrida, yeah, I read Derrida! My pretty fantasy books, so there is the series that are all kind of matching and nice. And usually my comic books as well, because they fit better into those shelves than into the other shelves that I have. (...) I put my pretty books there, and I do enjoy the juxtaposition of my capital L literature, because I get my theory books but I also have my capital L literature, Virginia Woolf's out there, but they are next to my comic books. So there is a pretty books place.

Sophie: Do I like to keep books? No, not really, No, I have got so many books, I've got a backlog of books that I don't know whether to ... that are stashed under the

stairs, I don't whether to give them away, or build some more shelves and put them out. There is a bit of a moratorium on books.

RG: have you read them?

Sophie: Most of them I have, some of them I haven't. Thats probably why I am keeping them. Some are old favourites and some are ... yes, but quite a long time ago I decided not to acquire any more new books, if I could help it. And if I did, to pass them on. I have got my stash, "out of sight, out of mind", but it is there. The shelving idea is probably going to happen, so I don't want to have nothing to put on my shelves. But at the same time...

In a subsequent interview, Sophie updated this initial response to explain that she had built the shelves required to house the large cache of books previously stored in the basement of her home, and is again collecting books, as well as using the local library for material to read. The book demanded attention in the end, with the books being displayed as objects of value and prestige. While flirting with the concept of a clear break from her previous reading experiences, making room for a future of reading, the investment of time as well as capital proved to be too large for the potential of removing the historical cache of experiences from her personal landscape. The willingness to consider losing access to these experiences was tested, and exemplified by the aphorism "out of sight, out of mind". Here, this points more to the fear of loss of the experience of reading, with the book offering the seed of the previous reading experience. While Michel de Certeau considered this a poor relative to the actual experience of a text (Certeau, 1984), the opportunity to gaze on a shelf stocked with previously read books is one sought and enjoyed by many of the participants.

For Ruby, the choice of whether to retain the book for future reading or pass the book on is part of the process that completes her reading of the book.

Ruby: Well, I automatically go and decide if it goes on my to be saved book shelf, to pass along or to keep for ever or go to the charity shop , so it gets filed in some category and then I go onto what's next? Then I go about deciding that. Sometimes, it depends when I finish the book, the time of day, or what I'm doing, whether I've

got time to mull on it. And sometimes the book has been so rich that I will need to digest it for a while. But how does it feel? It really depends on the emotions evoked from the book, whether it concluded satisfactorily or not. Something that I was totally absorbed by, erm, well with *Shantaram* I ended up in India a few weeks later and cooking a lot more Indian food, all the food descriptions. Yes books can really affect me. I did a big book clear out recently and I got rid of a lot of books that I thought I would want to hang on to, but I realise now, no just let them go. There are some I want to keep because, not that I often reread books, but I want to keep because I want them and I would like other people if they come to be able to see it and be able to borrow it. And I am far less precious about, I just to keep track of who's got my books but this last week I sent two books to two different friends, and I said "whatever you want to do with them, pass them along or go to a charity shop" so I'm getting less attached to having to keep the book. You know, as you get older, you want less, plus you have so many more. I am much more free flowing with books. But you wouldn't know that by looking at my house, I do have hundreds. But I am really cutting down on my novels now, and keeping them...

The strategic nature of the choice as explained by Ruby should be considered as part of the practice described earlier, with the collection of books active and separate from the process of selection. Ruby was the only participant who discussed the possibility of making gifts of the books purchased but never selected for reading, with books being passed on to family and friends, or if no suitable recipient was available, being given to charity. While noticing that she is less likely to retain books, and thus considering herself less attached to the book as an object, she is still attracted to the book as a transient object and commodity fetish, as signified by her practice of buying books as part of leisure activities when travelling or as gifts for others. The book as a commodity object is difficult to quantify in a manner that entirely sums up the affective component of the process of acquisition. Ruby buys books as they offer access to memories of location and temporal leisure as well as offering access to the experience of the text, be this remembered and specific, or inferred and potential. The ludic game offered by the text is here a smaller component of the wider use of the book as an assemblage, which infers a regime of signs which grants Ruby access to a sophisticated understanding of who she is as an individual, with the book adopting and dispensing subsequent means, dependent only in part, in the potential of the text to offer the ludic experience she looks for in reading.

The question of using an eReader was addressed only tangentially, with each participant asked about their use of electronically mediated communications and social networking sites (SNS), such as Facebook, or reading specific sites, such as Good Reads (goodreads.com) or Bookcrossing.com. While each participant interviewed in all groups is, to some extent and with varying levels of participation, registered as a user on Facebook, and all users of older personal electronic communications, such as email and SMS, none of the participants are contributors to Good Reads and only Olivia and Sophie were aware of Bookcrossing.com, with only Olivia an active member. That the only active social engagement with other readers was within the reading group was probably more indicative of the personal needs of the contributors to this research, rather than any indication of the social practices of readers as a whole, particularly given the size of each of the research groups contributing here.

Manifestation and 'reality' of the text

Does the material nature of the text determine any aspect of the hermeneutic arc or storyworld created, or is the real nature of the cognitive experience deterministic in the reader, meaning that the source of the text is irrelevant, with only its internal cultural values, along with the values of the reader, relevant to the experience of reading itself?

This chapter explores the experience of reading, as shared by members of reading groups. This case study was created to provide a core corpus of discourse which collated the language used by people who read regularly, in a fashion which might be described as ludic (Nell, 1984), and who are comfortable with talking about the texts they read. The social component of this reading practice was determined to be important, as this practice would enable the participants to share their personal experiences of reading in a way which would provide background material that would inform both the interview schedule and analysis for the later case studies planned for this research. With hindsight, this expectation was too idealistic. Some of the participants were keen to share their personal experiences of being an avid reader, while others were reticent to discuss a practice, which, while everyday, is personal in a manner difficult to replicate with other media. The mode of reading, the experience of visualisation, the creation of a storyworld from the material provided by the author

of text, all proved to be more difficult to explore and share with a stranger verbally than they had imagined.

Conclusion

The ideal experience of reading has several identifiable components:

- ○ An embodied experience, comprising of temporal, spatial or environmental, and positional factors,

- ○ A cognitive experience, comprising of the visual composition of the diegetic object of the text, and the accompanying sense of pleasure generated by the reader through the practice of reading itself, and,

- ○ A cultural component, where the reader seeks to retain access to the diegetic object through the retention and control of the materiality of the text itself.

The three constituent parts of the reading experience are co-contingent, performed as separate interactive strata, with no idealised hierarchy. None of the participants challenged regarded ownership of any book superior to the practice of reading itself, but each regarded the idealised memory of reading of such significance, that the material of the book could be described in detail, and had been retained in almost all instances. The embodied experience extended to specific individual experiences of reading, with circumstances explained and retained in detail. Participants explained the compunction to complete a text, which in part determined this physical embodied experience of the text, demanding an environment and physical level of comfort to enable reading safely for an extended period of hours, or even days. These experiences lead to the participants being able to recall the physical sensations of the text in detail, regardless of the amount of time which had passed since this particular experience of reading had happened. It would be fair to assert that these experiences have been idealised to some extent, with other 'perfect' reading experiences providing material to describe these particular occasions of reading. Nonetheless, the detail and language used to explore the experiences of temporal and physical distraction generated when a reader is consumed by the text, and the shared nature of the discourse this generates for communities of readers is marked.

The cognitive experiences described by this cohort is similarly communally consistent. While readers differed in the level of visualisation they were able to recall, each was very specific in regard to how they experienced any text visually. Characters,

actions and key details were available for immediate recall. Experiences of texts which differed from illustrations or meta-textual descriptions provided in film or television adaptions were commonplace, and widely held to be a source of distraction, even annoyance. The willingness of even avid readers to avoid descriptions of location and landscape was almost universal, with most readers admitting that, should the location be important to the plot or narrative, they would have to return and reread a section of description they had skipped in anticipation of the prize of more character driven material. The readers all discussed the pleasure of engaging with the characters of the plot being the component of any text that provided the reward and pleasure of the text, with the emotional landscapes and meta-representation of the resulting actions and motivations of the characters of the narrative being the motivation for the practice. The nature of the relationship between reader and characters appear to provide the kind of privileged access usually provided only in the closest of relationships. This is not to say that any of the participants discussed any dissatisfaction with life beyond the experience of reading. Suffice to say that the pleasure of the text and the cognitive experiences this granted access to provide a media entertainment that enriches their experiences culturally.

The cultural component apparent in the relationship between reader and book was less uniformly expressed by the participants of this case study. This might indicate the real level of engagement with individual reading experiences, rather than the ideal experienced which each participant tended to explore with the other components of reading. Different participants had far more varied strategies for both the acquisition of books to read, and with which to manage the post reading management of the text. Before reading, the participant has access only to the book and the promise of the text, with the pleasure of the ideal reading experience it offers. Once read, participants might automatically retain the copy, as a trophy of the reading experience and as an object of cultural value, or as occurred in a minority of cases, a value judgement of the experience was used to determine whether the book and text were retained. Some were offered as gifts to charity shops or passed on to other readers. For Olivia, books and her experiences of reading them are recorded on her profile page on Bookcrossing.com, prior to her subsequent use of the book in the treasure hunt game that this website supports. This practice was unique within the case study, and interesting for the apparent lack of any impact this has on the use of language and the discourse adopted in explaining her relationship to reading and the books that she has

read. Bookcrossing.com, its ludic practices and the effects these have on the relationship between the reader and the book are further explored in Chapter Five.

The consumption of literature as a leisure pastime and the social function this provides here are not unique, and provide access to a discourse common amongst people, for whom reading in this manner is a key source of comfort and entertainment. The ontological security offered to the reader by the diegetic object of the text is central to the medium's ability to enable the reader to alleviate the anxiety aroused by the vacant transitional space experienced by the individual. This space that enables the infant to test the limits of its new experience through fantasy and play, represents the space vacated by the maternal figure, and the security this represents (Winnicott, 1971), identified by Silverstone in the argument promoted by Winnicott's discussion of the first possession (Silverstone, 1994, p8). Here the ability of the reader to immerse him or herself in the storyworld of the text, and experience the mental and emotional worlds of the characters of the text, fulfils the requirement of the reader to bond both emotionally and cognitively with the diegetic nature of the text. The powerful combination of individual actualisation, creating and sustaining the storyworld inspired by the text, fulfils the reader both creatively and cognitively, while enabling the practice of mind reading central to functioning as a socially active person. This contradiction that the individual experience promotes and enables the sustained use of skills demanded by communal living is central here, developed as it by Zunshine (2010) and further expressed by the participants contributions to a reading group. In a process which is extended through the social nature of these bonds, from the process of selection and appropriation of a text, through the reading process itself and on into the discussion and agreement of a common understanding of the text, the nature of the reading group experience exemplifies how reading can be considered part of a cultural practice which maintains and enhances the social interaction demanded by shared culture.

In the next chapter participants who have adopted eReader and Tablets for the majority of their reading discuss their experiences of reading. Through a similar practice of semi-structured interview and discourse analysis, the pleasures and demands are described, enabling an understanding of the impacts and opportunities provided by the use of a mobile screen device for reading.

CHAPTER FOUR

eReaders

Chapter annotation: the assemblage of reading; the eReader; Derrida and the liberation of writing; Language and truth; printing and the text; Media, Technology and transitional space; Distribution; Digital Materiality; Anxiety of the absence of the text; How does the eReader change the Reader?

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the question of whether there is a freeing up of text-reader relations with the eReader. It tracks some of the anxiety of this transitional moment but goes back to Derrida to explore some of the relation between text and reading that was always already present. The experiences of the eReaders in this case study and the theoretical trajectory that Derrida takes speak back to each other in interesting ways. The chapter explores these intersections, brings Iser back into the discussion, and draws on work by Bernard Stiegler to bring the question of the technical and material together with the question of difference.

When reading, does a reader consciously read a book or a text? Or maybe more to the point, have we ever read a book? The conflation of the physical form used to contain and distribute a printed text with the text it contains has been synonymous with the book as a cultural object. The distinction between a text and the book has been largely dispensed with in English, as might be seen in the nomenclature of the bookseller running a bookshop, operating within a book trade, all active in the distribution of text in book form. People don't speak of reading texts, they read books (Ayers, 2003). However, this near seamless connection between the book and the text it contains has been peeled apart, with the emergence and adoption of the electronic reader, otherwise known as the eReader. While technologies associated with electronic literature have been reliant on the developments in code and screen technology (Hayles, 2005), the development of electrophoretic displays (which retain the position of the component crystals that make up the active part of the display, without the need for the application of an electrical charge to be constantly present) have enabled the development of low power consumption devices, lighter than the paper bound codex in many instances, that can be used as a replacement for the printed artefact.

The launch of the Amazon Kindle in 2009 marks the point when the possibility of reading texts in the form of a digital file came to public prominence. With the support of rigorous marketing campaigns, Amazon used the development of the eReader, along with a file format that implemented a strict digital rights management system, and software applications designed to provide a consistent reading experience on other network enabled devices, to create a new marketplace for the sale and controlled distribution of an electronic text format. This distribution system, enabling the Kindle user to purchase and download copies of eBooks within seconds of a purchase being made, using the connectivity of Wi-Fi and mobile telecommunication networks, has allowed Amazon to develop a vertically integrated business structure, where they provide texts published exclusively on the Kindle format, readable on its eReaders computer devices with their developed software installed. While none of these services are provided on the basis of exclusivity, the completeness of this service provision has lead to the questioning of the power of Amazon to disrupt the existing book industry, and certainly, their position as a global book retailer cannot be overstated. However, the potential of the Amazon Kindle has led to the development of competitive eReader products, such as Barnes and Noble's 'Nook' and independently owned 'Kobo' book readers amongst others, most notably Sony, who launched their first dedicated eReader, the 'Sony LIBRIe', in 2005 (Pilato, 2004). The networked nature of each device and marketplace controls, whereby the user of any system can purchase access to copyright protected material, limits the interoperability of each file format.

For sake of clarity, I will use the generic terms eReader to denote any ePaper equipped device, such as an Amazon Kindle Paper, and the term 'tablet' will denote any LED backlit LCD screen device, such as an Apple iPad (Apple, 2015). Where other networked devices are mentioned, these will be described with the most appropriate term, as defined by the use of that object. Where a contribution by a participant uses an alternative term, I will maintain the nomenclature they adopted, but will include the appropriate term as required for continuity.

Aside from commercial and political-economic issues, the emergence of a new format for the distribution of cultural objects has lead to the renewed discussion of the end of the Book. While Amazon do not release transparent sales figures for the Kindle readers, they have stated that the eReader in its various forms outsold paperback format books on the US website in the run up to Christmas 2010, having overtaken sales of hardcover books in July of the same year (Business wire, 2011). With sales in

these volumes, it became clear that the idea of reading a text on an electronic screen was being adopted in numbers comparable to numbers of people who regularly read books in codex form. In view of this emerging pattern of cultural consumption, what impact does the mainstream adoption of this new electronic format of a text have on the patterns of readership for the adopter, and how does a reader who adopts this technology describe for themselves how this new format has effected their own reading habits?

The development of eBook formats and eReader products are specifically intended to replicate the experience of reading the printed page. This delineates the resulting texts from the canon of electronic literature, as defined and discussed by Hayles (2002, 2005, 2008), where the electronic nature of the text is central to the use of the code and the mutable nature of the resulting reading experience. Electronic literature's role might be viewed to allow the exploration of the opportunities afforded by coded structures, such as hypertext mark-up language (HTML) to create fluid, evolving, multifaceted texts that exploit the ability of the screen to display dynamic images. Imagined narratives that incorporate both graphical and textual imagery enable the communication of narrative structures that obscure and redefine the boundaries of existing types of media. Leading on from the textual experiments that, taking advantage of the development virtual card index systems provided with personal computers intended for business users in the later 1980s, the emerging canon of electronic literature relies on the incorporation of code and other fluid content to subvert the textual nature of the reading experience. Resolutely screen bound and power hungry, these texts are determinedly looking to retain the "new" of "new media" (Hayles, 2008).

Rather than this electronic literary avant-garde, the eReader is intended to win over the most conservative of media consumers. The differential points that mark the eReader as potentially advantageous in comparison to the codex format are solely determined by the physical nature of the Book. The dimensions of the eReader are fixed and consistent, whereas the codex form will grow and gain weight depending on the size of the text it encapsulates. The eReader, with its capacity to contain the textual equivalent of hundreds of books, is unlikely to be the straw that breaches the weight limit for an airline's baggage allowance. And the nature of the network connectivity allows the opportunity to follow the whim of the reader, in allowing the reader to choose a text beyond the scope of their existing personal library, and to follow a flight of fancy in a manner unlikely to be matched in any other than the largest library. The

reader is free to consume a text in a manner more akin to the experience of choosing pictures from the Internet, where the choice is limited only by the machinations of the search engine of one's choice.

In this chapter I will investigate whether this freedom from the physical nature of the text, as it has been experienced since the development of moveable text anyway, has lead to any modifications in the experience of reading for the reader, and how might this modulate the process through which a reader defines this experience?

The early work of Jacque Derrida, particularly *Writing and Difference* (2001) and *On Grammatology* (1998), is concerned with language as a technology of culture. Language, particularly, writing, are his focus, with actions found signified within words, along with the work of J.L.Austin and speech act theory forming the basis for 'deconstruction', a method and process of analysis, and significantly, present in the realisation that all texts, while encapsulated within the bounds of a book, can never be limited by the physical constraints the book materially provides, due to the deferred nature of the sign, described by Derrida with the neologism 'Différance'. Derrida argues that the sign in language is infinitely deferred, and through this structural phenomena where any word must rely for significance upon a description itself dependent on language. Denied resolution, this chain of significance is never closed, complete or self contained, but must always be referential towards the body of text outside, beyond the bounds of that text being read. This concept is central to the 'semantisation' process of reading, as modelled by Iser (1994), in offering the opportunity for the reader to engage with the structure of the language of any text, providing space and play for the reader to engage with the text, such that the subsequent iterative stages of reading might be deployed.

The descriptions of use, embodied sensations and states of anxiety present in the contributions of the participants provided here are rich with both actions and responses, experiences caused by the textual material they consume, and material form that material is present in. As this project takes place within an era which I feel can quite rightly be described as 'transitional', with the user discourse around all forms of reading investigated within this case study emerging relatively recently, with the development of the technology discussed, I feel that Derrida, with his concerns around the nature and use of both language and the ideas they seek to explain, speaks directly to the experiences shared in interviews. With this in mind, the following section of the chapter will highlight some of the key sections of his work I want to lean upon when analysing the interview contributions, and following on from this initial

literature review, I will explore further how the notion of the pharmakon has been expanded by Stiegler, in a manner which I feel is completely relevant to both this case, and to the wider concerns of the digital materiality of cultural objects emerging today.

Before the reader can engage with the diegetic object of any text, it first has to be realised through writing. The book became a mirror to a writer's inner discourse. Derrida offered an analysis of this process through the prism of Plato's *Phaedrus* and the 'Pharmakon', a 'substance' that represents both poison and remedy, with discourse as writing the technology which empowers the writer to replicate their soul, while removing the demand that they be present at the point when their work might be perceived by the reader (1968). Here, writing is the pharmakon, that substance that offers the writer the opportunity to make something of themselves available to the other. The use of writing reduces the significance of the writer's mind in creating that text, transferring significance from the spoken word to the written text, and to the book, in its role as the object of repetition.

The metaphor of the pharmakon re-emerged, but this time in relation to the power of technology within a post-Fordist society, by Bernard Stiegler with his work on time and technics (Stiegler, 1998, 2009), and most recently in, *What Makes Life worth Living: On Pharmacology* (2013). Here the role of the Pharmakon, with its power to both sustain and extinguish life is played by Technology itself. Society in its late capitalist model strives to acquire access to technology in each thrilling innovative iteration, pulling new technological developments to the breast as supplement to a media-saturated, anxiety-releasing experience.

Technological advances have proceeded to fragment the practices of both reading and writing. It is common experience to compose text using a computer and hand scripted text has become diminished in the western collective cultural experience (Ferris, 2002), and with it, the common understanding of the labour associated with writing, once itself signified by the materiality of the book to the reader. Technology enables written or textual communications to be distributed digitally, which renders the text to appear virtual, and immaterial, beyond the digital archive of code retained at a distance, on mail servers, or hidden in plain sight, in plain text files of a local email application database. Similarly, an eBook offers the viewer a diminished view of the text to the eye of the reader. A file managing application might inform you that one file is larger than another, but digital fonts all weigh the same when rendered on the screen, and file size becomes inconsequential to the nature of the text.

A Technology of Truth

In *The Double Session* (1970), Derrida explores the different facets of the book discussed in the *Philebus* by Plato, while exploring the fold between Literature and its forms, and truth as a philosophical concept. The four facets identified, by Derrida through the work of Mallarmé, draw upon the role of the book in knowledge distribution, in signifying knowledge and thereby offering a sign to truth, at least as a potential for the reader. Each facet is described thus: 1) 'The book is a dialogue or a dialectic', 2) 'The truth of the book is decidable', 3) 'The value of the book (true/false) is not intrinsic to it', and 4) the element of the book, as characterised, 'is the image in general, the imaginary or the imaginal' (pp199 – 201, 2011). In turn, each is exposed to demonstrate how Plato describes the text as object, and here Derrida exposes the limitation of the book as an example of cultural materiality. The book is a dialectic or dialogue: the book holds the discourse on behalf of the absent author (or rather his soul, as the page of transcription from thought to language: it is the object that fulfils the presence of the writer. It fulfils the role of presentation of the discourse of the writer, and as such the book metaphorically provides voice to the author. The discourse it contains is exposed by the book, and will be examined as itself; 'one can always decide whether writing is or is not true' (p200, 2011). However, the value of the book is not intrinsic to the book itself, regardless of the substantive truth it might indicate to be present. Language as technology is neutral and adding nothing of worth in itself. Derrida analysis describes a process of transcription from inner speech to outer book, with the book only mimicking that value attributable to the discourse that lies within. Value is found within this discourse present in the text, and is separate to the book. The image provided by the book is 'able to compare between the soul and itself' (p201, 2011), and through replication of the inner discourse of the writer, a relation between the book and the soul of the writer is fixed in its image. At the very least, for the reader of any book, the book represents a chance to gain access to the truth of its author, with the truth of the discourse available to be assessed in reading.

Derrida gives this structural feature of language different names at times, depending on the implications he finds in the role of the signifier-signified relationship he is examining at the time. When he is concerned with the deferred nature of the expected totalisation of the signifier, Derrida describes the loss as 'Différance' and focuses on the unsettling inability present for observer who is unable to gain resolution

for the sign they seek. Elsewhere the surplus sign used to compensate for this lack of totalisation is described as the Trace, with the sign itself offering the opportunity to comprehend this deferred relationship (Royle, 2003, p66). Elsewhere, in *Spectres of Marx* (2006), Derrida describes the effect that the supplement contributes as 'hauntology'; the surplus signifier haunts as a ghost might pose as a presence to a previous state, whose significance is no longer demanded by the structural assemblage or warranted by cultural significance of the supplement (2006, p10). In a cultural epoch where media created, exchanged and consumed appears to be immaterial, the significance attached to the earlier physical articulation provides the supplemental signifier, with the cultural memory of the previously essential physical relic acting as the ghost, signifying the now spectral form of the earlier encapsulation technology (Brown, 2001). And it is through this relationship that the eReader/eBook technologies might be judged.

The supplement is a function of mediation: Derrida describes the phenomena as being virulent (1998, p157) , occupying the centre-ground between the presence and absence, a reconstituted presence through the functionality of the text, through language. In this reading, taken from Rousseau, Derrida describes the economy of the supplement as having "not only the power of procuring an absent presence through its image; procuring it for us through the proxy [procuration] of the sign, it holds it at a distance and masters it" (p155). The role of the assemblage of the book (Deleuze, G, and Guattari, F. 1987, p4), possessing the architecture to illuminate the reader, embodies the experience of both the text and the practice of reading, individually and within society, while seeming to quantify both the text and writing itself. This is the replacement that offers a challenge to the reader, not in the consumption of the text, and each of the participants whose views are included here actively read with a device which is either eReader, Tablet or Smartphone. The challenge they address and describe, both directly and indirectly in their concerns and described experience of reading, is the replacement of the assemblage of the book with a new machine for reading, a machine where the assemblage itself is no longer able to adopt a specific role with the significant text, but one where the rhizomatic nature of language and text is manifest within the machine designed to present the text for consumption.

The cultural experience of eBooks and eReaders is created and understood through the pre-existing relations that society has to the historical consumption of its texts: as knowledge, as entertainment, and to the role of the Book as assemblage or regime of signs (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). In a manner similar to the cultural

practices that dictated that the early fonts used in printed codex books were carved and ornate, replicating the workmanship of handwritten manuscripts, the use of an eBook is constantly compared to the practices of consumption and the perceived qualities associated with the common commodity of the paperback book. This coalesces in the form of a discourse within which society explores and defines new patterns of significance, that will in time evolve and define the experience associated with the eReader as a cultural object.

Our cultural experience of reading is based, in part, on the physicality of the representation of a text. This technological paradigm began to change with the development of digital page setting and the adoption of personal computing technology from the mid 1980s (Thompson, 2005, 2010). The utility of rendering pages digitally, enabling the development of digital distribution systems within the production cycle, has in turn been extended to the final customer. Alternatively, the physical printed form of the book might be seen to be a spectral intrusion of the previous hot metal technical paradigm, the digital text fixed in ink to accommodate the wishes of a backward looking market, unwilling to adapt to the virtualisation undertaken within the post industrial printing conglomerates. The text is encapsulated within a markup text, which both supports the additional functionality of the eReader (font adaptability, etc), and without which the text remains invisible, indecipherable to reader and eReader alike, as the coded simulacrum of the book that is the eBook fails to execute. The use of a screen device to display and consume an eBook, whether a generic computer monitor or specific mobile reading device, is merely the process of inviting the reader to participate in this digital process of production. The service the reader is being offered is to inspect the digital document that would once have been used to provide the fixed ink copy, and can now be considered the final commodity object destined to be read on a consumer's screen.

'The supplement is neither a presence nor an absence' (Royle, 2003). For the book and its role as assemblage of presentation, as a sign for both the ludic experience of reading, and the diegetic object it provides access to, the complex regime of signs provided by the book, is that supplement to both the material object and language it contains. Culturally and technologically, the material nature of the text signifies and provides access to the experience in an embodied sense, as the object that presents the textual medium to a reader in material form.

'Early Adopters'

All the participants shared that they benefited from their use of technology, with a variety of advantages offered:

- fixed physical dimensions,
- mutable interfaces,
- network enhanced distribution system and
- networked functionality such as dictionary and web browsing functions.

If the adoption of an eReader is not about a new textual or literary experience, but represents a new and ill-defined assemblage or reading media machine for the user, what might be represented by the adoption of this new technological product? Discussing the use of an eReader in place of other forms of text, participants spoke of a similar and consistent list of attributes for the technology, in patterns similar to those used in the marketing discourse. The weight, when considered in relation to weight of a paperback or hard bound book, is considered light and convenient for travel. The ability to read screen rendered text and its ability to be visible in direct sunlight is discussed. The opportunity to manipulate the text, with the size and font of the text adjustable was appreciated, particularly by older adopters who participated. However, without exception, each participant was quickly drawn to describe their admiration for key components of the experience of reading with an eBook. These include the ability to acquire new texts in an instant, and the ability of the networked functionality to provide meta-textual reading, emphasising the open interrelated nature of the text being consumed.

Jack: oh, the dictionary is fantastic! all you got to do is to use the cursor and immediately the definition comes up you don't even need to go to another part of the setup. Very, very convenient; and I find myself thinking," well, that's an interesting word, I know what that means, I wonder what the dictionary definitions are. Normally you'd say, "well, I'm not going to bother with that", because I know what the word means, but because it's so easy "I wonder what the etymological is?, I wonder what the derivation is?", I've always wondered about that word, you know, then you find out. And then you go back to your reading, in about 15 seconds you that you're reading. In about 15 seconds you've done it… Because you know, you know words, you have the vocabulary,

and you don't need to do that, you'd never get a page would you? (Laughs) but you can indulge yourself A little bit in that, it's easier.

Other features were noted at times by the participants of this section of my research, but differences between previous and existing technological paradigms which focus on the relationship between reader and text appear to be central to the experience of the new reading object. The book has been opened out to include other texts, reference material, including the potential for socially created shared comments, discussed below. Functionality associated with the experience of the text enhances and enables the experience of reader, such that reading itself is reported as either unchanged or enhanced by the interface of the eReader. Participants frequently reported on this experience as an increase in speed, or rather a sense that they are now reading quicker, in that the rate at which a book is being read is no longer made apparent through the constant manipulation of the physical object, with the page turn reduced to a button tap. The remaining portion of the book still be to read is hidden, no longer made apparent through the number of pages being held onto under the right hand page. Where once the nature of the printed text appeared rendered closed and discrete, here the open nature of the eReader as a device for reading enables the consumption of a text to be associated with the texts that are always already present within the book. The labour associated with the rigours of reading against the text, with additional reference material is subtracted from the equation of consuming the text.

Amelia: And on a Kindle [eReader], I feel that I am reading quicker. And I don't know why, whether its because when you are holding a book you can gauge it, you can think, "OK, I have got half an hour, I am going to read for half an hour. And because you are used to a physical book you can say, I am going to read three chapters. And you can spin through the book and see how long each chapter is, and then you can say, 'OK, I'll be able to read that, I am going to read that for a few minutes. I am going to stop reading when I get to the end of chapter 5' because that is 100 pages or something like that. On a Kindle you don't know that. You don't now how long each chapter is going to be.

The fixed physical nature of the eReader has further moderated the embodied experience of the book for the reader. The weight of any book is replaced by the

physical dimensions of the eReader, and the sense of progress, represented by the shift of weight towards the thumb of a right-handed person is removed. Where once the scale of the text was indicated by the physicality of the codex form, now the text rendered digitally is rendered immaterially relevant, with the dimensions of the eReader final to any everyday assessment by the user.

Along with the black-box encasement of the text provided by mark-up language, network and eReader architecture, the reader adopting an eReader is confronted by the metaphor of a new interface to master.

> Oliver: I am put off by the percentage indicator, it makes it seem a challenge to finish. I do that a bit with page numbers anyway, I do like to read and think I have done a set quantity of reading in a time, but , it seems more so when the Kindle [eReader] gives you a percentage... I have found it ... I have read some scholarly stuff on the Kindle and I have found that a very odd experience, because it doesn't feel as real as reading it in hard copy. I don't feel I have absorbed it as well, and I certainly can't remember where it was, in the text if I haven't referenced something, it's a complete pain to find it.

For Oliver, the design of the interface, which presumably is intended to compensate in part for the lack of materiality, instead presents a puzzle and distraction. Both Amelia and Oliver find that they compensate for the lack of paper signifying their progression through the text in hand, and while Amelia finds this a liberating experience, Oliver, describes the sensation to be "odd". For Oliver, the digital materiality failings to offer the sensation associated with the reality of a text in being read rather than at the point of reading.

> Jessica: Kindle [eReader], there is no physicality, it is just reams and reams and reams of letters, which is fine if you are on the go and it has meant that I can ... I have read as much as I did before I had a child because of the Kindle, thank god for that, and Kindle [in application form] on my phone, because I can have him on my knee, watching *Pepper Pig*, and I can be reading something. When he was very little and it just involved a lot of time with him, and it is very isolating when they are very little, I could still read with a hand free from not having to turn pages. So thank god for Kindle. It has been fantastic for me, and there is tons of free literature as well.

Jack: It is convenience. if I am touring a lot, I used to be the guy with all the books in his suitcase, and it needs to be known as the .... travelling library. And I used to circulate ... if I finish the book, and it was a novel or something, and I wasn't going to read it again, I'd give it to somebody who knew was interested in the same sort of subject. And I'd get one from him so we didn't have to carry libraries around with us basically, which is really a drag. So the Kindle [eReader] is perfect for a lifestyle like that.

Where once a heavy, hardback copy of a new novel would represent a weighty choice for a reader on the move, the latest published novel is identical to any other published eBook, and the fatigue associated with reading a heavy volume for any period of time has been alleviated, extending the period of comfortable reading. The positions and locations comfortable for the reader have formed part of marketing discourse for Amazon, and the ability to read comfortably for an extended period enabled the reading enjoyed by Jessica while breastfeeding, saving her sanity, or at least providing some touchstone back to a life she considered to be more normal than the early months of motherhood. For Jack, the compromised nature of the display offered by ePaper displays had the effect of determining what type of material could be read satisfactorily, with the low energy display providing an ideal format for literature, while text of a biographical or historical nature are better suited to the colour displays of a Tablet, using an eReader app. Here the accurate rendering of visual content, such as maps or genealogical charts provide a constant reference point, one which became a problem when rendered using ePaper:

Jack: because non-fiction, like historical biographies, you'll get diagrams of genealogy tables, you'll get portraits of people, or there will be a picture section, which is not so good in Kindle [eReader]. Novels; great because most novels have no illustrations, so it's great for that descriptive stuff. So that reason I've gravitated towards more novels.

The functionality of the network, as experienced by the user of an eReader is the feature of eReader technology most commented on and most relevant to each participant. The ability to receive a text, in an almost limitless number of locations and situations, was directly commented on by all eReader users, though with a wide

variety of opinions of the compromises this ability represents. The impact of the network rendering all texts to packets for friction free and virtually labour free distribution affects the commodity value of much of material culture, and this is a subject which was referred to in passing by each of the participants, and one which we will return to later. The freedom to purchase a text and for it to be seamlessly delivered to the device of ones choice enabled the reading experience for several participants, with purchases made to compensate for the end of a text, or in response to the discovery of a new author or novel.

Jack: it's really great if you've just read a really great novel and just finished it to be able to go online and download the next one. Without visiting the bookshop, great convenience there.

Jessica: So then my next thing was I was on holiday and I couldn't get to an English bookshop. So I downloaded the next book, I could find, on Kindle [eReader].

Grace: So what is interesting with a Kindle [eReader] is that its incredibly easy to buy books, because you just press a little button and hey presto, in fact I accidentally bought one the other day! And I couldn't get into the screen that says, did you buy this by accident, cancel? And I thought, "Well, its a book by Chomsky about democracy and politics, its probably really interesting, I might read it one day, why not? I'll just keep it". And then Kindle are really clever, because they send you the Kindle Daily Deal and its usually about 99p, and what I like about it is that it's the equivalent of browsing in a second hand book store, because its random things, and because its 99p, if its remotely interesting, which face it, most things are, you think "Oh I'll have that!", so I've now got folders of things on my Kindle, which are going to do what my physical books have done, which is sit there, probably for years, and never be read. And I'm quite amused and intrigued by my own experience, because its the collecting of the books and the 'I might want to read that one day' or 'I've got to have it' doesn't leave you, you've just transfer it into an electronic medium, which I didn't think I'd do, I thought I'd be much more focused, but it's not true.

The replacement of one spontaneous leisure purchase, of a bargain priced or second-hand paperback, by the acquisition of eBooks, purchased via a secure network

protocol, possibly in response to a daily automated email might sound like an e-marketers dream. However, the removal of the material object, and the centring of the activity of consumption on the eReader, reduces the process of purchasing an additional text to that of accepting a charge for the service of gaining access to the text. Rather than being a commodity purchase, this transaction is more akin to paying a fee for parking a car.

> Grace: Yeah, exactly, and that what I am finding interesting I think, because of course I'm now really into my Kindle [eReader] and I'm noticing how I am starting to replicate my little collection of books within the Kindle, including the things that I'll probably never get around to reading, but I might and I want them and they only cost 99p which is exactly replicating what I have done in physical form. I bought *Room* by Emma Donahue second hand fairly recently, and then it was very cheap in Kindle, so I bought it on Kindle as well, and thats interesting as I've got it in two different forms, so there's quite a lot that are interesting me about my own interaction with books at the moment, which have come out of having the Kindle.

The purchase of the eBook differs markedly from the purchase of a textual object in so fundamental a manner that it is legally described as a service, with the text presented within mark-up code and encapsulated in a file retained securely on a network server until your chosen device, or devices, are available to receive a copy of the file. Whereas with the object book purchased, access to the text is immediate and singularly unique, here the eBook text is a repetition of a code source, demonstrating iteration only with the number of times that access has been granted. Where once the text was dependent on the material used to manufacture the codex object and inks used to print the text, here the text has a robust independence from the technology of presentation, made available to the reader in a format that may be rendered and consumed by a number of hardware and software configurations. The connectivity to the world wide web extends the text and enables facts to be verified, with reference sites like Wikipedia offering additional meta-textual opportunities for readers, already able to take advantage of the built in dictionary. For Amelia, the immateriality of the text delivered by Amazon's *Whispernet* distribution system made the purchase experience transient and unmemorable, reducing any cognitive experience associated to the book (cover, title, etc.) in a manner which required new tactics to be adopted.

Amelia: I suppose that the same as having all your books on a shelf, it's reminding you of where you bought that book, or whatever, but with a Kindle [eReader] its just come through the air. There is no real ... you haven't had to go to a book shop, you haven't even got the memory of going to a new town and finding a book shop and finding a brilliant book. You have just bought it through the wire.

The presence or absence of the text as an object was complicit in many of the compromised reading experiences shared, with Oliver and Jessica, who found their reading experienced effected by the removal of the sense of spatial continuity associated with the confines of the page.

Oliver: Spatial memory, where it is on the page, so, say something I had to look up recently something I hadn't properly referenced in Foucault *The Order of Things* on the empirical transcendental doubling and I realised that it started about two-thirds of the way through on the left side about two thirds of the way down, and found it. You can't do that on a Kindle [eReader], pages are incredibly slow to turn each actually.

Jessica: [I] don't know if you have this experience but I don't have a photographic memory but I have a photographic remembrance of things, like I can picture a page and see where a crucial part or paragraph is like a bit of the action, or, particularly a point I want to make, and I can roughly remember where it is physically in the text. Kindle [eReader], there is no physicality, it is just reams and reams and reams of letters, which is fine if you are on the go and it has meant that I can.

The adoption of the word-flow format of an eReader text made both personal referencing, in the process of remembering where one is in a book rather, so as to enable the reader to pick up the thread of the book being read, and the academic restrictions experienced associated with the limited opportunities to refer a reader to a text when quoting from an eBook, are functions of the format. The fixed nature of a screen demands that text, where the font size is adjustable, will display differing amounts of text.

Oliver: It is still problematic, the process of notating a book is such that you don't know in advance what you are looking for, especially where you are bringing it to a group environment where the discussion might go in a different direction. The physical object has the advantage of being able to re-orientate swiftly to that and finding a point. In a Kindle [eReader] you are dependent on knowing in advance what you are noting for, so you put a marker there, so you can find it quickly. That seems to be the problem I would have.

For Oliver, the non-pagination of the text provided by an eReader prohibits the ability to refer to earlier sections of the text, and the lack of a quickly referable index have lead to his eBook reading material becoming largely fiction. The electronic alternatives to flicking through a known section of a physical book, using a word search function or having a hyperlinked contents table for the eBook, fails to compensate for the loss of previously won skills in manipulating a familiar format. This results in a modified reading experience, disrupted through the mediating effects of the multifunction screen borne interface, which better supports the linear and consistent reading method used to read a novel, but is ill-equipped for the looping iterative self referencing reading approach demanded by an archival, historical or biographical text, where the materiality of the object better supports the content of the text. The disconnection apparent to the notion of a page as a unit of a book, while still maintained in some eBooks, fails to have anything other than a historical reference point, with the page becoming a bookmark connected to the place provided by the Kindle [eReader], described as the GPS of eReaders by Amelia.

Amelia: There is that place thing on Kindle [eReader]. Its almost like the GPS of where you are, that's how I imagine it, the GPS of the book. So, what will happen when there are no textbooks? What will we say to people? Move to place, it is place or something its called isn't it. Move to place whatever. So that's going to be a lot more important isn't it?

The map/text metaphor deployed by Gregory Bateson is given new breath by the description of the GPS of the eBook. The lack of any physical landmark with which to gauge progress or accomplishment removes the notion of a reader being able to estimate how far they have progressed through a book by its physical segmentation between read and still to be read. The choice of GPS is influenced by the

technological root of both technical objects., While the eBook is relatively transparent in its structure and process, with files being open to personalisation, there is an air of mystery promoted by the lack of physicality. The GPS renders the map a similarly digital lamina. The idea that a reader now has to read an interface to understand their progress through a book indicates a modulation in the experience of reading the book, where the text that is still available to be read is no longer appreciated through an embodied experience.

The materiality of the book, denied

The absence of the book, in the sense that the eReader offers only access to the text, rather than the nature of ownership previously enjoyed by readers, was similarly raised. The cost associated with access to an eBook was compromised, both by the lack of an object to associated to the commodity value of the text being commensurate to that of a hardcover book, and in the sense that the book was owned at all. This modification of the terms of use is recognised in the adjustment in the language used to indicate the economic position of the reader of the text, from reader of a book to user of the eReader. The device for viewing a text is owned by the reader, while the text is retained by the copyright holding publisher, frequently through collaboration with the distributor, who owns access to the network. For Jack, this makes excusable his use of shared copies of books he was given by a friend.

> Jack: I don't know if I should be admitting this but a friend of mine, my brother-in-law, he gave me a whole bunch of about 900 books, so I'm able to find novels, novelists that I would never ever read and I can see them, if somebody tells me about a new novelist, "oh I've got ten of his". I don't suppose I should be going public and saying that I have bootlegged a whole host of copyrighted books.

The digital nature of the exchange meant that he was happy to make only a limited distinction between the found copy and the text purchased from Amazon, and once acquired, he had little knowledge of what the tranche of texts included, needing to check whether a newly discovered author was included in the list. For Mia and Oliver, commercial availability made the case for him on those texts to acquire through Torrents or via other websites.

Mia: Basically, my kind of ethical, compromise is that I will steal texts that I can't get in hard copy or texts where there I have read them already, or texts that I would only ever borrow from a library, so I wouldn't pay for and use anyway. So, really old stuff, so that sort of thing.

Oliver: So my rules tend to be about availability. And its sounds a bit opportunist but if people have died, I tend to feel a little less guilty.

Interestingly, this type of exchange, with books exchanged as part of a private library, furtively provided as a gift on a USB key or uploaded to a portable drive, is the only real exchange possible with the eBook. Rather than the traditional exchange of the book, popular as a gift or prize, copies that have been 'hacked', with the digital rights management removed, or prepublication copies provided directly from the author or publisher, become the only manner in which an eBook can be personally shared in a digital material form. With sharing itself potentially offering evolutionary and societal advantages (Price, 1975, Belk, 2009), the inhibition of the practice might appear to be counter productive to the process of adoption for the emerging digital form.

Knowledge of the eBook owned by each of my participants appeared to be distant, as the lack of a physical object reduced the opportunity to be reminded of which books were already part of their digital library, with Amazon taking on this responsibly for Kindle [eReader] users, and in turn leading to users collecting or hoarding texts. For Grace, the pretext to hoard texts comes in the form of a daily email offering reduced prices for a new release or classic text. For Emily and Jack, as Grace and Jessica earlier, the reduced price of the classics available as eBooks has triggered the purchases of a number of texts, which they are then unlikely to read.

Emily: What is glorious about those eBooks is that I can download them, I can download several because it's a dangerous thing again when I don't have a book to read so the problem is when I start a book and the movie doesn't start. And if the movie doesn't start then I am not into this book, its usually a writing style problem or sometimes the subjects just not grabbing me, and suddenly I am reading a fucking book, it's a ... its the text and that's all I see. And that sucks. So if I've gone to the train station and I'm starting to read a new book and its doing

that, I'm pissed. So to have several of those already in the same thing and I can flip to another one and hopefully something starts.

Jack: I have downloaded all the Charles Dickens, they are about two pounds or something ridiculous. All you can get the complete Jane Austen the 75p (laughs) which is great! You have got to have it, haven't you?.

The practice of choosing a new book to read was part of the compromise presented by the use of an eReader for Emily and Amelia, with the removal of the cover a limiting factor, while Emily found that she always needed to have a number of books available to turn to in case the first text selected failed to provide the visualisation experience she expected in a book. Amelia offers a number of further insights into how complicated the reading experience is for many people.

Emily: This has been my strategy lately, often they are recommended by people I trust, who I know have taste close to mine, and if I don't have any, if those line aren't giving me good stuff, then I turn usually to people who have built internet lists, and I find people who already have my favourite books on the top of their lists, and I see what else they have recommended, and I go based on their recommendations.

Amelia: The way that I have found quite a lot of authors, or a new author, is by going into a bookshop, as it used to be, and looking at covers. Because I like the look of a cover, because I suppose because I'm a maker, and colour interests me in my work. So I would go into the bookshop and look at the tables or whatever, and if I saw a cover that I liked, then I would pick that up.

While uncomfortable with the idea of using a social network to facilitate book selection, or for any sense of reading community, she missed the opportunities provided by the cover of the book being read in public, where she mentions that she takes interest in the reading material of others and feels a bond with someone who is reading a book she has enjoyed. She takes no interest in what other people are reading unless she has already read the book in question, in which case she feels a positive response to the sign of the book enjoyed, with the person associated to the positive experience the book has come to represent. This positive cycle of self-recognition and

reinforcing of a previous pleasure is denied by the studiously generic nature of the eReader, with it's associated collection of book imitating covers and slip cases.

Amelia: Some books, some authors that I like, you can't get, they are not on there, so, in that case, if there is a new BS Johnson come out, then I will have to have it as a book. But, I don't know, because I have got quite a lot of books, I almost resent getting a book now because, why can't I have it on my Kindle [eReader], because I want to carry it with me. And I think "Why, Why don't people like these books that I like!" and whatever. And I suppose that is a good thing about if you did a cover, on the tube and whatever, you could see somebody, with the book that you have read, and then they're reading it and you think 'Ah, that's great'. I wouldn't necessarily speak to them! I would just think "Oh yeah, I remember that book. I wouldn't really speak to them or strike up a conversation with them about it.

Further Amelia has been lead to compensate for the lack of a book cover in other ways. As part of a practice of recording the experiences of a book in the form of a review diary, Amelia sketches a cover to represent the book she has read.

Amelia: Yes, earlier on I was talking about what drew me to certain books was the cover, the cleanness of the font, and in Kindle [eReader], I found that I had forgotten what I'd read. I am a Filofax user, lists are very important to me, so part of this Filofax community put an idea out asking "if you could have a new Filofax, what would you do with it? What would you use it for?" So I decided that I would use a Filofax as a record of what I had read on my Kindle. So it became another little library that I could carry around. Because, when you pick up a book, you have that cover all the time, also, at the bottom of the book page, a lot of the time you have the name of the book. At the top you might have the name of the author. You haven't got that on Kindle [eReader], you've just got the page. You haven't even got the memory of the picture. So what I have done is, each book that I have read, I have drawn my own ridiculous little picture and the name of it, and then just put a couple of notes about what that book was about. Obviously the Filofax community were thrilled with that, because they like a book, they like a list, and I listed them in the same groups that I have on my Kindle. That's what I have got in my Filofax. So I can look at

the books that I have read, and I can look in the arctic and Antarctic, and I can see the books that I've read in there. It is not necessarily the title of the book that I am forgetting; it's the author really. I can't remember what they are called, but that's ridiculous really. Because you are not being reminded all the time are you. I suppose that the same as having all your books on a shelf, its reminding you of where you bought that book, or whatever, but with a Kindle it's just come through the air. There is no real ... you haven't had to go to a book shop, you haven't even got the memory of going to a new town and finding a book shop and finding a brilliant book. You have just bought it through the wire. Yeah, I hadn't thought about that. So, that's been quite good for me, to be able to look back and see the books that I've read.

Documenting the book in a Filofax organiser, and categorising each books within a structure that replicates the pre-existing organisation of her personal physical library and eBook files stored on her Kindle [eReader], Amelia has a structure which I feel compensates for the lack of a sign for the experience of reader she has enjoyed or endured. Her digital book collection has been supplemented, with the physical file providing signification for the experience of the immaterial object, stored on the local flash drive and backed up via Amazon's database of customers.

Each of the above strategies can be seen in the light of the reader adjusting to the new or emerging technology. The removal of the object of significance has led to the readers looking to compensate for the lack of physicality of the text, even while all finding other aspects of the digital materiality advantageous in it's new service commodity form. In most cases (Amelia being the exception) each user has found that the form has led to an anxiety in their ownership of the object, in that the reading experience once enjoyed has been eroded through the lack of a significant object to embody the experience of reading. In the case of Jack, his practices of reading have not included retaining a copy of a book once read, and he has dispensed with books, either to friends or charities, regularly for a number of years. For Amelia, while retaining all her physical books, she now compensates for the lack of an object with the design of a cover to replace the image of the book now hidden within the confines of the file structure of the eBook. Her file of reading, replaces the book shelf, or rather enables her to add these new texts to the signs for the texts previously consumed.

The eReader is reading as the act of consumption. Conspicuous cultural capital is replaced with the personal, in the form of individual access to a file system, which

documents how much of any book one has consumed, whether one has selected sections of the book to share with others, and replaced socially by the administration of a social network profile which documents books read, how they were appreciated, and reviews shared with our community of similarly minded individuals. The lack of any objective compensation for the purchase of an eBook results in dissatisfaction with the experience for some, and for others results in the later purchase of physical copies of those books where the reading experience warrants the purchase. Interestingly, those participants who indicated that they will buy a copy of a digital book particularly enjoyed are not those who reread books regularly. The object is purely that, not a text to be consumed again at later stage, but rather a document of the past experience. Further, no one suggests that an eBook would be considered as a gift purchase, while each did discuss the use of a book as gift.

> Jessica: What is interesting actually is that I often reread stuff on the Kindle [eReader]. In the way that I don't reread stuff in the physical, cause they're there. I really enjoyed Caitlin Moran's *How to be a Woman* was very funny. You are mad if you take it as a feminist tract, because it's not, but it's a really, really great piece of writing. And every now and then I will think of something that will make me think about it, and I will have to reread the passage, because they are so sidesplittingly funny. So I do reread things a lot more than I would have done if they were not on Kindle. I got about three copies and sent them all to the girls in my family, I thought they might benefit from them. Likewise, if I have got the physical and it's a book I really love, I've got it on Kindle, I've re-got it, cause I feel that I have to have it with me at all times. So I think from a kind of pleasure, hobby reading point of view, it's fabulous, and I am reading as much as I have ever have, I guess sometimes I go through phases of reading more because I am quite a fast reader, and also I am an impulse buyer, it's only, like £2.99, before I know it I have racked up about 40 quids worth of books, (laughs) it's impossible, so I am definitely consuming. But, from a ... when I think of the books in the last few years I have read, that have really moved me, if I have read them on Kindle I have immediately gone and bought them physically. But, they have all been physical. I definitely feel that there is that thing with a book.

> Emily: For some things I might. Especially as I'm such a fan girl. {Laughs} Ha yeah, like I will probably get physical copies of the *Song of Ice and Fire*. I've got the

red book of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, the hardbound red. Not even sure that I have opened that version but I've got it. So I am a fetishist at that level of object.

Emily returns the text to an object which she uses for specific separate purposes to replace the eBook she consumed originally, illustrating how the two assemblages of text differ, and how we culturally respond to the diegetic object and the material object providing access to it in entirely differing ways. Gift purchases were discussed with every participant within this research project and, quite noticeably, none of the participants discussed or mentioned the possibility of sending an eBook as a gift, with each discussing how a book would be considered appropriate for a particular recipient and why the gift of a book would be considered appropriate. While the technological issues of interoperability mentioned earlier have bearing here, I do think it indicative of how my participants viewed the digital text as ephemeral and insubstantial, it's lack of materiality making the ability to "wrap the gift" more than a challenge. The use of an eBook is a mode of personal consumption, the nature of the access granted by the network architecture and material object of the eReader ensuring that the reader has an individual, or potentially series of devices, with which their texts might be accessed. Consumption of the text is controlled at the point of access, much in the way that the consumption of television as a media discussed by Roger Silverstone is personal and domestic, inhabiting the transient space and providing solace from anxiety as an isolated individual.

For Grace, the move to an eBook format was a surprising experience after an unsuccessful initial experiment with digital reading:

Grace: I read *Wolf Hall* (Mantel, Hilary, 2009) because it was available as an app and I read that as I was going to work, which was really unusual for me as this was when I was living at 'Seven Dials' (an area of Brighton) so my work journey was only about 10 minutes or so, so I only read a little bit at a time, little snaps, on the app. So it's really weird because I feel like I haven't read the book, partly because I haven't had the physical experience of holding it in my hands and turning the pages, and partly because I read it in a very snatched, in a very snatched way and not in a sustained way which I normally would. So I'm not sure that was an entirely satisfactory experience. If you are reading something more like a paper, that's how you would consume a paper anyway. Which is

funny actually because I am sure that if I had a book, physical book and I read pages on the train to work I would feel different about it.

Approximately two years later, and with the adoption of a dedicated eReader, Grace found the reading experience of an eReader and eBook was more successful:

Grace: So my Aunt sent me that book, just before Christmas, and over christmas I bought a Kindle and I downloaded it onto the Kindle and I started reading in paper, and I finished reading it on the kindle and what was interesting for me was that the "put-down-able thing" I felt exactly the same about it when I was reading it when I was reading it on the kindle which really surprised me, because I didn't think that I would, I didn't think that I would be able to develop that relationship with something that wasn't a physical formed book. And that's partly because of my experience of reading before didn't really kind of do it for me. And I think it's something to do with the, that I'd begun to be immersed in the book. So then I just carried on being immersed in it because I'd got caught up already.

The experience of reading with an app (short here for application), designed for the dimensions of a smart-phone screen, is inarguably different from the visual affordances provided for the reader of a eReader or Tablet. The screen dimensions are narrower when compared to the page the app is designed to replace, and the impact of the minimised field of view means that the interface required by the device becomes impossible to avoid. Grace affords the interface for the phone to be one which doesn't accommodate the longer immersive nature of the reading experience expected by a novel (de Souza e Silva, 2006). Of course the environmental circumstance of reading might similarly have inhibited the reading experience for Grace. Elsewhere, Jessica and others praised the opportunity to read from a smartphone, preferring to discuss the convenience of the form rather than it's limited dimensions. Similarly, the position of the reader visa vis the text is further modified by it's presentation within a specially designed application, rather than being presented in a generic commodity unit such as a book or eBook. To render the app as an object, further differentiated from the text in a normalised form, interface functionality becomes highlighted (Hayles, 2008), which in turn only differentiates still further the object from the paper codex form as described by Grace. The 'victory' of the Amazon

Kindle format later adopted by Grace is that, for her at least, the interface manages to be sufficiently transparent to render the reading experience unaffected by the transfer to the digital form.

Anxiety and the Transitional Nature of the text

While Jessica and Jack praised the immediacy of the delivery of a text, and the freedom from the historical relevance of the bookshop to the reading experience, for Emily, the ability for the network to deliver and replenish her library is key to the functionality of the eReader, and this enhancement allows for her anxieties of the potential lack of any reading material to be avoided completely.

> Emily: (F)or me, it was really important to have the book, since I'm upset when its not there.

The availability of further texts to read, both in the memory of the eReader, and through the distribution network out into the near infinite number of published and pirated texts beyond the capacity of the eReader, enables the reader to feel secure that a text, which can provide the next reading experience, is only a few clicks away. Even when the network capabilities of the eReader are not available, the quantity of texts held within the reader are likely to be sufficient to enable the reader to avoid the pangs of disappointment. The consistency with which the readers of all types of literary material describe the experience of visualising the content they consume might indicate that the experience of reading a text is one active primarily internal to the reader him or herself.

All of the participants interviewed who have adopted an eReader as the object for at least part of their leisure reading have done so with a well developed reading habit established, and it was in maintenance of this habit that the new technology was adopted. Therefore, it might be assumed that the use of the technology by this cohort indicates that the reading experience is unaffected by the change of text format. The interface of the eReader has been developed to maintain continuity with the experience of reading a printed codex book, but there are still some impacts reported in its use. However, Emily found the interface to be less of a distraction when compared to the physicality of the book:

Emily: Weirdly no, I was kind of worried that it might when I first got it, but no, its the same. It's even a little bit easier as I don't have, there is less of a break, with all the page turning, with the cumbersomeness [sic] of the book, especially as the book that I read are really quite big and I'll read them in paperback, so they're, you know, they are falling apart. They don't open properly, so since that's gone, I think it's actually helped. I'm not sure that's a good thing. I really don't know if that's healthy for me {laughing}, but yeah.

Emily further expanded this point by indicating that the design, and particularly the weight of the electronic reader are in her opinion successful, and have a positive impact on her reading practices:

Emily: No, not really, I might, I probably read a little bit longer because I feel a little bit more comfortable to read. I can hold it at angles where my neck isn't screwed up into horribleness, and it's different in length, just because I'm not getting tired, but (...) no. Not for me anyway, but for me it was really important to have the book, since I'm upset when it's not there. So, that might be my own issues.

While Emily's reactions to the text are a response to the potential experience of being denied access to having something to read, the appeal of the eReader is in part predicated on is efficiencies and physical affordances to minimise the labour and physical discomfort associated with each of the practices associated with the selection, purchase and consumption of literary texts. While extreme, her reactions encapsulate the range of experiences described and explored by each of the participants to this research case. Whether for professional reasons or for the purposes of distraction, the book is still the medium of first choice for a sufficient proportion of society to make the transition of the text to a digital form of circulation, with the potential to affect the reading experiences for any or all of those readers invested in the medium and its continued success.

In part, our cultural experience of reading is based on the physicality of the representation of a text. This technological paradigm began to change with the development of digital page setting and the adoption of personal computing technology from the mid 1980s (Thompson, 2005, 2010). The utility of rendering pages digitally, enabling the development of digital distribution systems within the

production cycle, has in turn been extended to the final customer. Alternatively, the physical printed form of the book might be seen to be a spectral intrusion of the previous hot metal technical paradigm, the digital text fixed in ink to accommodate the wishes of a backward looking market, unwilling to adapt to the virtualisation undertaken within the post industrial printing conglomerates. The text is encapsulated within a mark-up text, which both supports the additional functionality of the eReader (font adaptability, etc.), and without which the text remains invisible, indecipherable to reader and eReader alike, as the coded simulacrum of the book that is the eBook fails to execute. The use of a screen device to display and consume an eBook, whether a generic computer monitor or specific mobile reading device, is merely the process of inviting the reader to participate in this digital process of production. The service the reader is being offered is to inspect the digital document that would once have been used to provide the fixed ink copy, and can now be considered the final commodity object destined to be read on a consumer's screen.

Is the book as printed object the supplement of the text?

The spectre at the feast of the eReader is the book, in all and any of its previous technological incarnations. While it might not a present or active in the imagination of a reader, the knowledge and experience that a book contains textual material to be read is a response inculcated in the reader, a shared cultural meaning attributed to the book as a medium. The book has held meaning as a transitional object (Winnicott, 1974), with the reader granted access to the storyworld provided by the diegetic object of the text it contains. Reading material is chosen by the reader on the basis of the reading experience promised by the metadata of the book: author, genre, format and title information, along with socially related data of review and computational data of a suggested purchase information algorithm (Nell, 1984). Each book, chosen for its likely ability to fit within the specification for the reader's ideal textual experience, will be judged for its ability to fulfil these criteria, and any meaning will be attributed to the book once read, on its ability to generate successfully the experience of reading the reader pursues, with any accompanying cognitive responses. The ludic nature of the text and the experience of reading is separate, but informed by the embodied experience of the object of reading, be this a book or eReader, and its accompanying text. The difference here is the nature of the relation

between text and encapsulating technology, with a one-to-many relation provided by the technology of the screen-based eReader.

The reader of the eBook has no text specific object to embrace with which to make this judgement. The eReader must hold significance for its user, with meaning derived from the pleasure of the object from an embodied sense. Participants discuss its weight, interface, the reduction in those aspects of the book which they found distracting, and the ability of the eBook to be directly distributed to them, requiring only access to a network to facilitate the transaction of access. The experience of pleasure in the book as text is denoted by this ease of access as well as by the object of reading, and is denoted by the transaction of acquisition as the text is materially removed from the transitional space of the reader. Here the reader is denied the previous object of the book and along with it, by the removal of the one-to-one relationship it offered. Here the eReader is the material object of reading, rather than written text or book. By no means am I arguing that the reader of an eBook does not enjoy the experience, on the contrary any adopter of the technology has expressed pleasure at the facilities offered by those elements listed above. The reader is able to acknowledge the text as an experience, without making reference to the physical elements that once had precedent over the literary experience, and it is the text which acquires a prominent position in the experience of the reader. Thus in turn, it is the presence of the text, which offers a basis for meaning of the eReader itself, for the user.

However, the removal of the text, in the symbolic form of the Book as an object, from this cycle of myth construction reduces the possibility the reader has to create any symbolic link to the book. Where once a reader might include the memory of the book itself within the experiences offered by any text, this has now been confined to the experience of the text itself. The act of consumption is denied its specificity, rendered generic through the use of a generic reader. For Stiegler, the removal of the thing or a text, and its replacement with a thing of reading, industrialises the point of consumption (Stiegler, 2013), rendering the historical notion of what a text as book offers the reader (promise of a text to be consumed, granting access to the imaginary, with the signification of the book modulating between the offer of access to the imaginary and access to the storyworld of its actual consumption, with further access infinitely available) curiously finite. The link back to an earlier experience is now competing for space with the demands of future texts. This conflation of significance produces dissidence for the reader not associated by the text in any previous book form. While the experience of reading is in some ways enhanced through the use of

an eReader, the object of the book is absent from the pleasure of the text, that stage of reading which Iser demonstrates provides perspective and understanding of the true nature of the text and its diegetic object (Jacobs , 2011). Further, the lack of a specific connectivity of the reading experience to an object for a specific text reduces the ability of the reader to produce meaning in any state: whether before reading the text, during the process of reading the text, and after reading, with the memory of the text itself. So while reading might be an enhanced and pleasurable experience, it is rendered meaningless, further creating anxiety in the reader as they seek sublimation of the instinctive response to the text as a transitional object (Winnicott, 1974).

Ted Striphas observes that book culture, and eBooks in particular, exhibit characteristics which point to the 'as yet incomplete emergence of what Henri Lefebvre has called a "society of controlled consumption"' (Striphas, 1993, p180). This development threatens the reader's relationship to a text (book or diegetic object it contains) after its has been purchased. In fact, the logic which treats access to a book as a service is predicated on the assumption that western society is defined by its role as a consumer, a definition that Lefebvre is uneasy with. Striphas argues that the cybernetic structures that enable machine-based obsolescence points to the emergence of a 'post-consumer society' (1993, p182), with the cultural practices emerging around the publishing of ebooks being a prime example. Similarly, one might argue that this model shares more with a computation paradigm (Berry, 2008), where libraries of code are used and shared, with ownership being retained by the library/administrator for code being licensed. Any code might take advantage of advances in library scripts, but similarly, incomplete testing of any incremental changes might threaten to undermine the algorithmic processes of a program, which relies on the library to function.

Stiegler and Technology

Bernard Stiegler takes on the arguments made by Derrida in *Plato's Pharmacy* to explore the role of technology within the paradigm of post-Fordist, late-capitalist, society. Reenacting Derrida's close reading of Plato's *Phaedrus*, technology becomes the Pharmakon, a tincture that offers the potential to be both medicinal and poisonous in use. Society is drawn to the potential granted by the ability of any technology to extend, or grant new power, to an existing ability, and so extend us, while ignoring and remaining in denial of the potential for this technology to erode that ability the

new technology is intended to extend. Language when reified into text in the form of writing, with an effect that memory and rhetoric is eroded, and while still possibly admired as a skill, the ability of the technology to render the skill external, modulating the skills required to achieve results previously considered belonging to an elite. Addition is rendered external through calculators. Printers and electronic communications render handwriting superfluous, rendering touch typing almost an essential skill. The camera, especially in its mobile network enabled form, renders draftsmanship and portraiture obsolete.

But is obsolete the correct term? These skills are still admired, and the cosmopolitan classes acknowledge their passing, vocally, where the complaint is an opportunity to express capital. Stiegler considers technology and its progress as driving the force of proletarianisation of society, rendering humanity a skill-less bunch of operators, dependent on its computerised, robot-enabled tool set to do "things" on our behalf.

How does this paradigm exist for the reader, and where might the eReader and eBook fit within this landscape? The ability to buy a book has been electronic for some time, with books being an early example of Internet commerce (Timmers, 1999). The book, once shipped as a thing, has been rendered electronic for distribution, and the process of waiting for the book has been abbreviated from one of hours to one measured in seconds. The satisfaction of the book arriving is only a moment away. The technology required to support this activity is that modulated to enable this task to be assigned to the network. Pick, pack and despatch, shipping and courier deliver, as well as customer receipt, have been made obsolete by the electronic distribution of the encrypted digital file. Reading is only implicated as a consequence of this change, and not really instrumental in the choice at all. For those who are comfortable with the technology, and for whom the anxiety of the delay between purchase and object delivery is too great, are happy to acknowledge the progress signified by the adoption of the eReader as the object of reading.

The anxiety, as expressed by the participants who contribute to this chapter, is a concern that they will be unable to read at any given time, or more importantly, that the book they have to read might not be the right one, as in that the book they choose to read may not be able to support the ludic vertigo-inducing third stage of reading (mimicry or 'activation of facilities'), as modelled by Iser, where the reader is completely absorbed with the experience provided by the diegetic object (Iser, 1993). During most of the stages associated with reading, the reader is aware that the book

will end, providing clarity and completion, at least in part, but that that end signified the loss of the experience of reading, signifies the loss of the cognitive connection with the emotional lifeworld provided by the creation of the author's text. The experience of reading, of creation stimulated in this way, is such that it is missed. In some cases the reader will choose to remain with the characters for some time, allowing the storyworld of the text to settle, enabling the neurones associated with the labour of this work to relax, while for other ludic immersive readers, the loss of the text is a pain, the imagined experience of which is difficult to bear, for which the desire for the new text, and the imaginary experience this will enable, proves to be overwhelming, if subtly so. The cognitive distraction provided by the mimicry stage of reading becomes so fundamentally associated with the distraction provided by the diegetic object, and the satisfaction of the cognitive activity this enables for the reader, that the potential denial of the satisfaction provided by the eventual transition to stage four, described by Iser as the Pleasure of the Text, that the ludic reader, anxious by its loss, seeks the comfort afforded by the personal library potential of the eReader. Both the immediate nature of the electronic purchase and distribution and the number of books which are retained by the eReader enables the anxious consumer of the eBook to remove the risk of being denied access to 'a text that works' for them at any given time.

But is this transition about the act of consumption, or is this a complicit component of the industrialisation of the manufacture of the text, initiated by the adoption of moveable text in Europe in 1460? The dawn of the industrial age was signified by the ability to commodify the letters of the alphabet, develop the trade of letter forging and the reworking of worn type, and the development of paper as a commodity such that taxes and export controls were required to control the flow of raw materials required for its manufacture (Hunter, 1978, Basbanes, 2013). It is here that the design and development of the book as we have previously known it began, and while economic and demand pressures maintained the development of technic and form, a book from this period remains recognisable to a child of pre-school age, similar in architecture and practice to any book produced since these initial volumes were printed.

Each aspect of traditional book production has been rendered digital and subsequently subjected to a distributed process of industrialised production, through the adoption of Desktop Publishing (DTP) and personal computing within the print and publishing industries (Johnson, 2005). The completion of the cycle of digital distribution, represented by the eBook delivery to the hand of the reader is simply the

final leg of that journey, with the advantage for the publisher of removing the text from the ownership of the reader and rendering the object of significance, not a singular treasured object of a book, but part of the new assemblage of the experience of reading, where access by the reader to the text becomes the outcome of a process of administration.

Stiegler identifies the moment when fidelity was first exposed to the pharmacology of the spirit, through the Derridian process of grammatization, with the invention of the printing press (2013: p59-61). Arguing that western society and its relationship to books, and the Book, in the form of societies structural adherence to religion at that time, developed a bookish pharmacology. This trigger to pre-industrialisation of Western Europe, and to process of the commodification of culture, in time effected bodies, shaped minds through education and the expansion of knowledge and culture that became mobile and distributed, and affected social relations. More pertinently, the hyper materialism he describes links all things, integrates all objects as part of the emerging Internet of Things (Bleecker, 2005). All technological objects become transitional objects, marking that transitional space between mother and child, as identified and elaborated by D.W. Winnicott in *Play and Reality* (1974). Pointedly, similar use of Winnicott's work has been made by Roger Silverstone in *Television and Everyday Life* (1994), where the consumption of television media is modelled as both object/media text and experientially, enabling the viewer to make sense of their environment through both the content distributed and through the pattern of consumption it supports. Television in particular and media generally, is identified by Silverstone as providing a source of transitional object that enable the audience to derive security through attachment to a transitional object, which occurs as ever present through its persistence. It is through this persistence of presence that the audience develops a dependency on the media object (1994, pp14-15). For any cultural object to support the development of such a bond, it has to be significant in both a practical and symbolic sense and be able to withstand an attempt to destroy it (at least in a fantastic sense) before the object can be viewed as dependable and something to be adored.

How might we describe the eReader?

While this case study was originally considered to be likely to be one for which the recruitment of participants would be difficult, it in fact became the case study

where the identification of potential participants was the most straightforward. Participants were drawn from a number of different sources, with no real common thread shared between them, except the one key qualification that they read in a manner where the practice represents a major part of how the participant spends their time. They are self-declared and self-defined as people who read, and for this reading practice, they have adopted the eReader for a significant proportion of their reading material.

While the potential might be for any networked object of media consumption to prey upon the individual's anxiety of the unknown, this is also driven by the pleasure of the text experienced by the reader. Each of the readers here demonstrated that they came to the eReader and/or Tablet to facilitate freeing the text and their consumption of its contents from the physical constraints demanded by the materiality of the codex form. Freed from the page, the text is available in a manner not previously enjoyed, and the transient nature of their relationship to the text is of limited concern. While some of the participants did develop a tactical response to the digital materiality of the new reading form, whether this is keeping a journal to record the title and details of the books they have read, or by purchasing a codex version of the book to go on display, generally, the missing signifier and any concerns this might generate, was compensated for by the future reading experience offered by the eReader, finessed by the ease of acquisition of a text.

A key component in the discourse shared by the eReader group is that the emergence of Amazon Kindle continues a trend of media companies to exploit the trend towards digital objects to render the book transient, by parsing the material nature of the codex book from the text. This enables a separate commodity value to be applied to the codex form, as the eReader acquires attributes beyond the textual and illustrated, and the text develops attributes of distribution, momentum and digital materiality. This trend towards digital materiality transfers the transitional object focus for the reader from text to eReader, while still enabling the reader to focus this obsessional focus on the text and its consumption (Thoburn, 2010).

By focusing more on the text and less on the book, the reader becomes anxious about the possibility of being denied the experience of reading, so while being offered greater access to the pleasures of reading, the removal of the regimes of signs associated with the book results in a reader being focused on the limits of the text itself. Where once a collective whole was present for the reader of a text, now they are present only to the line being read, with all other structural elements associated with

the experience of reading reduced to a paradigm of line or screen. The book will end, the series of books must finish, and the reader will be faced with the need to source a new text to immerse themselves in. While this transience was present in the text when encased by the book, the book provides the solace that it might be read again, and the 'spore' remains, embodied in the codex, and its material significance (Certeau, 1984).

The development of the sale of books for eReader further exasperates this trend, with the removal of the physical nature of the personal library denying the reader any physical oversight of the books they have access to at any time. This is compensated for by the myth of mobility and utility.

An eReader might be read anywhere, in any light, and without the fatigue of holding an irregularly shaped or weighted book (the book changing shape as its pages are moved), and the technical screen enabling font and font size to become local attributes of the reader, rather than fix aesthetic features of any text. Light might be provided in front of the screen in early design readers, with later developments enabling the screen to be backlit, with the text developing a diffuse and magic glow. The discourse of naming this advance as 'paper' has continued, sharing space with the parallel development of the full retina screen, with ePaper displaying the attributes of mutability listed above, while reducing the problematic issues of power consumption to a minimum. The ability to limit the consumption of energy is demanded by the trope of mobility. Freedom is only maintained by the ability of the eReader to support consumption of the text in a pattern close to that of the codex book, which, while demanding energy in its production and distribution, once rendered fixed, adopts a symbiotic position for its future transport energy needs.

Utility is engendered in the device through its ability to render all textual objects similar, with near congruence promised through the nature of the reader's control over font and the generic nature of the text as distributed digitally. Material from other sources can be re-rendered for the eReader by the owner, with personal documents, work in progress, original material and portable document format files transferable to the memory of the reader, either through the wireless network maintained by the owners of the means of distribution, or through the personal management of the content held by the owner themselves. These documents attain a status similar to that of the books purchased or pirated by the reader, and might be shown or shared further in this form. However, the structural difference in the nature of the text becomes apparent in the ability for the document to be saved at the end of the eReaders functional life. Here, only those documents delivered in the authorised path,

maintained by the gatekeeper to the network, will be saved from an unintentional deletion and loss.

Further, the ability to engage with the content of the text, through highlighting passages of interest, and sharing this knowledge as a display of cultural capital, takes advantage of the network nature of the object as well as the social nature of reading. The visibility of these markings is controllable by the reader, and the access to the marks themselves is under the control of the network owner. Similarly, notes can be made, in a manner familiar to any use of academic pdf readers, and such marginalia have been part of reading throughout the history of the codex form book (Coover, 1992). However, here again, the network forces the reader to acknowledge their place within the bounds of nodes and edges, with the limitation of the eReader to enable the reader to gain access to the textual digressions. Utility is limited and false, granting sufficient usability to diminish the loss of this functionality, while being insufficient to enable the free use or ownership of the digital text itself.

The text consumed through reading here is not owned in the traditional sense. As has been widely reported, the eBook is distributed as a service, with the reader purchasing access rights to the text, rather than an individual copy, as would be the case with a codex form book. A record of purchases is held centrally, and once purchased, additional 'copies' of a file can be downloaded to a registered device, at least as long as that service is still available. Where once the text was a closed commodity, material and rendered complete in the view of the reader before they start to read, here the text is closed in that the reader has no control over its use beyond the opportunity to read, and share data about this reading with the network owner and selected social networks if desired. This is the commodification of the act of consumption itself, with access granted after purchase to any device connected to the network of distribution, but not to any device that might crack control of the book itself. The book remains elsewhere, with only its trace available to the reader to consume. The distribution network provides sufficient access to maintain the reader in their sense of denial, while controlling the actual materiality of the text is distant.

To heighten the sense of anxiety of the near completion of the text in an eReader, those attributes previously available to the reader of the physical book that indicate location are rendered obsolete. Page numbers are removed along with the page-less nature of the eBook and its ability to manipulate the structural aspects of the text, but the meta-textual components of the book: title, subtitle, cover, automatic access to a table of contents and removal of the information of the author are key to the limitation

of the reader to the landscape of the book, as an object within a network of other objects. These design choices must be intentional, as they lead to changes in the behaviour of the reader which heighten the connection the reader has, not to the book, but to the network of distribution. The removal of these features from the eBook effectively removes sight of the textual horizon, limiting the reader's access to the metadata of the book, disorientating the reader in understanding how much more of the book is available to read, and even removing any signifier of which book they might actually be reading. Blind to these structural elements of the codex book, the end of any text might be triggered with the next click for the page forward button. Further, the removal of cover art and the metadata of the author renders the eReader immune to providing information for any future book selection. To know whether an author has created more texts in a series, or developed a series of books in a similar genre, the reader must return to the site of purchase, and it is here, or at the screen of a host that can support the purchase of a future text that the images of the codex book return.

The development of the eBook predates the eReader, and the initial development of the practice of the production and consumption of eBooks as a resistance practice has allowed the enforcement of these factors of form to persist. The hackers who released texts from their codex form for 'Project Gutenberg' were forced by the limitations of the network for distribution, the memory available in PDA technology used as a reader, and the anxiety heightened by the nature of the text to remove visual luxuries like memory hungry images. The illustrations in a text were frequently dispensed with, and the cover of the codex book was replaced with a generic textual form, which details format and special text name only, as the limited nature of the operating systems of the period restricted titles of files to no more that eight characters (Ludovico, 2012).

Derrida confronts the nature of the book and the endless nature of the text (Royle, 2003). This is an argument composed with reference to a Structuralist's strata of the book embodying difference in the nature of the written language as technology rather than as a gift from god. This trait is itself rendered visible in the confusion of the text maintained by the eReader. Freed of the metadata of the title, physical configuration of page position, page split, cover design and authorial discourse, the limitation of the text becomes apparent, in the same way that a sailor, lost and denied the means to calculate their position is reduced to constantly watching the horizon for the first signs

of land, the reader is constantly reminded that the text is finite and that their anxiety will return, and with it the knowledge that there are fewer books available to be read.

The practices described by the people who have adopted eReader technology are shaped by each actor within the network, including the activity mediated by the eReader. Marketing activity undertaken by the companies who sell and distribute eReaders are all active in demonstrating the advantages of their product, using the attributes of the technology, some of which are discussed here. While the nature of the technology has driven the design of screen reader and files it utilises, the decisions, which have removed authorial content, privileging the name of the network and technical object above the name of the creator of the text. This is, I feel, intentional, and made to establish that the relationship the reader maintains to the network of distribution becomes primary. It is this relationship that the reader becomes dependent on for their release from the anxiety associated with the loss of the transitional object. While this practice would have been observable in the marketing discourse developed by publishers of the codex form, the fragmented nature of the distributed system would reduce the efficacy of this marketing discourse. The vertical integration of the book publishing and distribution enacted by Amazon has limited the ability for the publisher to develop a role as "anxiety alleviator in chief".

People who read using an eReader and file format, do so, in the expectation that the text they read is identical to that provided in a codex format, and do so for the conveniences afforded by the technologies involved. They do so completely aware of the significance of the form, at least in my opinion, as formed by the experiences shared by the people who have shaped this chapter. However, this does not mean that their experience is not forged by the technology they employ, nor is their relationship to the text they consume unaffected. The transient materiality afforded by digital technology means that the text as object, previously enjoyed by the readers here influences their new relationship to the eReader, with a resulting anxiety apparent in each of the participants interviewed. They compensate for this anxiety in various ways, with most resorting to a hoarding practice resulting in the purchase of additional book, or copies of books, so ensuring that they are never without a copy of a specific or potential text. The need to be in immediate procession of a book-as-transitional object is apparent, and as discussed by Stiegler (2013), the potential of technology rather than alleviating this effect, appears to intensify the discomfort, by removing from obvious relative visibility the object required to fill the transitional space of the reader. Where once the sight of the book might be sufficient to quell any concerns

about the availability of a text, only one participant here identified the eReader as a similar object. However, it should be noted that Emily still purchased books in threes, in case the initially selected text did not come up to expectation.

While not actively preying on the tendency of readers to require a book to be available, rather than an object which delivers a text, in the way an eReader does, the distribution of digital texts does appear to trigger strategic responses in some people who adopt the technology. This anxiety or discomfort may well be related to the fact that the technology is still emerging, and social practices for the codex object have been developed over thousands of years. The transitional nature of the technology cannot be avoided, however, this may in turn effect the way in which eReader technology is further adopted. For the current consumers of books and eBooks, the adoption of technology appears to be a partial solution to the physicality of the text.

A reader consistently seeks to establish a relationship to the texts they have collected as if they were material, and this material presence in some way militates against the digital form of the text, in a manner similar to the practices described by Kibby (2009) in relation to the collection of digital music files. While playlists and compilation CDs are not appropriate for the written word, buying celebration copies of favoured texts, sharing physical copies as gifts, and documenting reading experiences all fall within the category for making material the digital memory of reading. Whether this action is born of the response to digital material form of the text read, or, if the reader is simply the making material the personal bibliography of their memory, in a manner similar to Benjamin with his personal library (1999), requires further research, at a time when the eReader is further normalised and practices around it are more firmly established.

In the next chapters we will return to the book as an object of contemplation, with its use in a treasure hunt, where the affective response to the text form part of the prize (chapter 5) and with the use of books in exploring how the aura of their use can provide a conduit for affect (chapter 6).

CHAPTER FIVE

Bookcrossing

Chapter annotation: <u>Bookcrossing.com</u>, history, game and social structure; the digital bookshelf; etiquette; Australia and Europe; Israel and critical mass; the gift of the book.

Introduction

Making a gift of a book, and with it, sharing the opportunity to experience the experience of reading, is central to the process that is documented on the website "Bookcrossing.com". Started by Ron Hornbaker in 2001, based initially in Kansas City, this has become a global community of people who enjoy reading and enjoy sharing the pleasure they find in reading. Established between the launch of Friends Reunited in the United Kingdom and Friendster in the USA, Bookcrossing.com functions as a social network for readers, where books can be shared in exchange or in the act of gift-giving, discussed and reviewed. This social interaction is generated through the shared activities that centre on the public gift of a book. The website was developed to exploit the capacity of an online database to allow people to track their books:

What or where is Bookcrossing?

> Q1: Where'd you get the idea for BookCrossing.com?
> We've always liked sites like Where's George? (which tracks U.S. currency by serial number) and PhotoTag.org (which releases disposable cameras then tracks their whereabouts and displays the pictures taken along the way) and GeoCaching.com (where you can stash and search for items with GPS technology), and so we thought to ourselves, "okay, what's something else that people would have fun releasing and then tracking?" And we thought of books, which made perfect sense, since everyone (well, almost everyone) loves books. Twenty-eight mostly sleepless nights later, on April 17, 2001, BookCrossing.com was launched (www.bookcrossing.com/faq).

The website Bookcrossing.com was created to enable people to release and track books that they had decided they did not need to keep, and which might be enjoyed by other people. As noted in the quotation above, the website and game it proposes was one of a number of games, where one can leave, release or simply use an everyday item, and then track its geographical progress, with the help of other people similarly interested in both the token being tracked and in the possibility of the game. The closest analogy would be the reference to "Where's George?", a website that allowed users to track individual dollar bills as they travel within the social and

financial system. In place of paper money, books are used as the token to be "released" and subsequently "caught". Bookcrossing.com is an early example of a social network site (SNS), with the book release game drawing together a community of reader's who wish to share books in this way (Dalli, D. & Coriolani, M., 2008).

In this chapter, I will look to explore how this community "for people who love books" further supports the experience of reading, both personal and vicarious, through the reported experience of another person's reading of that book. In this way, people who use <u>Bookcrossing.com</u> replace the book, that had signified access to the diegetic object of the text, in such a way that they compensate for this loss, by substituting a new significant object in its place. This practice is explored in several ways: through my engagement directly with the community, as a member of Bookcrossing and participant in the process of sharing books, at local meet ups and larger conventions, and through examining the discourse of other participants who have shared their experiences, specifically of Bookcrossing and of reading generally. It is through this analysis that I propose to explain how Bookcrossing, with its combination of treasure hunt game and book review social network, might provide a model that replaces the practice of creating a personal library to represent the personal reading experience.

Site and Game

Bookcrossing is a treasure hunt game with books. People who participate "release" books they own, leaving then in a public place in a bid to share the book as a gift with another person. The person who finds the book is invited to read the book and share a review of it with the original owner on Bookcrossing.com, subsequently releasing the book again. This process of capture and re-release allows a book to travel, both from person to person and geographically, and a history of this journey is documented on the website, recorded along with the review of the text on the "bookshelf" of each person who has registered having found and read the book on the website. Books are recorded by the user in a database on the website and given a unique number, or Bookcrossing ID (BCID). The website allows users to record both their participation in the game of releasing book, and to record their own experiences of reading the text, which is then subsequently shared with both previous and future holders of the book.

As *"Ruse1966"*, I have been a member of this community since 2005, and have attended a number of local meetings as well as several national conventions. Each member has a profile page on Bookcrossing.com which allows personal information to be shared and grants access to their personal bookshelf. This virtual bookshelf displays all the books each member has registered, caught or released, and categorises each book registered in one of five status: to be read, available, permanent collection, reserved or travelling, which inevitably becomes the final status for the majority of books on the site. The website offers direct messaging, allowing members to communicate discreetly, and there are forums used by members to communicate openly within the community. These communications are supplemented with other off site fora, hosted on local or on other SNS. Bookcrossing.com also provides appropriate services to enable members to document their Bookcrossing activity using other social networks, such as Good Reads, Twitter and Facebook.

Users document their game activity with the creation of a "Journal Entry", which is recorded against the unique Bookcrossing ID (BCID) allocated to the book. This entry fulfils multiple functions: recording the release or capture of any individual book, and allowing members to record their experience of reading the book. This is done using a combination of a simple rating out of 10, along with a review of the text. Various approaches are taken in creating this review, with some members simply copying the reviews found on other books sites, while others write an original review, frequently approaching a traditional newspaper style book review. The BCID is added to each book, frequently with a purpose-printed label that includes the BCID and instructions to introduce the nature of the book they have found. These labels or 'bookplates' can be purchased from the website or can be designed by the user themselves, and are generally illustrated with a book-related image to attract the eye of a potential reader. The text of the label is written in the first person as if it has been spoken by the book. A reader who 'catches' a book they would like to read is lucky to be in receipt of this gift, but it is the book that is travelling, and it is documenting this journey which is the primary purpose of the site. The record of a member's reading and releases is relatively simple, being a fixed list with no filtering or sorting functionality. However, this record of a member's reading experience has proven to be a key component in the relative success of the website. The affection the reader has for the experience a book signifies, or rather for the experience of reading that text, is recorded here, bound to the unique individually numbered book. It is this affect that the text of the label describes, and is

the gift which the book acts as a token for, and that the book encapsulates for the Bookcrossing member.

History of Bookcrossing.com

The website was developed and made public in the spring of 2001. Developed as a private project between enthusiasts, rather than with the sense of any potential profit to be acquired from the eventual sale of the site, the project was made public in a little under a month. The game fitted with a number of similar games and websites popular at the time:

> When and how did it start?
> Although there were websites tracking things such as dollar bills and pictures, business partner Ron Hornbaker noted that nothing existed for tracking books. After all, books were more than just tangible objects, rather they possessed elements of emotional attachment and strong opinion; books were not only items collected and revered, but were intrinsically shared. This was the nidus that began our journey. With the help of Ron's wife, Kaori, and cofounders Bruce & Heather Pedersen, the site was launched on April 21, 2001. The site remains a fun way to track and share books while connecting people at deeper levels using books as the architecture and glue to facilitate the Great Conversation (http://www.bookcrossing.com/about).

The website and community of users quickly gained media attention, with the website being mentioned in newspaper coverage of new websites as early as July 2001. The aspiration to turn "the world into one giant library" had emerged as a central component in the discourse surrounding the website and community, being used in media coverage, which marked a relaunch of the website in April 2002. First media attention for the website outside of the USA and Canada followed with news reports of the game in Australia in June 2002, with the first European media coverage occurring in the following month. A discourse of the book as a significant object of culture is central, not only to the media coverage of the game and site, but further to the purpose of the game and the pleasure it provides. Documented publicly and shared prolifically, the game of documenting ones personal taste and experiences of reading proved to be popular with people who both had access to, and required access to more books to read. While not 'just tangible objects' the private retention of the book is an act of denial, robbing others of the pleasure of the text, as well as of the game of sharing the website promotes.

The website has now spread to be active on a near global basis, with members recorded as resident in 194 countries, while "About Bookcrossing" includes the

following information: "There are currently 1,911,010 BookCrossers and 9,756,454 books travelling throughout 132 countries." Bookcrossing operates as a type of virtual reading group. While expressing the intention of providing a mechanism and structure to support the sharing of text, such that the collective activity provides a global library, the website text continues to describe the mission and nature of the website to be social and communal:

> What's our mission?
> Very simply, we aim to connect people through books." "It's a smart social networking site. It's a celebration of literature and a place where books get new life. BookCrossing is the act of giving a book a unique identity so, as the book is passed from reader to reader, it can be tracked and thus connecting its readers (http://www.bookcrossing.com/about).

A number of structures have been developed by members to further the social aspects of the community. Members discuss books read and to be read, and books are made available to other members through the private messaging system on the site. These books are distributed through a mechanism called "controlled release", where a book might be requested or a swap offered for a book listed on a member's bookshelf. To help initiate these exchanges, each member can publish a wish list of books they intend to read but do not have a copy of yet. Also, a network of local communities, operating at various local, national and international levels, organise gift circles and books are distributed on the basis of a ballot. These events, called "not so secret santa" (NSSS) enable members to distribute their books, safe in the knowledge that the book will be recorded as a catch, reviewed and in all likelihood will get a future release, as demanded by the etiquette of the Bookcrossing community.

The two strands of the community weave around the book and the consumption of the text, allowing members of the website to retain some part of their sense of ownership of the specific book released. This is maintained through the relationship maintained by the database of the website, and through communal shared activities centred on reading, organised both directly through and separately from other social networking sites, which further extend the community. These practices directly pass books onto another person, who is usually, but not exclusively, already active on Bookcrossing.com. Books are shared through distinct sharing processes: Controlled Releases, Bookrays, Random acts of Bookcrossing Kindness and Not So Secret Santa gifts, and Conventions (and unofficial or Unconventions).

A controlled release entails a book passing to a specific person to be read. While this person is not necessarily a member, where they are it is expected that the book will receive a new journal entry to mark it being received. A further entry and review should be posted once the book has been read, and a final journal entry should be posted on the occasion of it being re-released. A controlled release has the reward of ensuring a catch for the member releasing the book, and is recorded as such in the statistics on the member's profile. To offset some of this advantage, it is usual to mark any controlled release as such in the initial journal entry.

The other sharing processes involve a modified version of the controlled release to share a text. A 'Bookray' is a shared reading experience, and might be considered a sequential reading group. A copy of a text is passed from reader to reader, with each participant documenting their personal reading experience with a journal entry. At the end of the ray, the book is generally returned to its original owner, but in many cases the book is released again in the wild. Where a collection of books are shared in a similar manner, frequently with a common author or theme, this is called a 'Book Spiral'.

A Random Act of Bookcrossing Kindness (RABK) involves a book released and sent to a member who has included the title on a wishlist, hosted on the Bookcrossing.com. While being described as random, these usually occur within the community between members who have a existing relationship. A 'Not so Secret Santa' is a gift exchange, where a member volunteers to take part in a book change, usually to celebrate a religious or secular holiday or celebration. A gift is given, which involves a couple of registered books, again from a list of titles on the member's maintained wishlist, with additional small items, such as chocolate or a book related gift, such as a bookmark. Conventions and UnConventions are community events where members gather to participate in Bookcrossing related events and enjoy a space where books can be released and captured. The name "Unconvention" or "Uncon" was adopted by members in the UK in 2005, who created a UK based meeting in response to an annual World Bookcrossing Convention, which was held in the USA. This act of resistance replicates the sense of resistance present in the use of Bookcrossing in general, with the sense that the exchange and circulation of books promoted within the community is an expression of resistance to the commodification of culture in general (Dalli and Corciolani, 2008). Books are collected by convention attendees and are released at the convention in a dedicated communal space. This initially takes place within the convention, with part of a room dedicated to this task,

and any books which remain uncaught at the end of the event are released publicly, during a wild release walk, an event that generally marks the end of the convention. The convention release table is a space for convention attendees to exchange book releasing tips, and for the discussion of books and reading generally, and it is in this space that many of the conversations which have informed this chapter have taken place.

A digital bookshelf

For members of the Bookcrossing community, how might the website represent an advance on the traditional bookshelf? And might this global library feed the gaze of a transitory object in the Winnicottian sense? In interview, Bookcrossing members have discussed how their own reading experiences have been enhanced through this practice that actually reduces the number of books they have at home. Here the website fulfils the role of a virtual book shelf for the users, acting as an archive, documenting the reading experiences for the user, and enabling the user to demonstrate their taste in reading material. In an interview, "Olivia" described how her use of the website touches all areas of her reading practices.

> Olivia: Well, all my books are registered [as] most of my books come through Bookcrossing. I don't keep many books anymore so I read a book and I release it straight away. I tend to wild release mostly. If somebody offers to lend me a book now, and it's not on Bookcrossing, I tend to say no. I'd rather the books are on Bookcrossing. It suits my brain. I like Bookcrossing as it keeps a record of everything I've read and if in years time I want to go back and see what I thought of it I have a reference there, I like logging things. I like to keep things recorded and Bookcrossing is a way of recording my reading, it works pretty well.

The role of the virtual bookshelf on Bookcrossing offers a direct replacement here of the role of the traditional bookshelf, in that it allows Olivia to document her reading experience, while not needing to retain a copy of the book itself. The ability to maintain a list of those books read is here a replacement for one of the functions associated with having a copy of a book that has been read on display in a home. The record of a reading experience as a personal cultural statement becomes the site for

the gaze to be activated. In conversation with other members across conventions and in personal meet ups, each has subsequently offered an opinion which supports this supposition, in that this function of the website documenting the reading experience in this way, is more than sufficient to compensate for any labour required to participate in the game and community.

> Olivia: [I]t is like that sense that it is there and it's safe, and should I ever want to have a look at it I can. It's not that I actually spend much time looking at it. Very occasionally I might but; in honesty I know that if it wasn't really there it wouldn't really matter, but I just quite like it. I just like to know that it's there if I want to look.

It is not the text per se that Olivia is interested in reliving, but her experience of the storyworld she is anxious to revive, in a partially remembered form, that she finds the pleasure of the text itself reenacted. That vertiginous moment when the realisation that the storyworld of the text is unreal, with the reader sensing themselves present in the real again, enables perspective and understanding to surface from the reader's own emergence from the diegetic object of the text itself. The memory of this is enabled through the gaze on the image of the book, through the review of the textual experience, and through the memories of the storyworld and diegetic object, triggered in response to the history of the specific book, recording its progress as a token for the gift game of the site.

The close examination of a bookshelf is a pleasure enjoyed by visitor and stranger alike. The only occasion to search one's own bookshelf is to look for a particular book or books, to read or be read, or to see if one has read them. The shelves of books offer an aid to the memory, with the book signifying the experience of the text, even if only partially recalled, and signifying the pleasure of the text consumed, which itself grants a promise of access to the object of the text, with its own further deferred significance.

The replacement of the bookshelf with a media object in the form of a website, with the individual books replaced with a single object of significance, I see as highlighting the momentary aspect of the gaze when it alights on a shelf of books. The nature of bookcrossing.com, with public profiles that detail the reading experience and cultural taste of a community of readers, all sharing and exchanging books as part of a game, which promotes the experience of the text above ownership of the

commodity of the published book, replaces the requirement for a personal surplus of books with an abundance maintained at a communal level. The game aspect of the site draws together a community as it celebrates its successful releases and commiserates when a book is vandalised or lost. The expectation is that a book will be caught and the text enjoyed, otherwise the game would represent organised littering. It is in anticipation of the pleasure of the text once more being consumed, if vicariously, that the game is played.

The nature of the reading experience is central to this practice of book sharing, and with this re-using a supply of books that have been pre-consumed, allowing the Bookcrossing user to make a gift of the experience of the text to the finder of the book. The pleasure in releasing the book is found in being able to offer the signified experience of reading this text, frequently based on the memory of ones own earlier reading, with the unspoken understanding that this experience is shared through sharing the book as a gift. Also, it is through the game being played by others, that ones own opportunity to enjoy future reading experiences is assured, so the forward gift of the book released is in the expectation that one will catch a future released text. The addition of game-specific metadata maintains the ties back to the previous reading experiences of any book, and offers the invitation to the new holder to enter the game, by joining Bookcrossing, and possibly registering their own collected book on their virtual bookshelf, and further extending the shelves of this self proclaimed "Global Library".

Interviews versus Participant Observations

As one of the four case histories explored here to offer insight into the changing materiality of the book, Bookcrossing.com, with the novel use this community makes of physical books, provides an opportunity to understand how the object of the book is currently understood by readers, both for those who use the website, and more generally in the wider reading community. As the Bookcrossing community and website are dependent on and directly informed by the culture that surrounds the concept of the book, the use of the book as an object that encapsulates and distributes texts, the community of members are ideally placed, and possible uniquely informed, to be able to communicate the changes that are currently under way with the emergence of a digital textual replacement for the physical book. One of the key components of my choice of this community was my prior knowledge of this

community and the uses to which they put the book. This is informed by my membership of the community, as I have been a member of the community since 2005. I attended the previous UnConvention in 2006, as well as being part of a meet up, which was active in between 2005 and 2007, releasing books both in the UK and across Europe. My participation has informed my choices and shaped my thesis research from a very early stage.

After my initial personal interviews which includes the opinions and experience shared by "Olivia", and before attending the Nottingham UnConvention in September 2011, I made a choice to collect information, and most importantly the views of other members, by taking field notes rather than attempting to make sound or video recordings of events and conversations. This was triggered, in part, at the UnConvention, where the brief and intermittent nature of participant interaction at the event, where much of the conversation took place during breaks between events and while browsing the UnConvention Book Release tables. Early attempts to record interactions were ineffective with the levels of noise present in the environment and the distances involved made the recording practice ineffective, and resulted in unwieldy conversations, that provided little in the way of insight and were impossible to follow in a structured manner. In addition, the practice of recording interviews proved a distraction to other members attending the convention, such that I felt that the conversations I could record represented atypical behaviour, and were inconsistent with my experiences of the convention immediately previous to my attempt to record. After spending some time waiting to see if the appearance of the recording equipment would become normalised for the other participants, I chose to return to simply taking notes and capturing my own experience of the convention as a participant. I continued to make plain my research and made notes in plain sight, as I felt was demanded to maintain my integrity as a member of the community I had come to document, however the removal of the audio recorder did enable the conversations I was able to participate in to return to a normal state. So, while providing leaflets to inform other convention participants with information as to the nature of the research being undertaken, and making my research known to the wider book crossing community, I found note-taking by hand to provide a less intrusive alternative to a portable recorder.

As Bookcrossing.com is a social network site, it offers a number of opportunities in the recruitment of participants. To this end, the text of the profile page has been used to announce the research and its goals to anyone who catches a book I have

released, or has previously held any book I have since caught (http://www.bookcrossing.com/mybookshelf/ruse1966/#dProfile). The web site provides a number of fora to allow the community to share tips and news of their Bookcrossing activities (http://www.bookcrossing.com/forum). These have been used to further research in a number of ways: appeals were made to potential participants who would be happy to share their thoughts in interviews, and the "Conventions and Meetings" forum (http://www.bookcrossing.com/forum/22) provided access to various meetings attended in the UK and Australia. While the material collected at conventions and meet ups was captured on paper rather than recorded directly and transcribed later, I maintain that this approach was more productive in relation to the nature of the material collected and the number of interactions I was able to record. Additionally, the presence of a visible recorder being held forward within a space that is primarily social introduced a barrier, requiring explanation and providing a distraction to the actual business of discussing books. However, care was taken to maintain my visibility to all potential participants, and those members who have been active participants with the collection of the material discussed in this chapter and thesis have been provided with the same levels of care and control offered to the participants in each of the other case studies. I remain an active member of Bookcrossing.com and plan to provide access to this research to the community via Bookcrossing.com, with a report planned for the international convention in April 2015.

While the methods discussed in the earlier chapter outline how an approach of critical discourse analysis has been used to explore how the thought and experiences related by the readers participating in each case study are analysed, the personal interaction, combined with the effects of the previous personal involvement within the community is something which requires acknowledgement. While I cannot claim to understand all of the motivations which lead to the involvement in this community of the different people which the community attracts, I have been willing to be involved in the release and capture of books for a number of years, and should acknowledge my personal attractions which led to my participating. Bookcrossing.com was personally attractive in that it promised two unique opportunities: the offer of free books to read, and the chance to pass on books, which I was no longer interested in. Personally, my interest was primarily piqued by the first of these two possibilities, and Bookcrossing has provided access to a number of books, which I was interested in and insufficiently motivated by to buy a copy, or in some cases, which I was ignorant of

entirely. After an initial burst of energy, my motivation to release every book read as it was completed waned, and instead of registering each book prior to releasing them at Brighton Station, I found I was transferring books once read to a new pile of recently read books, which were now "for review". Books I had less interested in would be given away. Books I knew were of interest to friends who were members would receive Controlled Releases, with the request that the book be Wild Released once they had finished with it. This request was largely fulfilled and is responsible for the majority of my "catches". This lack of success in having books caught and registered was a source of disappointment with the game of Bookcrossing. I wanted my released books to be collected and to travel, as the community and game offers, and in most cases a book release did not result in a catch. My books appeared to be simply lost.

Mount ToBe[Read]

Walter Benjamin's analysis of the different ways in which a collector might acquire books, most notably in "Unpacking My Library" (Benjamin, 1999a), explores how the book collector acquires and maintains their interest in the collection. He begins the essay by describing his pleasure in unpacking his library. He describes his mood "of anticipation" and explains how his essay will explore the mode of acquisition of the collector. He pointedly asserts that his essay is not about the object or any collection, but rather "the relationship between the collector and his books" (1999a, p61). Benjamin begins with his thoughts about being a collector:

> Naturally, his existence is tied to many other things as well: to a very mysterious relationship to ownership, (...) also, to a relationship to objects, which does to emphasis their functional, utilitarian value - that is, their usefulness - but studies and loves them as the scene, the stage of their fate(1999a, p62).

> I am not exaggerating when I say that to a collector the acquisition of an old book is its rebirth (1999a, p63).

The book is in captivity awaiting the collector to discover it.

> [O]ne of the finest memories of a collector is the moment when he rescued a book to which he might never have given a thought, much less a wistful look, because he found it lonely and abandoned on the market place and bought it to give it its freedom - the way the prince bought a beautiful slave girl in The Arabian Nights. To a book collector, you see, the true freedom of all books is somewhere on his shelves (1999a, p66).

The packed books become 'mountains of cases', releasing the books from their case becomes a process of mining, bringing the books "to the light of day", but this process, which for me compares these individual volumes to a gemstone commodity rather than an industrial ore, frees not the text, the narratives of the books encased, but exclaims 'what memories crowd in upon you!' (1999a, p67) The objects described are treasured, or at least considered sufficiently attractive to warrant further interest, and this interest has triggered the decision to acquire the object in question, but the material of the book embodies the actions of the collector, the memory of the way in which the book was discovered, or, in other instances, created. Only in one instance does Benjamin mention the quality of the text as a determining factor in his desire to acquire a book. For the remainder, that they are part of this library is sufficient evidence as to their value, at least to Benjamin the collector. '[T]he phenomena of collecting loses its meaning as it loses its personal owner.' (1999a, p68) Benjamin states that it is only when in a private collection that "the objects get their due" (1999a, p68).

Ownership is the most intimate relationship that one can have to objects (1999a, p69).

For the collector, the book offers a significance, which while connected to, is not exclusively born of the text that they contain. The books hold a value that is intrinsic. Benjamin views the book as free while it is safely stored within the bounds of his personal library, and it retains value while in confines of the collection. This is in opposition to the discourse and practice of Bookcrossing, but is framed within a similar understanding of what the book represents. While Benjamin collects antiquarian books, where the edition and binding would be central to the book as an object, Bookcrossing operates largely with paperbound editions, produced in volume, and traded as commodity objects rather than as individual unique items. However, the value of the textual experience is similarly treasured, with books repeatedly appreciated for the text they contain (1999a, p67). In place of the 'mountains of cases', members talk of 'Mount ToBe', the pile of books frequently stored by the bed of the reader which represents those books still to be read, at some point in an ill-defined future. Bookcrossing members frequently discuss how, while they joined the community as a way of reducing the number of books they had at home, their participation in the community has in fact increased the number of books they have access to, both immediately at home, and via the various social process of distribution

practiced through the social structures of the community. While it would appear on the surface that the discourse used by Benjamin and Bookcrossing is in opposition, the sense of the book gaining its value in the relationship between itself and the collector/reader is consistent. While in the wild, the travelling book is a gem waiting to be discovered, and this is similarly true for Benjamin, in the jewels that acquire the memories of the collector. The book in the wild is always an opportunity for a catch, with the journal entry and shared experience of the book that follows.

What about Bookcrossing and Reading?

> [F]ascination emanates from a real presence that obliges us to prefer what it hides, to prefer something remote, which it prevents us from attaining even as it offers itself (Starobinski, 1989, p2).

Starobinski, with the collected essays that form the contents of *The Living Eye* (1989) contemplates the nature of the critical gaze in art and literature. His reflections on the nature of the text when read have informed the reading of both Derrida and Iser, and it is with his analysis of the gaze when turned to a book as an object that encases a text. Describing a book as an object which retains power through allusive nature:

> The hidden is the other side of a presence. The power of absence, if we attempt to describe it, leads us to the power possessed in varying degrees by certain real objects. These objects point beyond themselves toward a magical space. They are indices of something they are not (Starobinski, 1989, p1).

The gaze is irresistibly drawn into the vertiginous void that forms in the object of fascination: an 'infinity' opens up, devouring the real object by which it made itself sensible. In truth, if the object of fascination calls for the abdication of our will, it is because that object itself is annihilated by the absence it provokes. This strange power in a way stems from a lack, an insufficiency in the object. Rather than hold our fascination, it allows itself to be transcended in a perspective of the imagination, an obscure dimension. But objects can seem insufficient only in response to an exigency in our gaze, which, awakened to desire by an allusive presence and finding no employment for all its energies in the visible thing, transcends it and loses itself in an empty space, headed for a beyond from which there is no return. (Starobinski, 1989, p2)

This provocation demands action, as the beholder is impelled to devour the text offered and withheld from the gaze by the cover/enclosure of the text. For Benjamin, this provocation demands the ownership of the object, with the control and esteem this provides. For the member, where the ludic pleasure of the game provided by the records of the future capture and release of the specific object compensate for the loss of direct contact to the source of fascination, the gaze is redirected to the virtual object of the visual replica of the book released. 'Sight is asked to lead the mind beyond the realm of vision into that of meaning' (Starobinski,1989, p11), and the book becomes signified, with the documented experience of reading collapsed into the experience of the textual object itself.

The experience of reading, as described by Starobinski, appears to offer access to a state, which might be compared to the 'body without organs' described by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari, 2008, p4)

> It transforms the written signs on the page into living speech and, beyond that, establishes a complex world of images, ideas, and feelings. This absent world was waiting for help, anxious for protection. Once awakened, however, this imaginary world requires the reader to make an absolute sacrifice: it no longer allows him to keep his distance. It demands contact and involvement; it imposes its own rhythm and its own destiny. (Starobinski, 1989, p11)

Two further passages of Starobinski bear inspection, in that they provide analysis of the tensions born of the relation between reader and text:

> Image making, then, came only after a certain delay. Its effect was to reduce the tension of the situation, to lessen anxiety, to make the obscure fermentation of desire more tolerable. What is most authentic here is not the creation of images (all borrowed from books) but the silent intensity of the primitive emotion: feeling, looking for a way out, turns to images for both diversion and temporary satisfaction. The point bears emphasising: Rousseau's imaginary life was above all a deployment of the powers of feeling, an expansiveness without definite object that revealed by turns in the keenest joys of pride and the pleasures of abject humility (1989, p35)

and

> Images vanish, the gaze loses itself in the infinite. The expansive power of desire, having created the imaginary world in order to negate and transcend the imperfections of the real one, completes its trajectory with a final negation, which abolishes the imaginary spectacle itself (Starobinski, 1989, p38).

In Rousseau, Starobinski traces the experience of the impelled reader, who documented his relationship to books and their relation to his experience of desire and self-knowledge. While not as erudite in composition, the activity recorded on Bookcrossing reflects on both the experiences of reading and the relation the reader

has to the book as an object. Creating an avatar as replacement for the physical book that has now been released, enables the game supported by the site to fulfil a new role for the reader, that of responding to the absence of the object presented by the text. The assemblage of the book has been supplemented with its avatar within the site, and this in time becomes the representation of the experience of the text for any subsequent reader who updates the record of the book with their own reading experiences. The meta text of the book created here, encompassing both the response to the diegetic object of the text and the ludic experience of the game, in the form of release notes, documents both these affective responses.

In *Proust and Signs*, Gilles Deleuze study of the final volume of *A la recherché du temps perdu*, Deleuze reveals a system of signs used by Proust in the depiction of the text. As outlined by Bogue (1989), Deleuze uncovers a system of signs, which can be divided into four categories: Worldly signs in the text are used to define a social aspect of the text, representing action and thought within the text. Signs of love signify 'multiple worlds which the lover must explore and unfold through loving' (Deleuze, 2000, p37). The signs of sense experience are those signs signified by involuntary memories, most famously rendered in the response of the narrator to the madeleine at Combray. Finally, the signs of art 'afford a full and stable revelation of essences' offering a glimpse of 'the true nature of the other three kinds of signs' (Deleuze, 2000, p37).

If I concentrate on the latter signs identified by Deleuze, when considering a book as a cultural sign, Deleuze identifies that, for Proust, the truth of such signs lie not in their objectivity, but in 'alogical or supra logical'essences, 'beyond designated objects, beyond intelligible and formulated truths, but which are also beyond subjective chains of association' The 'essence' of the text encapsulated within all and any book becomes part of the subjective association of any book. The personal experience of reading and the time spent in consuming any text becomes embodied in the material form of the book.

Elsewhere, in *Difference and Repetition* (2004), Deleuze expands on this model of the sign as a multimodal essence, enabling and denying access to signified understanding simultaneously:

> Problems and their symbolic fields stand in a relationship with signs. It is the signs which 'cause problems' and are developed in a symbolic field. The paradoxical functioning of the faculties - including, in the first instance, sensibility with respects to the signs - thus refers to the Ideas which run throughout all the faculties and awaken

them each in turn. Conversely, the Idea which itself offers sense to language refers each case to the paradoxical functioning of the faculty. The exploration of Ideas and the elevation of each faculty to its transcendent exercise amounts to the same thing. These are two aspects of an essential apprenticeship or process of learning (Deleuze, 2004, p204).

The experience of texts, of reading, and of the difference understood to be present in books through the repetition of that reading, are all encapsulated within the signified experience offered by the presence of a book. 'A book exists only through the outside and on the outside' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2008, p4).

Deleuze maintains that the assemblage of the book denotes the experience of the storyworld of the text of the book. The pleasure of all texts are provided through the ludic practices of reading, with access provided by the presence of the book. As an author, Deleuze appears to demand that the reader acknowledge their own role in assigning significance to the object of the book. Before reading, the assemblage of the book, free of ideological content, offers only the a promise of access to the pleasure of reading. Once read, any book inherits a further regime of signs indicating the experience of reading the encapsulated text, along with the spatial and temporal experience of it's consumption. Once opened, the power of the storyworld consumes the power of the book as an object separate from the text.

Melbourne (Winter) and Brighton

As a social network of bibliophiles, Bookcrossing has a number of real world structures to supplement the virtual connectedness the website and gift structures provide. These structures are generally local and personal, with clusters forming in a manner similar to other social reading groups. However, the structure of fora enables Bookcrossing people to find and approach like minded people, who might like to find new books or share favourite reading material. The community will get together to exchange books as controlled releases, sharing rays and NSSS gifts as well as sharing recent finds, catches and favourite reads. When travelling, members will network and meet up with local people, and I adopted this practice as part of my research practice, under the guise of participant observation.

In Melbourne to attend a symposium organised by *The Centre for the Book* (http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/the-book/) a request for a local Bookcrossing member to meet with that I had posted on the Australia Bookcrossing.com forum was answered by Evie, a local Bookcrossing member. There are 4887 Bookcrossing members listed

in Victoria, 24% of those registered Australian Bookcrossing members, and just over half of whom are registered as resident as in Melbourne. This reflects part of the bibliocentric culture prevalent in in the city. Melbourne was the second city to receive designation as a *City of Literature* within UNESCO's *Creative Cities Network*, and hosts the largest publishing and bookshop sectors in Australia, and the state of Victoria is responsible for 43% of the total books sales in the country (http://wheelercentre.com/about-us/melbourne-a-city-of-literature). If any city was likely to be well disposed to the idea of publicly sharing its reading material, one might assume it would have a profile like Melbourne.

An academic, working at Melbourne University, Evie has been a member of Bookcrossing for several years. As a gift for me, Evie made a controlled release of a copy of *The Penguin collection of Henry Lawson Short Stories* by Henry Lawson (BCID: 614-11231464) (http://www.bookcrossing.com/journal/11231464/), so I had a piece of Australia to take home with me. The first story in the collection, called "The Drover's Wife" is one Evie studied while at school. The story is about a lonely woman, who protects home and family from a venomous snake. The story represents a cultural view of Australia as wilderness, but felt a world away from the comforts afforded by the coffee shop in the heart of modern Melbourne.

While talking about what aspects of Bookcrossing Evie found most important, social or community structures were highlighted, where a member uses Bookcrossing to read a book communally, using the Bookray structure. In this a single copy is shared sequentially around a small group of readers. Each reader posts a personal review and acknowledgements to document the progress of the book round the ray, with the volume eventually being returned "home", back to the person who originated the ray, with the reading experience of the book documented by all who had read the copy in between. This communal practice of reading a book replicates the structure and social reading process of a Reading Group, without the investment of additional copies of the subject material in question. Additionally, it offers the advantage that each subsequent reader gains access to the insights provided by the previous reader or readers, with their reviews offering supporting evidence for your personal reading experience or grist for your critical mill, as your perspective demands. Evie expressed a fondness for the opinions of others when choosing books to read, and that they perform a number of roles:

- ○ validation of choice of reading material,
- ○ validation of the experience of any given text,

- ○   validation of the memory of the text,
- ○   validation for their original choice of reading material.

On reflection, Evie offered an opinion that the final point might not be so relevant for a book caught after a wild release than one chosen in a more predictable manner, Bookcrossing etiquette demands that a book caught should always be read and reviewed prior to its subsequent release. This might be part of the game of Bookcrossing, but the testimony of other members indicates that not all members maintain quite this level of integrity around their personal participation. Evie related a story of a book she had released in the Northern Territories which had returned, through its capture and subsequent release, to the same university department and the desk of a colleague. They had not spoken about the book and while they had both known that the other was on Bookcrossing, the capture of the book came as a pleasant surprise. Bookcrossing had resulted in a net increase in the number of books Evie has at home, and even with the release of over 1600 books in the time she has been a member of the network, Bookcrossing is still liable to increase the numbers of books available to be read.

A release alert email was received from Bookcrossing, which contained details of two books due to be released at "The Mount Cafe", located in the basement of the Victoria State Library in Melbourne. A release alert is a mechanism used by Bookcrossing, where an email is sent to announce the release of a book, its title and location, and a user registers to receive these emails for a specific geographical area, which in this case was Melbourne. For any user of Bookcrossing, who is interesting in a catch rather than releasing a book, this is essential information, the blast of a bugle to announce that the chase is on. In this case, the release alert provided an opportunity to contact another Bookcrossing user, asking if there was a chance to meet up. Rather than meet for a coffee, Hannah mentioned that there is a regular meeting at "The Green Sage Cafe" in the suburb of Melbourne called Templestowe.

Hannah started the meet up in 2008 as a way to increase the number of books being circulated in the local area, and generate more interest in Bookcrossing. The meet is held as a local coffee shop and organic cafe, where the proprietor is happy to receive the extra customers on a slow Sunday morning and prepared to house a bookshelf that provides storage space for the books left at the Official Bookcrossing Zone (OBCZ) set up to cater for the bibliographic needs of the group. Official Bookcrossing zones are another cornerstone of the book releasing network that has been generated by Bookcrossing. A OBCZ is a safe location, often a shelf in a friendly

pub or cafe, but elsewhere a dedicated telephone box (such as the box in Colchester, used for a mass release as part of the 2012 Unconvention) or busy travel hub, such as Brighton railway station, where benches frequently host released books. An OBCZ is a place to release books to be browsed and selected, much in the way one would visit a bookshop. Other members will use the space as a safe place where a wild release will not be damaged or removed as litter, and where anyone can browse in the hope of picking up a recycled mainstream novel or an occasional unusual or exotic volume, released by someone from the local community. An OBCZ provides a virtual landmark for the community, facilitating both the game, and social structures for the site. This is a place where a member can safely expect their catch rate to be increased, and so expect to enjoy the ludic aspect of the site, along with the recognition that the book release was attractive to another, and likely if network etiquette is followed, to have the history of this book updated with the experience of the latest reader, with a new series of journal entries. The numbers of people attending any particular week's event fluctuates between two and fourteen people, and can include a retired policewoman who has now published two novels based on her experiences in the Melbourne constabulary. On this particular morning, there were just three attendees, with Hannah, another regular and close friend of Hannah called Ella and myself.

Hannah's introduction to Bookcrossing was by way of catching a book that had been wild released, while she was on a skiing holiday in Denver, Colorado. This first book had introduced her to the concept and she immediately took up the challenge of the game and started to release books. She reported that she was happy to release books, including those read by her husband, creating a review for the release notes based in his spoken opinion rather than reading it herself. This is about the ethical reuse of a book once read, recycling books to more readers, rather than the book become a dead object retaining only a whisper of its previous potential. One effect of her participation has been to increase the rate of her personal reading, mainly reading while travelling, which forms part of her regular work schedule. She described buying books as a release, frequently visiting the second hand bookshops which are a feature of Melbourne. Ecological concerns are central to her participation in Bookcrossing, to the extent that her avatar on Bookcrossing is the image of a reclining kangaroo.

The social communal activity provided by Bookcrossing has become important for Hannah, and she was a member of the organisational committee which arranged the 2014 Australia Convention, a biannual event which was due to take place in Melbourne in 2014. This event, which Hannah was organised along with a member of

staff at the University of Melbourne Library, was held on the University Campus during the Summer holiday period.

We talked for a long time about the literary culture in Melbourne, which is prolific, with a large number of bookshops present in the CBD area of the city. Hannah mentioned a shop, described as between "Swanson and Collins Streets" (actually a corner between two adjoining streets) which was friendly towards Bookcrossing. This was in contrast to other book stores who are negative or in opposition to the organised recycling of free books, though no specific organisations were mentioned. At the time of my trip, there were 107 bookshops listed in Melbourne CBD alone (http://www.truelocal.com.au/find/book-shop/vic/melbourne-city/). Hannah mentioned that the bookshop in question viewed Bookcrossing as similar to a reading group and were quite positive. The website and community has received a mixed response from the writers and the publishing industry, with the model of recycling books either viewed as a limit to potential sales, or more positively, being seen as a tool for promoting reading, the spectrum of opinion similar to those seen in the music industry regarding the digital distribution of music (Lessig, 2004).

The only other attendee at this particular meet up was Ella, who while the quieter and less forthcoming, had actually been a member of Bookcrossing for far longer, having caught her first book caught in 2003. Her reading material was described as being generally restricted to novels, primarily 'Modern Australian' literature. Ella would only release books she has read personally, except where she finds she has duplicate copies of a book. Also part of the organisational committee for the convention, she was an active member of the local community, though Ella didn't share details of her involvement.

Hannah and Ella were close friends aside of their involvement in Bookcrossing and their families have holidayed together in Australia, and travelled to Bookcrossing conventions in the US. They mentioned that they have similar backgrounds. Templestowe is an affluent suburb of Melbourne, with direct train and bus routes into the city centre. This is a suburb of large, freestanding homesteads-style housing, and an area of the city surrounds which is open and semi-rural. Templestowe is within walking distance of the Yarra River and the chain of parks and reserves that follow the flood plain of the river. While my journey to the meet up had included a train, connecting bus and lengthy walk to the town centre, with its shopping centre built around a main junction, my return to Melbourne was via a single bus which ran from Templestowe to the National State Library.

Phenomenological experience

Back in the UK, and after attending the Colchester UK UnConvention, I was contacted by Lucy and arranged a meeting in Brighton. After attending a convention, Lucy will travel in the host country visiting other members, releasing books recently read or collected previously at the convention itself. On the occasion of our meeting, Lucy had attended the convention at Colchester in 2012. Lucy is the username for a woman from Bremen, Germany. Although only becoming a member of Bookcrossing in 2009, she has been very active, releasing an average of 2.5 books per week, attending various local meet-ups, and participating at each European conventions since discovering the website. Lucy has a reading practice that is demonstrably ludic, with a pattern of reading similar to her Bookcrossing activity, but, as her profile page explains, her shelf does not demonstrate her personal tastes in literature, as she frequently releases books she has not read, and registers books that will be sent as gifts to friends or other members. Books distributed to other members who have the title listed in their "Wish List" in this way is called a "random act of Bookcrossing kindness" (RABCK). As a further alternative, the books once registered might be traded in exchange for a desired book that is listed as available on another members shelf, found using the website's book search functions. Finally, Lucy will register books which she has not yet read, as she is a frequent convention visitor and, Lucy releases large numbers of book at each event, each of which has to be registered in advance. All of these practices inflate the number of books registered beyond that read personally, and will, where etiquette is followed correctly, result in a catch, the most satisfactory outcome to any book release.

The etiquette of the community is of primary importance, and it is the idea of a book you have released and travelling being what stimulates her participation. Lucy is particularly concerned about the failure of traveling books to be caught due to the failure of a member to register a book or read it in a timely fashion. Bookrays frequently stall and Lucy described her annoyance with people who do not register books in line with the expected progress. Lucy will buy a copy of a book, to replace a catch, where she likes it enough and re-release the copy she has read so the travelling book may continue on its path for the original owner. Lucy described her attitude to books as materialistic, the object is important to her reading experience, which is specific and about the physical book being read. Any breech in etiquette results in the failure for the game of Bookcrossing, with the member denied a catch. This has an

impact on the bookshelf, where the history of the book release stops being updated, offering no further ludic pleasure, and is reflected in the statistics displayed as part of their profile.

The material read by Lucy is largely literary fiction, with an 80:20 split between fiction and non-fiction titles, reading books in English as well as German. Lucy described the sensation when finding herself without anything to read as seriously anxious and explained that she is very careful to make sure that this is never the case. Lucy did not express any physical sensation to accompany the experience of a catch being registered for a book that had been released, but did describe being delighted when this happens. Lucy will wild release books, she exchanges books with other Bookcrossing members, and likes to take part in social book releasing opportunities, such as a convention release walks. Lucy will meet up with other members to release and capture books listed on her wish list. She uses her Bookcrossing activity as a spur to travelling, reading in both German and English, releasing language specific books in different locations. Germany is the most active Bookcrossing country in the world, with the largest number of releases per member currently reported on the community website. While discussing this area of Bookcrossing, Lucy reiterated personal annoyance with people who break the rules of the website and game, describing how upset she becomes when this happens with her books.

In describing her experience of reading and the pleasure associated with the text, Lucy described the experience of reading as including visualisations of the text, explaining that this is primarily character driven. This visualisation practice, triggered by the activation of those ludic facilities of reading described by Iser (1994) appears to privilege reading literary texts over other textual media. Lucy described her annoyance when the films, which were based on a book she had previously read, as the visual elements are too different. Rather than becoming frustrated by movies that are visually wrong, Lucy tends not to see films taken from a novel source for this reason. An example of this was *The Time Travellers Wife*, which was loved, but where the film was incorrect, when compared to her personal visualised form. The negation of the experience of the diegetic object is useless for the reader, as their opportunity to experience the text has already concluded. The text was complete and with it the diegetic storyworld it enabled, leading to the experience of the film simply feeling dissonant.

The ludic experience of reading, as detailed by Iser, is evident in the experiences related by each participant, with the subjective distress of negation and articulated anxiety of the potential failure of the diegetic object in a text very apparent for each participant. The strong emotional response to the potential denial of etiquette represented by the lack of a catch resulting from the actions of another community member were similarly shared by each participant. While some of the members present were more preoccupied by the game, for those members who identify reading as their primary focus for their participation in the community appeared to possess a heightened consideration for the future of the books they released. Here, the ludic trade of future affective experiences shared were highly valued. Without the intervention of the future readers of a book, the release and loss of the object of the text would be all for nothing.

Bookcrossing in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem

The possibility that Bookcrossing.com might offer a replacement for role of the traditional bookshelf in alleviating the anxiety generated in the absence of a transitional object requires a number conditions to be met before it becomes sufficiently attractive to readers to participate in: books must be available and of sufficient quality and quantity to ensure that anyone who wishes to use this website as a means to pursue their reading habit is able to find books that they want to read. This is dependent on the number of people who might be participants coinciding with a local culture where books are prized or revered as being of value, while being sufficiently cheap, as a commodity, to be freely given as a gift to an unknown other. This is essential to maintain a view where a text, and the experience of reading itself, is considered sufficiently valuable that people are willing to seek out books offered as gifts rather than simply buying books as a normal commodity, while the status of a book as a gift-object will be such that it will not be viewed as refuse and disposed of in the appropriate manner. Such a balance must be struck so that a book might be value-free such that the Bookcrossing member feels it acceptable to make it available as a gift in return for the ludic pleasure of the potential catch, while the book as assemblage is able to retain sufficient value to anyone who finds it "in the wild". It is only after these conditions have been met that a book might be retained and registered as caught, enabling the game to achieve its first successful outcome, all of which

requires a mutual level of significance to be placed in the object of reading to be held by both the person releasing the text and by the person who finds the book.

On a trip to Tel Aviv, I met up with Jacob, a resident of Jaffa, who had been involved with an attempt to start Bookcrossing in Israel in the early 2000s. Our conversation centred around the failure of the practice to become established. His awareness of the website was informed by a business associate in Europe. Tempted by the lure of free books, Jacob joined to find out if books were being released in Tel Aviv. The books he released were not recorded as catches, and there were insufficient books released to encourage him to continue with the game.

Bookcrossing.com hosts 426 Official Book Crossing Zones (OBCZ) in Israel and an inspection of their locations indicates that they are consistent in nature with the sites chosen by members in the UK or Australia, in that the sites chosen are generally transient in nature. Bus stations and coffee shops, University corridors or outside of the occasional Bookshop, these are locations where people are generally passing by, presumably in some volume, and where the member hopes the book with its additional label will come to the attention of a magpie reader. There are currently 1460 members registered in Israel, though the lack of books being released indicates that most, if not all, of these members are currently inactive.

Bookcrossing or at least a version of the community established by Bookcrossing-Spain, which is a mirror of the English language website, has used the practice of releasing books as part of the celebrations for World Book Day. In 2012, 71 museums and cultural centres took part in a mass book release, with the institutions donating catalogues and other books. Described as an attempt to flood the cities with reading tools of excellence, five thousand books were released in total, with books released at "Instituto Cervantes de Tel Aviv" (http://www.esbaluard.org/en/activitats/324/bookcrossing/).

So, this evidence culled from the website indicates that the social practices of Bookcrossing fails to survive within the literary culture found in Israel. To try to explore this failure of the Bookcrossing game further, I decided to release a book in the heart of the fortifications of the City of Jerusalem, and chose a text that I hoped might be interesting enough to entice a contribution. I had picked up a copy of *The Iliad* at the first Bookcrossing UnConvention I visited in 2006. Hosted at a hotel in Birmingham, this was the second BCUK UnConvention and was so successful that the event remained in Birmingham for a second year. This was a book that I had retained too long for it to be acceptable to normal Bookcrossing etiquette, so the opportunity to

release the book away from the UK, might compensate for my lack of activity. This book, which was registered by "purpleskybaby" on 14th June, 2006, BCID: 143-4140485, was released at the Citadel, Jaffa Gate, in the ancient city of Jerusalem. The game was on with the release of this book.

There appear to be socio-economic differences that might be used to explore why there is not a Bookcrossing community evident in Israel, while other countries that share similar social structures have active Bookcrossing communities. The publishing industry in Israel services a marketplace in which the book as a commodity has retained value, despite the presence of a strong IT and social network sectors in the local economy (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/is.html). Newspaper reports indicate that the local book publishing industry continues to perform strongly, with more books published on a per-capita basis than in France.

In comparison to other countries where Bookcrossing has become popular, the newspaper coverage of Bookcrossing has been minimal. Two articles can be traced from the period between 2001 and 2005, only one of which directly discusses Bookcrossing, and with no apparent coverage in the main newspapers being traceable since 2005. This is in contrast to the record of 2142 articles culled from *Lexis Nexis,* in a search that covered the period from 2002 to 2012, and included any language and country of publication. A Bookcrossing forum hosted on Yahoo unused since October 2010, and while an initial rush of postings were created on the forum, this initial motivation has long dissipated. "Uriba" (his Bookcrossing name), who was the source for much of the original Ha'artez newspaper article is now based in London, and has drifted away from Bookcrossing. While he still includes his Bookcrossing user name and use of the social media site in his listed activities on other social networks, he hasn't released a book in the last five years.

This is a far cry from the days when Bookcrossing was the winner of the "People's Voice" Webby award for community and social media sites in 2005. The popularity of the website and the game it promotes is demonstrated by the reported adding of the word "Bookcrossing" to the Concise Oxford English Dictionary in 2004 (Anon, 2004). One can understand why Jacob saw potential for a community of people willing to share forward and make a gift of their book collections.

An avid reader, Jacob hoped to gain access to a free supply of books to help sustain his reading habit. He explained that books are very expensive in Israel, and the local publishing industry does appear to have certain constraints that would limit any

potential profitability. The population is comparatively small at 7.7million, even with an estimated literacy rate of 97%. Seventy five per cent of this population are Jewish, and might be expected to have at least some working knowledge of Hebrew, and visits to local bookstores in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem quickly indicated that the majority of books published locally were published in Hebrew, although this approach is entirely unscientific, and impossible to substantiate, with UNESCO reporting the quantity of books published by country, rather than by language, in a dataset that they stopped collecting in 1999.

These structural issues are not dissimilar to those found in other countries, which have local language and alphabet that demands a local publishing industry. Greece is a reasonably close comparator, with a population marginally larger than that found in Israel, reported to be 10 Million and with a similar literacy rate. The number of Bookcrossing members registered in Greece is significantly higher than the number of members currently registered in Israel (4,241 against 697), which is greater than the difference in respective populations would indicate, and might be taken to indicate that the nature of the game is itself more popular in Greece than in Israel. As a further indicator of the success of the Bookcrossing community in Greece, the 8th Greek "Seawater" UnConvention was on Skyros island at the end of June, 2013. A glance at the relative population numbers does indicate that this is a game that is more attractive to western Europeans and countries where English or Spanish is the official first language. So is the economic value of the book a disincentive for the gift exchange game represented by Bookcrossing?

The statistics of Western European countries would indicate that this is not the case. The Benelux countries, with a mix of relatively small populations and different languages, has relatively high membership rates (Belgium: 3,072, Netherlands: 21,244, Luxembourg: 338). Returning to the original comparison, the number of members of Bookcrossing who live in Greece represents 0.04% of the population, whereas in Israel the membership level is lower at 0.009%. The number of participants prepared to share their book collections and form a network of communal readers is apparently too small to sustain itself, hence the game fails, and the exchange of books on the scale seen in other countries never materialises.

Is there a perceptible difference in the value of the text at play in Israel? Sales of books are exempt from sales tax, while electronic book sales are charged at the full rate of 16.5%, as is also the case within the EU (http://www.lla.lt/uploads/documents/Tax rate survey.pdf for a full list of current rates

of taxation). This is not the case in Greece, where sales of books incur a reduced rate of VAT, set at 4.5%. Similarly, book sales incur VAT in Australia, where the sales of books receive no exemption or reduced rate protection. The effect taxation has on book sales is difficult to quantify, as the decision which factors in to why books are chosen and bought are complex, so rather than divert down a cul de sac of macroeconomics, it might be more productive to compare the numbers of books published in these countries per year, and explore how these books are sold in a couple of specific examples.

How else might we try to determine if there is a difference in the relative value placed in the book in one or other country? To borrow a methodology from a newspaper article, which claimed, "Israel leads the world in per-capita new titles per year" in 2005 (http://www.artsjournal.com/publishing/Publishingarch20051201_archive.shtml), we might compare the quantity of titles published per capita. Taking Greece as our comparator, the quantities of book titles published in each country looks to be similar, at least using the last published numbers available for both countries, published by the respective national libraries, would indicate that books might be considered more attractive in Greece:

Books titles published

Greece (2011) 9,209 (Source: National Book Centre of Greece)

Israel (2011) 6,302 (Source: National Library of Israel)

Population

Greece   10,772,967 (July 2013 est. CIA World Book)

Israel   7,707,042 (July 2013 est. CIA World Book)

People per title:

Greece   0.000854825

Israel   0.000817694

This represents a difference of just 4%, probably the margin for error on this type of estimated value. As the sources for both sets of published titles data makes plain, it is currently impossible to obtain accurate sales figures for the quantity of books purchased in either country, and this ignores exports made in each countries

respective language, the importation of books, largely in English to meet demand for other languages in both countries, and the potential for trade between the two countries (with Israel being the second most valuable export market for Greek publishers, attracting 16% of exports).

As an alternative to this rather speculative comparison of the two markets, let us consider an example found in the largely Palestinian sector of East Jerusalem, called Educational Bookshop. This is a bookshop, which has positioned itself at the centre of their community's needs for information, describing themselves as " a strong, stable and vibrant cultural hub in our city "(http://www.educationalbookshop.com/our_mission.html, accessed 15/03/2013). This is an assertion supported by a number of quotations, which are used to demonstrate the nature of the public support they receive for their activities. Activities that include specialisms in educational publications, providing study material in a number of languages and sourcing books at overseas book fairs to provide access to a wider variety of sources provided by other more official bookstores. Further, Educational Bookshop supports publications made by local organisations, promising to stock "every single book or study published by our local institutes, centres and NGOs, about social, economical, political issues and more (ibid).

As part of this commitment, Educational Bookshop supply a wide cross-section of newspapers from across the wider European area, including publications from Russia. These can be delivered on a daily basis, and a reference to this service is highlighted on the company' website. In addition to this provision of "authorised" media, I found printed copies taken from the *Financial Times* website. The pages, being sold for the cost of a few shekels to meet the cost of printing, enabled members of the local community to gain access to information ordinarily restricted to an expert community. This guerrilla republication of information hosted behind a firewall exploits the capacity of digital media to be malleable, with the tendency of material to evade control, particular when the information is viewed as being of value. So, we have a community, which, while in the majority of the local urban population, are demonstrably in the minority within the country at large, and as such potentially protective of the cultural legacy, are open to the distribution of information both within and about their local community. The value of this cultural legacy is openly displayed, and is in turn supported through the activities of the cafe, open within the bookshop, which also offers a space for seminars and workshops, as well as space for meetings, by other organisations. I argue that this activist outlook, generated in

response to an oppressive or antagonistic regime, breeds a culture where the personal cultural capital afforded through the knowledge of and ownership of a text is too great to be compensated through the potential pleasure to be found in a stranger's reported experience of finding and reading a book. Here, the object retains its personal aura, and retains its value, in a manner which Walter Benjamin might fully appreciate:

> This place is for all of you, for all the people in Jerusalem, to come and spend quality time, to meet and gather, and I encourage you to make the most use of it. Myself, and the rest of the staff are here to help you, and together we are looking to construct the first milestone of an intellectual and social hub for our beloved city
> (Imad Muna, Educational Bookshop MD, 2010).

At this point, there are 43 Official Bookcrossing Zones (OBCZ) in Jerusalem, but no book has been released in the last 30 days, nor has any book been released in Israel in this period (http://www.bookcrossing.com/hunt/45 access on 10/2/2013). There has been no Bookcrossing Journal Update to announce that the book has been caught, no new member has chosen to join in with the game of travelling books, and it would appear from all available evidence that the book, first registered in Manchester has disappeared somewhere in the Middle East.

The practice of making a gift of the book, and experience of reading the book, while recording the personal reading experience on a social networking website in the manner undertaken by members of Bookcrossing, demands that each user participates in a deterritorialisation of the book as a signifier, accompanied by its reterritorialisation as recycled travelling text, part of an archive of collected experiences of reading, documented by all previous and subsequent readers of any specific book. This practice of releasing books encapsulates the book and text combined as a token in the Bookcrossing game. This token grants the holder access to the archive, enabling the holder to extend this communal recorded experience of the text of that book, and once this archive has been opened by the process of catching the token, the holder of the book has access to each recorded experience of the text. Provided that the etiquette of the community is followed, each holder has further access to multiple future precarious reading experiences. Where the retention of the book by the reader/collector offered access echoes of the experience of the text as consumed, the release of the book as a gift and token returns the text to its previous state, rendering the book eternally unread.

This attractive quality of the book, marks it as an object that is reserved for the post-industrial process of re-use, rather than being an item of general waste that

demands industrial recycling. The book as an object is privileged through its connection to the act of reading, and the knowledge this enables. So embedded into the culture of post-Fordist consumer society, the book as a symbol approaches the transcendent, in a manner explored by Deleuze and Guattari in "Anti-Oedipus" (1984, pp197-198). This activity of parsing the recorded experience of the book from the object itself, partially captures and maintains this transient experience in a manner impossible with the object itself, and in such a way as to render it capable of becoming a culturally valuable object, to be admired within the Bookcrossing community, at least by those who have shared access to the same book.

Conclusion

Bookcrossing.com, with its international community of readers all willing to make a gift of the books they have read, offers a challenge to the common understanding of what the book represents to a late-capitalist society. This community has it's shared ethos, that by sharing the book and the experience of the text, they share a pleasure in and of the text which is greater than any pleasure that can be derived from hoarding the book for the future. This ethos highlights the role traditionally fulfilled by books as an object of cultural value while being traded as a common commodity. The assemblage of the book is able to fulfil the role of signifier to the text once read, in the manner identified by Starobinski, as well as being an object of desire for the collector described by Benjamin. While the reader has frequently maintained a dual role as consumer of texts and collector/hoarder of books, the virtual bookshelf of the website, and the pleasure provided by the game of gifting books to others as treasure, offers a model for a future, where the pleasure of the text for the reader is documented separately to the book as a commodity object, which is not retained by the reader. Here the text is exchanged freely and of itself, while the experience of reading, far from being a controlled commodity experience is one that is ubiquitous and freely enjoyed.

As seen in Benjamin, the book has been seen as an object, which can be collected and is of cultural value. For the reader, it embodies a significance based not only on its commodity exchange value, but which it possesses as a result of the experience of its past consumption and the knowledge that this represents. Additionally, this was not purely captured in the actual quality of the text itself, but is a reflection of the pleasure found by the reader in the freedom and absorption

provided by the mental process of reading. Bookcrossing, with its gameplay aspects, enables the reader to exchange the retention of books once read for the vicarious pleasure offered by participation in a virtual community. The books they have released are treated as unique objects, which may be enjoyed, with a record of this experience shared, not only with the original benefactor, but with all subsequent "holders" of this particular book. This ludic reward provides a further enrichment to and documented memory of the book, and here provides a key component to a chain of significance that leads back to the original reading of the book. It is only through the absence of the book, as promoted through the practice of making a gift of a book once it has been read, that the nature of the significance of the book as a token, and of the text as an object encapsulated, can be fully parsed from the regime of signs maintained by the language of the text the book distributes. Unfortunately this leads to a situation where an author is unable to receive capital compensation for the labour of creating the text, not through the digital material replacement of the text itself, but throughout the marginal replacement of the sign it encapsulates. Potentially, it is not through the digital format of the eBook that the death of the author as profession might be enacted, but rather by the conspicuous over-consumption of the text that the current publishing industry represents. We may, as predicted by Derrida, be at the end of the era of the book, and as the beginning of the era of the text after all.

CHAPTER SIX

The Portable Document

Chapter annotation: the portable document format, the digitally material page, Mutter Matter; Trace and the Aesthetic of the printed object; eBooks and the end of the page.

Introduction: What is materially relevant to the text?

The general argument/hypothesis here is that the digital nature of portable digital format documents leaves behind some general materiality as it virtualises the page, the loss of which undermines trust and value in the document that remains. The means to distribute large documents as small packets of data across a network was demanded as part of the new technological paradigm that came about with the computerisation of print. The driving need here is for a computer to communicate data to a peripheral printer, enabling the ability to print documents on demand. The potential for any document created, either commercially or for personal use, to be available immediately in hard copy, emerged as part of the 1980s revolution in personal computing (Sellen, 2002). Subsequent to developmental increases in the volume of digital information be-ing created and shared through the networked services offered by the world wide web, digital archiving systems have developed to enable the storage of documentation which had previously been part of physical paper archives. Both in distribution and in storage, digital formats have been developed to enable organisations and the documents they rely on to overcome the limitations of paper. The 'Portable Document Format' or PDF was one of a number of similar formats established during the 1980s and 1990s, and while it has been frequently revised, the format has now received widespread support, with the format being adopted by the offset print industry as well as with the incorporation of the format into numerous system and business applications (Leurs, 2008). The PDF has become the paper replacement for government, academia and business worlds (www.digitalpreservation.gov, 2013), providing access to a library of text in much the manner foreseen by Bush the 'Memex', which was described as a screen based system offering a facsimile of the page to support the reading of a book (1945).

The dependence on digital documents for academic purposes (Weller, 2011) and the emergence of archiving practices which maintain print quality digital formats in place of the physical objects previously printed from the pdf format (Steenbakkers,

2005), have lead to the questioning of the ability of the digital form to maintain an accurate archive for the original material form (Vandendorpe, 2008). The propensity for digital formats to fall into disuse as the technology they require to be used is superseded by further technological innovation has led to some degree of international collaboration on the format deemed to be the standard for document distribution and archiving (http://www.iso.org). The free availability of document readers, and the widespread adoption of the encapsulation software, along with the collaborative nature of the present stewardship of the format, have enabled the PDF to become the de facto standard for paginated documents (http://www.digitalpreservation.gov).

How might this development affect the use of the documents stored, affecting both the practices of reading and the value the reader places with the text rendered digitally? Or, as posed by Hayles, with reference to "The Don Quixote of Pierre Menard" by Borges:

> Is this electronic version the same work? Subversive as Borges's fiction, the question threatens to expose major fault lines running through our contemporary ideas of textuality (Hayles, 2005, p89).

How might the inability to gain access to a lost or withheld paper document affect the reader or user's sense of trust in the information available to them, through the digital documents they can gain access to? Is there some sense in which the nature of access to the documentation undermines the validity of the document, and might this be engendered by the digital materiality of the document itself, and how is this experienced by the user?

The methods adopted in researching the previous cases included the following groups: people who read socially, in book groups, people who read using a device, such as an Amazon Kindle, Barnes and Noble Nook, tablet or smartphone, etc, and people who have incorporated other practices with the book in ways based on its nature as an object, in the particular case of bookcrossing.com and its gift culture of leaving books in public spaces to enable the opportunity to read the book to be shared. While these research cases investigate the discursive practices of those groups, describing how they relate to reading and books, how might the issue of trust in a text be addressed more directly, and could this issue be related to the material nature of the text, rather than the aesthetic nature of either object or text? To this end, the research material for this chapter focuses on the work and experiences of the artist Jane Fox, who with Irene Mensah, used books and texts, both printed and virtual

portable documents, as components in works that explore the affective potential for everyday objects to communicate across generations, with their work *Muttar Matter* (2011-2012). Subsequently the chapter will consider whether the aesthetic of the textual object is inured against the effect of remediation present in the digital form as represented by the PDF, and if so, what other aspects of the document form might be the determining factors. Finally, and with regard to both the role performed by the production of the physical artefact in the development of the PDF as a digital form, how might the screen based systems of reflowing documents, such as the EPUB or AZW/Kindle formats be relevant to the use of paginated formats?

The history of the portable document format.

The portable document format is itself based on the Adobe PostScript page description language (PDL), which attained industry dominance in desktop publishing systems as a result of its adoption by Apple for the LaserWriter printer in 1985 (Phinney 1997). The potential of a digital document format was outlined in a paper by John Warnock, titled *The Camelot Project* (1991). Warnock had started work on a system called 'Interpress' which was designed to control Xerox laser printers, while at Parc, Xerox. When 'Interpress' became becalmed in development, Warnock left Xerox to develop the system further, establishing 'Adobe' with Parc Xerox colleague Chuck Geschke. 'Postscript', a page description language for high-resolution text and graphics, was released in 1984, becoming the first product released by Adobe (Leurs 2008). In his working paper, Warnock viewed the development of a portable document format as part of a potential change in general document management:

> Imagine if the IPS [PostScript Interpreter] viewer is also equipped with text searching capabilities. In this case the user could find all documents that contain a certain word or phrase, and then view that word or phrase in context within the document...One obvious application for the IPS viewer is in its use in electronic mail systems. Imagine being able to send full text and graphics documents (newspapers, magazine articles, technical manuals etc.) over electronic mail distribution networks. These documents could be viewed on any machine and any selected document could be printed locally. This capability would truly change the way information is managed. Large centrally maintained databases of documents could be accessed remotely and selectively printed remotely. This would save millions of dollars in document inventory costs...Specific large visual data bases like the value-line stock charts, encyclopedias, atlases, Military maps, Service Manuals, Time-Life Books etc. could be shipped on CD-ROM's with a viewer. This would allow full publication (text, graphics, images and all)

> to be viewed and printed across a very large base of machines...Entire libraries could be archived in electronic form, and since IPS files are self-contained, would be printable at any location (Warnock, 1991).

Initially announced at an industry tradeshow and released to software developers in 1991, the first commercial software for the format was available to industry in 1993. In 1996 support for a "CMYK colour space" was added, fulfilling a industrial technical requirement. This enabled the format to be adopted by the commercial print industry. The development of a plugin for the Netscape web browser, the leading web browser at that time, lead to the application being adopted more widely (Leurs, 2008).

In addition to enabling a printer to render text, graphics and page layout of a document, the PDF file format enables documents to include the specific font used in replacing elements of its design, making the document format more robust and supporting further custom design work. The file format is based on a structured design form, which enables all of the various content types to be organised and compressed to manage the overall file size, making the form convenient and ideal for digital distribution (www.adobe.com). The release of a free of charge reader software, with Adobe Reader 2.0, enabled the system to gain prominence and become the de facto standard for service documentation and on line publishing.

The publicly released format is currently described as at version 1.7. Adobe passed control of the format specifications to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO 2005) in 2008, and a specification for version 2.0 is being developed with the support of the wider expert community. Initially due for release in 2013, version 2.0 is currently expected to be published in 2015. PDF has spawned a number of derivative formats, each with a specific subset of specific features, designed to cater for different uses. For example, PDF/A, based on version 1.4, has now become a legally mandated document type for numerous government and judicial institutions, and it has been adopted widely for long-term document storage and archive distribution (http://www.adobe.com, 2013).

The document format and system, which was developed as a computational means to alleviate file distribution issues between computer and a dedicated laser printer, has become a format which enables print media material to be distributed, stored and printed on demand, and is considered to offer the potential replacement for print media. While Warnock's working paper identified printed material specifically technical in nature, with the potential for a high level of illustration or contextual content, as the likely documents to be distributed digitally, the PDF has become the

standard within the print industries for all printed material (Thompson, 2005). Transferring from the relatively closed media of paper to a digital form, with accompanying advances in distribution, replication and utility, the format supports the potential to create archives which hold massive stores of text in the form of electronic archives, while rendering the text open to be printed, retaining each text as code, secure and self-contained as an image of the page. The process of reacquiring the textual content of the page requires the use of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software, which identifies each character individually, returning the appropriate ASCII code value in the form of a text file, which in turn may be read and edited electronically. This marks a distinction between text image and images that are encapsulated and included in the document. Image recognition, while subject to intense research by Google amongst others, is currently not widely available, and as such images are not open to visual recognition and subsequent interpretation in the manner carried out by OCR (Gitelman, 2014). This distinction between image types, the machine readable and the illegible, forms a boundary for computational aesthetics, with machine understanding limited to geometric shapes which might be grasped algorithmically, rather than the nuanced appreciation informed by real-world experience of the human reader (Berry, 2014). Where else might the tension between physical technical document and a replacement digital facsimile be observed?

Mutter Matter: how the use of a digital copy affected the artistic process for Fox and Mensah.

In 2011, as part of the *HOUSE* project, a work commissioned as part of the Brighton Festival, Irene Mensah and Jane Fox developed the concept of a multimedia installation called Mutter Matter:

> The impetus for this work was two domestic books, each inherited from a Grandmother: 'Enquire Within Upon Everything' (114th edition, 1929) inherited from Hilda Fox (Fox) and 'Quotations and Recipes' (Wisbech, 1931) inherited from Lily Shaw (Mensah). The Books provide a lens through which the artists view their own and their Grandmother's lives via collisions of memory and material, and in conversation between themselves......the exuberant naughtiness of licking plates, a discreet hum or the handling of flour and utensils to create 'Perfection Lemon Pie' (www.muttermatter.co.uk, 2011).

These cookbooks were used to evoke affective memory of their grandmothers, and images of the books included on the website that documented the project show how the books have aged, and are marked with evidence of their use with stains on popular pages and thumb marks created by frequent page turning. In one case the book is now held together with the application of a bulldog clip across the top to keep its contents in check. As explained by Jane Fox, when I interviewed her in 2013, lines of text were randomly chosen in a call and response process, where the two artists selected text that triggered an emotional response. They concocted a 'recipe' from the sections of text that embodied this affective experience. This new distillation was used to create part of a sculpture that formed the centrepiece to the multi-sensory work, which explored shared and documented experience of cooking, in the everyday and as a historical expression of womanhood. As explained by Fox:

Fox: [W]e pulled stuff out of the books, that related to these things that were bubbling up for us. As the project progressed, we had an artists book that we were making, that we deposited our personal memories into, so there was a handmade book. Then our personal narrative feed into that book, but what fed into the work were these bigger issues around perfection, mayhem, rule breaking, but we realised that we were making the piece with a very strict adherence to certain rules that our grandmothers would have approached through their baking, all this kind of complicated interesting stuff happening, and the piece eventually emerged as a table with a hand made table cloth, with some of the text which we had devised between us, which was made from collaging text from the two books into advice.

Viewed as a successful start to a longer project, the following year a commission was secured to take the concept to the county residence of John Soanes, in the once rural glades of what is now suburban Ealing:

At Pitzhanger Manor, a new voice is invited to join the dialogue -that of Dr. William Kitchiner, Regency cook and author of 'The Cook's Oracle' (4th edition 1822) and a new recipe -the 'Broth of Fragments' is created! (www.muttarmatter.co.uk).

At this point obstacles started to emerge for the project. The book, selected, as it was owned by Soanes and is part of the library, stored at John Soanes' city home at Lincoln Inn, was not available. The contents of the library were all in storage, pending

the renovation of the library. Further research revealed that Soanes and Kitchener were friends and confidents, making the choice of this book more important to the two artists, but the lack of an access to a copy of the work, and more specifically the copy available to Soanes, proved problematic.

A copy of the same edition of the book was found in the British Library, but due to the state of disrepair, this copy could not be lend out by the library. This demanded regular visits to the library to study the volume, which proved to be unsuitable for the working practices of the artists, where the books formed part of the practice of design, with regular reference to the material in their studio-space. Finally Fox traced an electronic copy of the book, which had been digitally scanned. The artists chose to use this copy to develop the installation for Pitzhanger Manor.

The scanned copy of the book, while granting access to the text, elevates the nature of the text above the physical aspect of the object which the image fails to capture. The size of the initial book, described by Fox as "tiny", demanded that the two artists "gather around it" to study its contents. While the size of the text remained important to the final work itself, it is denied by the digital copy of the book, which are scalable when displayed within the framing device of the computer screen. The book being open to manipulation in this way has been compromised through the scanning process. The PDF of the book, which is available from archive.org, is in a single page format, where the pages have been removed from the spine by guillotine, as was common practice with early digitalisation projects (Striphas, 1991), a practice now avoided with the use of high speed page-turning scanners.

With only the image to work from, the focus on the textual elements of the book by Kitchiner contributed to a different balance between the three texts used for the artwork with the digital object attaining prominence at different stages within the work. Similarly, the digital nature of the text resulted in the artists developing a new, more separated, less dynamic working practice, with each reading the text individually and e-mailing observations, rather than working together but separately as they had for the previous project, where the uniqueness of the objects being used demanded that the artists work within the bounds of a common space. Fox found the digital format to be more unwieldy, with the digital document losing the ability to allow the reader to move speedily between sections, tracing similar recipes and ideas. So while the scanned document gave access to an object difficult to acquire physically, the digital nature of the form forced the artists to modify their practice and approach, and the resulting work was affected by both the form and absence of the Kitchiner cookbook.

The process of sculpting with flour, rendering the space of the table visible, marks the transitional space that the book commands for the artists, bringing it to our attention, like iron filings trace a magnetic field. Everyday objects incorporated into the sculpture share significance here as the space they mark, along with the text collated from each book, offers meaning to the whole. This is a space of individuality; the artists were interested in where they joined, and not the spaces without, interested in how this space was defined by and defined their gender, their heritage, their history and their ancestry. The spaces were unique, a potent collaboration between the object and the personalities of the people they reflected. The issues created by the inclusion of the Kitchiner text are not that it was too loud a voice within the cacophony of the work, but that John Soanes was an absent landlord for the work as a whole. There is no sense of ownership written into the book through use, as there was with the books inherited by the artists. The PDF document bore the scars of digitalisation, and of its ownership by a library, but shared no details of being used as an actual cookbook, as was true with the other books.

The potential for distribution inherent in the digital object removed the need for the artists to work together, as the ability to clone the PDF rendered the issue of the scarcity of the book redundant, resulting in a working practice where the individual was isolated. The object determines that any definition of significance established by the reader of the text would be their own, regardless of the nature of the language of the text as open and accessible for the act of being read, even in those cases where the nature of the object rejects significance itself (Hayles, 2005).

Digital materiality: rendered to code, the text is free to flow

It is unavoidably the case that the process of rendering any material object in a digital form must dispense with aspects of the physical experience. Those aspects of materiality not captured by the digital form will be lost, and the digital nature of the document will render the aspects retained amenable to replacement (Manovich, 2001). Obvious and definitely within the bounds of what might now be usually consigned to the domain of common experience. With the work of Fox and Mensah, I suspect the lack of any affective connection to the documents used by the cook of John Soanes, may in itself still be maintained by the dislocation with the original document described by Fox in her experience of the digital facsimile. However, the removal of the book from the domain of physical objects to that of digital materiality

and the affect this had on the resulting work created with its use does still warrant examination. Fox explains how, confronted by the limitations of the digital format, she found her work exploring the lack of materiality rather than the affective nature she had hoped to examine. Even though the PDF book was available and mobile, she still sensed that the object was ephemeral and transient, unable to capture the existence of the book, as had been the case with the cookbook of her grandmother, and unable to relate the existence of its pre-digitalisation-self. The object wasn't so much frozen as freeze-dried, rendered graphically accurate in colour and scaleable to the desired size, it had dispensed with that which allowed the reader to position themselves in relation to it.

Walter Benjamin is frequently referred to with regard to the emergence of digital copying and distribution, for very good reason, as his discussion of aura in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* contains a persuasive argument for the freedoms and burdens which accompany the ability to reproduce endless copies of art. I want to qualify its use here:

> The whole sphere of authenticity is outside technical - and, of course, not only technical - reproducibility (Benjamin, 1999a, p214).

Image and not text or object was the focus of Benjamin's interest, but the printing process of rendering as a 'PDF', at least in its formative postscript version means that text is fixed as an image, coded in algebraic form to ensure that curves are smooth and scalable, with pages set. This is text as image, or as close as the technology will allow.

It is here that the concept of Trace becomes important to understand how the process of rendering digitally effects the contextual information of a text. As part of *The Arcades Project* (1999b), Benjamin explores how the material of an artefact might carry signifiers as to its cultural value.

Trace/Supplement

> Tactile appropriation is accomplished not so much by attention as by habit (Benjamin, 1999b, p 233).

For an object, the authentic authority of the object is undermined through the process of digitalistion:

> The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object (Benjamin, 1999a, p215).

The trace, here in the form of the scars acquired by an object in use, also historicise the existence of the object, offering symbols for the narrative of its use (Eagleton, 1981). The freedom of the digital object to accumulate signs of occupation is that which denies the object a past, and which demands that each reader identify with the text as a voice alone. Separate, proprietary systems, incorporated into devices of local instances to compensate for this lack of material authenticity fail as they are part of an intermediation separate from the experience of reading, and as propriety systems, fail to be universal in provision.

Materiality

The graphical nature of the Kitchiner book, once scanned and rendered as a PDF, is indicative of the current state of technology. The ability to scan books without the use of a guillotine to remove the spine and separate the pages has been in place and used widely by specialist book archivists for some time (Ludovico, 2012). The text used by Fox and Mensah bears the scars of the scanning process as implemented at that time, with the book destroyed for all but the scanning process. Pages are reduced to leaves, which must be observed in isolation, as if illuminated plates for a book in preparation. For the Portable Document Format, this is a book of images, graphical files compressed and ordered for later inspection and printing on demand at a later date. The format renders pages, unlike eBook formats which were developed for the adoption of eReaders discussed elsewhere, the PDF is a solution to a problem posed by printing, and as such it is tied to the forms derived from the paper codex book, rather than anything natively digital in form. The PDF document, while available for

mobile digital distribution and manifestly suitable for the storage of the images of the book in an archive, is a digital artefact of transition. Its technological solutions are framed by the earlier technological demands and questions. As a form it has bridged the gap between page and reflowing documents, but in itself, it is being supported by a widely divergent community of invested users, as indicated by the adoption of the specification management by ISO.

The PDF file itself is not a single material entity but is a compressed container, structured to support both Raster and Vector image files and metadata to accompany the text of the file, which is itself rendered through Page Description Language, designed to render each page of the document as an image to the printer or screen. As a scanned object, the textual content of the book here will not be available as text unless the book is further processed using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software, a process which then allows the text content to be rendered available for to be searched. The assemblage nature of this object, with interchangeable elements, held in an array rather than any prioritising hierarchy, maintains the open nature of the object, while maintaining the closed and controlled textual content. The file maybe scaled up or down as required, but the text is maintained as predetermined. This is primarily a format of the image, where the text is rendered prior to inspection, in a manner which is McLuhan might consider to support his hypothesis that the electronic age heralded a return to the image (McLuhan et al, 1997).

How does form inform aesthetic? Is the aesthetic of the codex form important to its continued use and and to its role as a medium? The object of the text is delivered to the reader through language, which is in turn printed or rendered as the written (printed) text. The replacement of the book is obviously a transition of aesthetic, with all the phenomenological changes this must incur. How might this be considered with regard to the use of the PDF? The contention that the book itself shapes the aesthetic of the era has been long held:

> One might almost say that the whole culture of the age, at any rate the mass of the purely literary culture of the age, from 1050 to 1250 and on till 1300, was concentrated on one aesthetic problem, which, as Dante put it, 'includes the whole art' (Pound, E., 1991, p53).

The aesthetic nature of a textual object has been contested, with interpretation progressing from the reader as onlooker (Harding, 1937/1962) through to the role of negation in the manifestation of the textual object discussed by Iser (Schwab, 2000),

where the aesthetic nature of the storyworld of the diegetic object is central to the experience of the reader:

> The "material text" becomes a name for an open-ended, often apparently aleatory inventiveness that simultaneously resists the efforts at closure of the traditional literary imagination and places the reader actively in a world that would otherwise be reducible to the smooth flow of commodities. Therefore the cultivation of materiality also becomes an important device for creating community among those highly suspicious of the more idealized and the more empty principles that keeps capitalist social machinery in its interpretive place (Altieri, C., 2007, p74).

The interpretation of any text is not dependent on genre or mode of writing, how can it be, as we as cognitive beings have a multi-tasking but singular organ for the imagination of the persona of the storyworld of a text. If a reader is not informed of the name of the "narrator", there is a tendency to read the text as the authentic other. Any negation of the expectations of the reader by this unnamed narrator undermines the trust placed in text by the reader, and enables the reader to question the acts of the narrator. Otherwise, the author relies on the tendency for the reader to identify, allocate an emotional world to complete the author's creation.

For Weber, Benjamin offers an opportunity to reconsider the complex nature of the aesthetic of media more generally:

> To determine mediality as an -ability constitutes therefore not just a constative description of a medium, nor even a performance of it, in the sense of its actualization. Rather, it entails an appeal to readers or listeners, who find themselves addressed by this -ability, to participate in a process of partitioning that involves a readiness to take leave of the present or, better, to allow what is present to part with itself and to make room for something else. As -ability, mediality thus always entails the process by which intramediality becomes intermediality, opening itself to the advent of other media (Weber, S., 2007, p11).

The PDF renders a page as image, reconstructing the limits and fixed nature of the printed codex book as a digital file for inspection or printing as reader and circumstances dictate. The nature of the screen is such that the 'normal' aspect of the book may hinder the reading of the text on screen, while the partial display of a section of the page will disguise or obscure a section of the page at any time. The ability of the book to be flicked through is rendered obsolete, while the ability to search through the text with digital precision is rendered accurately by the use of OCR software and depends in no small part on the accuracy and clean nature of the scan included for that page, thus denying the ability for the book to be read in a non-linear manner, which is a key component to its aesthetic charm and usefulness (Kittler, 2001). These limitations offer the lead for the subsequent form of text which is now

leading the way for many electronic readers and consumers of text, which further expose and modify the aesthetic experience of reading, if not of the text itself.

The development of the portable document format proved to be the first step in successfully undermining the established model of print production (Nash, 2013), parsing the business of layout and design from the messier processes of printing and mov-ing the analogue elsewhere. Globalisation has provided the solution with volume print-ing of periodicals potentially carried out far from the editorial decisions of production. Once the digital materiality of the text encapsulated in a PDF became popular, it was probably inevitable that the page itself would be the net component of the book to be rendered electronically.

The development of ePaper (or E Ink or Elec paper as it was variously branded), begins in 1978 with US Patent 4,126,854, which details the system of "Twisting ball Panel displays", which followed an earlier conference paper on the same subject by N. K. Sheridon. Sheridon has a total of 46 US patents to his name, which detail the development of the design and manufacture process of 'gyricon' or twisting-particle displays that were developed while head of Xerox PARC's Gyricon Media (Chen et al, 2012). Such is the way of technical innovation and product development, the name most associated with the development of ePaper and the eReader is not N.K. Sheridon, but that of Jacobson, who separately published on the subject while at MIT, before establishing the company E Ink, which in association with Lucent and Phillips, began the process of developing products using the technology in 2000 (Mayfield, 2001). Aimed initially at the development of large dynamic displays, the use of the technology for personal reading was commented on in early media coverage, with the displays offering better visibility and crucially, lower power consumption when compared to traditional LCD displays. This is the technology which is vying with OLED to replace the page as part of an eReader or Tablet, but how does the format of the document become relevant to the change in reading practice and the discursive relationship this generates between medium and reader?

The development of document formats that flow, rather than remain contained within the perimeter of a page, is demanded by the use of the screen, not by the book or text, but by the user experience of the world wide web and its mutability providing the freedom to manipulate the font, size and layout of most webpages to suit the circumstances or personal preferences of the reader. This changes the challenges facing the designer, with the focus moving from layout and design to the incorporation of content and data (Mod, 2011).

The opportunity to personalise the print format details of the text, to a form of their choice which suits the environment and physiological limitations, is the crucial aspect that distinguishes the eBook from the document type of the PDF. Rather than render a document closed on screen, aside from certain form or interactive capabilities predetermined by the specifics of any implementation, reflow document formats are open to manipulation by the reader in a manner that the PDF, as a fixed image designed to render accurately for duplication in any technical environment, is not. This limits the PDF when used on any smaller form screen, such as smartphone or tablet, where the screen dimensions are significantly smaller than those of the original document size. The PDF is limited by the very aesthetic value it is designed to transmit accurately, that of the page.

Reflowing document formats, such as EPUB, MOBI or the proprietary format AZW used by Amazon Kindle, all utilise the XHTML, SVG and CSS paradigm of content encapsulation. The ability to adapt to the reader (User) is described as a key concept within the roadmap documentation for the next iteration of the EPUB format, enabling 'text line layout and pagination on the fly, adapting to the size of the display area, the User's preferred font size, and other environmental factors'(EPUB 3.0, 2011). Authors are 'strongly discouraged' from incorporating highly formatted content into an EPUB book, with accessibility prioritised over the intentions of author or designer. Richness is provided by the use of style sheets, rather than by use of fixed font sizing or absolute positioning. Most intriguingly, the standard includes a glossary of helpful terms, which redefines the book as a 'Package Document' with the 'Manifestation' explained to be 'The digital (or physical) embodiment of a work of intellectual content' and 'The ISBN is an example of a manifestation identifier'. While the role of the author is reassuringly unchanged, the reader has been recast as 'User who is 'An individual that consumes an EPUB Publication using an EPUB Reading System'. So, with the page and the development of the digital publication of the book, so the role of the reader is recast as one of consumption and use, in place of the previous hermeneutic privilege attached to the act of reading. With the PDF, while the frame of the page was central to the role of the format as a mode of the production cycle, the removal of page-layout has enabled the redrawing of the relation to the text discussed earlier. The move to the role of the text as a mutating flow of words, rather than as an image pinned to the page through the act of printing has liberated the reader of their other roles, of archivist, of collector, of editor or simply owner, reduced to a mode where access and use are the only offered facilities (Ludovico, 2012).

This might be considered a process of commercial re-appropriation, with the re-emergence of a role of the book seller/publisher as owner of the content of a book, that establishes the management of the eText under a form of control previously seen with the development of the early literary industry (Feather, 2007). As seen earlier with the experiences of people who have already adopted the eReader as their primary source of reading material, the development of the sale of books as a service modifies the previous paradigm of the ownership of any text by a reader. This potentially impacts the experience of reading as an everyday activity, limits the future relationship between reader and book, with the role of the reader confined to that of the consumer. The text of any book becomes diminished, with the previously eternal, impervious text denied the potential of being a gift or sign for reading itself. Its cultural role is marshalled by the mode of distribution and access.

The transfer of the mode of purchase from freehold to leasehold (to borrow a model from home-ownership in the UK for one moment), renders temporary the nature of the access to the text. The file offered for reading by Amazon is a copy of their file, to which you are granted access for your device or devices alone. No transfer or redirection is permitted without their expressed consent, which of course would be subject to change in an uncertain future. This fragile relation replaces the ownership permitted for any holder of the codex book, returning the reader to the state of a reader of a manuscript in the pre-Gutenberg period, where scarcity and technological limitations controlled access to the texts of the day. This act of enclosure, while offering the eager a service of almost instant gratification, is limited to the lifecycle of your electronic reader, with its design obsolescence and potential to be superseded. The book, for all its distribution limitations, has a freedom in that the creative destruction of capitalism could not effect your ability to read its contents in an uncertain future, something which digital culture for all its ability to be user defined, fails to assure us.

While the experience of Fox was a positive one, with the artist viewing installations of 'Muttar Matter' a success, the experience of using the book in a PDF form might sternly characterise how the interaction of the reader is modified by the use of an image of a text, rather than the text itself. Access to the book here would have provided the artists with the meta-material required for the successful incorporation of the book into the schemata of the original project. The removal of the text from the para-textual experience of the book, aside from the phenomenological experience of reading a small bound copy of a text, privileged the text above the

object, and disrupted the use of the book. While we might argue that the reading experience for a person using PDFs might be advantageous, the material disadvantage of the reader removes the opportunity of the embodied experience of the book. The ability to modify the image of the text, displayed as an image on a computer screen or printable in full page A4, renders the book as an object free of contextual information, rendered free floating in a universe of digital images. The text becomes liberated, but in a manner which removes the ability for the reader to organise their own position in relation to the text, either in an embodied sense or in with a hierarchy of relevance for the information itself.

It is here in the capacity for resilient use, copying and distribution that the digital copy of the book fails to materialise its true intellectual potential. The digital materiality of the text demands that the reader compensates for the lack of a 'material em-bedded-ness' offered by the print version. The lack of the paper trail offered by the page renders the archive free from contextual information for the reader. The capacity for metadata is essential for the replacement for this contextual deficit. However, the transcoding of material information into textual form only introduces a further level of deferred significance. The trace of the original document becomes further disrupted, disguised throughout the desensitising process of scanning itself.

The inability of the eBook to render material relevant to the contextual relation-ship to the book as an object is only relevant to those users (readers) who have enjoyed this experience in the past. Research continues to investigate the cognitive and educational differences encountered through the use of different textual forms (Tomasello, 2014). However, the experience of Fox and Mensah is relevant here as while they are part of the generation for whom the development of scanned documents is a resource once only dreamt of, their experience and the artistic response this supported, is testament to the potential and likely developmental change which will accompany the transition to a world archive which is largely digital in its materiality, and where access to an object might become a privilege affordable to a few.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

Chapter annotation: Derrida and the end of the era of print; the 'book' as the object of the reader; the aesthetic game of reading; the cognitive pleasure of the text, the freedom of digital materiality and the anxiety of the absence of technology;

The processes of reading, the creation of the world conjured through the reader's participation in the ludic practice, as detailed by Wolfgang Iser, was explored through the process of semi-structured interview. In *The Act of Reading* (1980) and *The Fictive and the Imaginary* (1993), Iser presents Reader Response theory, detailing the aesthetic and cognitive responses to the structural and narrative developments found in literary and philosophical texts. Drawing on Bateson's analysis of play, Iser explores the paradoxical relationship the reader has to the code of the text, where the experiences of the reader, once they have been supplied with sufficient information to establish a storyworld inferred by the text, assume the lead. Borne upon the pleasure of the textual experience itself, the reader seeks to complete the experience of the text, reasoning cognitive and emotional storyworld for the characters, and developing physical understanding for environmental elements (Theisen, 2000). This freedom to interpret any text when it is read, developed from Barthes and his exploration of the pleasures found in reading, forms part of the negotiated experience provided by the 'ludic reader' (Nell, 1984). The description and explanation of this general experience has formed the basis for all interview material generated for this research. The commonality of the experience of reading has been taken as such, that the sentiment generated and shared through communities of readers has been collected and explored to test whether any modification to the experience of reading might in part be caused through the developments in the relationship the reader has to the material manifestation of the text they read.

Community groups have been identified and participants recruited to enable this investigation:

- People who read as a member of a reading group,
- People who are a member of the book sharing community 'Bookcrossing.com',
- People who have adopted an eReader or Tablet as the main object or device for their reading, whether this is professionally or for leisure, and

○   People who have made use of a digital document (book or other), to replace the use of a physical or real document, which is currently unavailable.

The resulting interview and participant observation material contributed has then been discussed with regard to the Experiential, Socio-cultural, and Material aspects of reading described within each case study.

The book as an object for the reader

In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (2008), Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari define the book as an assemblage, and explore how their own book will structurally contain the text they are introducing. This is a theme they return to several times, with the book referred to as an example of how a cultural 'thing' is perceived to be both subject and object, providing significance both in and of itself, as well as potentially contributing to the significance of the cultural text and knowledge it distributes. The model of assemblage is particularly relevant to the discussions about reading contained within the research here, as the interview material and the practices that the contributors discuss are not in most cases specifically about the book, but relate to the practices and pleasures of the consumption of the text they contain. Here, one might argue that the use of 'consumption' as the verb associated with reading is difficult, as this ignores or eliminates the labour contributed by the reader, in their co-creation of the textual object generated through the language made available by the text. This is not an act of consumption in its more naked form, this is a cultural exchange where the reader manifests a world from the author's contribution, unique and perfect for their own contemplation, regardless of the nature of their reading itself, or the intention of the author at the time of composition. The 'book' assemblage is understood to be structurally composed of strata enclosing the text of the book, in layers of significance associated with the cultural space, such that any book must become part of to succeed, and exchange systems of distribution compliant with the role of the book as tradable commodity. These strata fix the text within a system, where value is contextual and in the eye of the beholder, associated with the potential future for the book: gift, collected object or saleable asset. Textual content for the book provides only a partial indication of the potential value of the assemblage within a system where the book, but more significantly here, the assemblage form and its independence, embodies specific modes of reading supported by the book as a

device. Freeing the text from the device frees the text from the associated value chain of the device as a commodity, ensuring that any significant commodity value is reserved in the first exchange of the book. Any further value is acquired by the device on which it might be read, the eBook making a fetish of the eReader, providing a ghostly presence of the text with no significant form beyond the letter of the text.

The freedom associated with the practice of the art of reading is of a sort not available through the consumption of any other type of media content. The ability to conjure a world of realistic dimensions and relationships is a skill highly prized with society, such that the names of people who have been skilled in this art are now widely beyond the consumption of their texts, such that their names are frequently associated with the emotional states that their work seeks to explore. The literary nature of culture is reflected by Deleuze and Guattari in their assertion that the work of literature provides access to knowledge that extends the philosophical milieu. Within Western society and the culture reflected in it, such that literature might be perceived to sit atop of a hierarchy of cultural significance, with works of literature providing the source material for other media to extend and explore, and with literature and the practice of reading central to education, whether institutionally or through the didactic practices expressed through the religious and philosophical practices of guided instruction or self help. It is against this backdrop that the transition media objects of the book must be observed and understood, as this is an object, which has accumulated numerous meanings and levels of significance, and where the practices of engagement with the text and the object of the book continue to grow, developing as part of the ongoing response to the commodification of culture, which itself is as old as written language itself. Returning to the quotation used to introduce the book earlier:

> What is the body without organs of a book? There are several, depending on the nature of the lines considered, their particular grade or density, and the possibility of their converging on a "plane of consistency" assuring their selection. Here, as elsewhere, the units of measure are what is essential: quantify writing. There is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made. Therefore a book also has no object. As an assemblage, a book has only itself, in connection with other assemblages and in relation to other bodies without organs (Deleuze, Guattari, 2008, p4).

What a book 'talks' is the textual object, a gestalt, and aesthetic, storyworld construct, which becomes available to the reader through the ludic experience of the text. It is the readers contribution, their part in the game, negotiated through the act of reading. Deleuze and Guattari see no implication to be draw from the material nature

of the book itself, and argue that the textual communication represents no object as such, as this is drawn in the mind of the reader. The body of the text provides sense to the body of work only, and no structure to the text as an object for consumption (Ayers, 2003).

> A book exists only through the outside and on the outside. A book itself is a little machine; what is the relation (also measurable) of this literary machine ? (Deleuze, Guattari, 2008, p4).

The language nature of a text is rendered on a screen in a manner impossible to reproduce in the fixed form of the page. How a book functions as a digital material object, distributed by a computer network, and available to be read almost immediately, all effect the established relations between text and reader, text and culture, and finally between people who read and the wider culture, of which they form part. That the focus of culture here remains the material object that distributes language as text is pertinent and essential. While the final cultural resolution to the role of texts in digital form will reside in language, which is shared, and social, any discourse related to the experience of reading itself appears to remains reassuringly unmodified.

The negotiated existence of the storyworld

The of aesthetic game play discussed in chapter 3, and as identified by Iser, forms the basis of any reading process, regardless of the material or the content of the material being read. The storyworld generated by a reader provides the aesthetic experience of a text. The challenges of the text identified by Iser, prompt the developmental revision of this storyworld and the reader's experience of it. The description of this central reading experience remained consistent within each group of people interviewed here. While there are differences apparent for the mediation of the experience of the book, both before and after reading, the actual experience of the text at the time of reading, as described by the participants here, reveals no experiential or phenomenological difference in reading, whether the text is hosted by an eReader, or present in printed copy.

The experiences of people who are members of reading groups provides an insight into the complex relationship present between a reader and the assemblage of

the book. This is a complex object, which will generate, with a reader's cooperation, a unique storyworld experience with each iterative reading.

A spectrum of collective experience is described by the participants who have contributed here. The experiences of reading texts, and the pleasure this grants each reader, create a picture which illustrates the nature of the reading experience, where the common and everyday influences the individual and uniquely conjured storyworld of the text. Each reflected quite freely on the intimate and personal, yet otherworldly experience of a text and the storyworld it sustains. Their own experiences here coloured by the personal nature of the experience of any text, with similar yet differing responses to the visual and other sensory stimuli triggered in response to the storyworld unfolding, and in response to the textual play of the experience of the text itself (Iser, 1980, 1993). The continuity found in the experiences described provides a reassurance perhaps that the nature of the text is relatively universal and continues to be free of modification by the technology of dissemination.

Access to the Text

Of particular interest here is the experiences of 'Lily' whose reading of *The Hare with the Amber Eyes* (De Waal, 2012) progressed from physical copy to eBook form, without any loss of appreciation or manifest deterioration in the experience of the text. This was following the unsatisfactory experience of reading in the form of an app hosted on a iPhone (Chapter 4). It should be noted that all of the eReader users interviewed commented on the fact that they are forced by circumstance to continue reading some books in the physical form, due to the unavailability of the material. This is a situation, which is likely to continue, with the mix of literary material currently being produced for eReaders being restricted to the very popular and the very obscure, with traditional practices still applying to a middle ground of publications (Thompson, 2010). While this will undoubtedly change over time, the economic incentive to make available unsuccessful or limited interest titles appears small, and the project of digitalisation of this bulk of remainder titles is likely to remain with Google Books, and the demands of their own research projects.

That the experience of reading with the eReader appears to be manifestly consistent with the experience of reading from a printed page, at least through anecdotal responses shared here, suggestive of the successful relationship the reader established with the texts as read. That the technology might be better aligned for the

literature of entertainment was reported by a number of participants, and should be explained with reference to the intentions of the design for the eReader as currently popular. The leading eReader currently manufactured and distributed by Amazon has been adopted as a reader for entertainment. Novels and genre works provide the vast majority of the material distributed by Amazon to their products. A tablet with similar branding is offered, with services to stream audio-visual content available, to take advantage of its screen properties. While still sold as a machine for reading, a short inspection of the marketing material provided to support the tablet illustrates that the potential of the device is utilised through the distribution of film and television content. Amazon continues to focus monochromatic ePaper screen readers as a replacement for paper books, and seeks to increase the number of volumes and publishers who are willing to provide their titles in this proprietary format. That the experience of reading an eReader as comparable to that of reading a paper book appears be a minimum requirement for any product development, though this should be noted only in passing here. Of more interest is that the practice of reading on an eReader appears to have had no apparent influence on the discourse or experience of reading, and appears to have supported the enjoyment of reading in situations where the use of a material book would be difficult. This has been noted elsewhere, most notably in *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction* (Jacobs, 2011) where Jacobs reports that the use of a dedicated screen devise has enhanced his powers of concentration and enabled him to resist the distractions of other electronic communications. Whether a process of cultural assimilation is allowed to continue to chase the codex book form from literary cultural or whether the two versions of material culture are allowed to coincide, only time and technological adoption will determine, but the practices of reading as determined by this group of adopters may indicate that even for initially resistant users, the eReader offers access to the act of reading in a manner that fulfils the critical criteria for the manifestation of the diegetic storyworld of the text.

That the development of digital distribution and the modern paradigm of continuous network connectivity has effected the processes of selection and purchase of the text is beyond refute. Practices shared in the selection of reading material included amongst others: the choice by author, by genre, by random selection and selection by the appreciation of the cover design. Each of these have been effected by the development of digital distribution, but of more interest here are compensation practices undertaken by participants to overcome the loss of their previous practice.

Common was the sense that the reader of an eBook was unable to remember at times what they were reading or where they were within the book itself. Participants expressed some surprise at reaching the end of a text, and for each the interface developed to compensate for the experience of screen reading proved, at sometime or in some instances, to be insufficient to replicate the physically embodied experience of reading a book. The consistent weight and size of the eReader denies the reader an experience of any difference between texts, rendering each a generic physical experience. Paradoxically, the design of the reflow form of the text is such so as to provide the user of the eReader device with control over the aspects of the text which were previously fixed through layout and print, namely the font form and size. However, the process of parsing these aspects of the textual from the text itself have reduced opportunities for the identity of the text itself, which in turn has effected the relationship between the reader and the book as it is read.

The practice of cover design shared by 'Amelia' and the practices of bookshelf virtualisation apparent in the Bookcrossing community are two processes which compensate for the loss of the identity of the book once read. The role of the bookshelf is one which is now undergoing extreme socialisation, with the public acknowledgement of one's reading providing voice at a public site for a previously private discourse, in the form of Social Networking Site activity (Bourdieu, 2004). The use of the hashtag #lovereading has been traced throughout the period of this research project, with the intention of potential analysis to help document the social and public nature of the exhibition of the cultural economy of the reader. This analytical goal was dropped when the material and nature of the discourse provided here proved to be uninformative to the goals of the research as they developed, however, it should be noted that over the course of the research period, the social networking site GoodReads.com was purchased by Amazon, the eBook publishing site Readmill.com closed in 2014 when it was absorbed by Dropbox.com, and the on-going development of Scribd.com, Aaaaarg.org and avaxho.org continue to challenge the status quo of existing copyright controls (Warwick, 2014), which, while apparently in a state of continual flux, now appear to be an oxbow in the process of flooding. While creative commons offers appropriation and sharing of textual content in a manner equivalent to that of an image, the ability of the author to remain financially and economically productive has been denuded.

Digital distribution, and the ability for an eReader to hold a collection of several hundred texts within its memory has lead to the development of the personal mobile

library, in a manner that was previously impossible. This has enabled a number of participants to alleviate concerns they previously held of the possibility of being left with "nothing to read". That this has been accomplished by the adoption of a digital 'no-thing' is paradoxical, but nonetheless, this previous unacknowledged cause of anxiety has been in part alleviated. For 'Emily' the ability to contain sufficient reading material to make sure that one of the books available would perform and enable the sensation of visualisation she enjoys, ensures that she is never without her eReader, and as an early adopter, she is already on a second replacement machine. For Jack, the travel associated with his itinerant lifestyle proved a challenge during the 1970s and 1980s, when his collection of books would be joked about as the library and which demanded that he redistribute any books once he had read them to enable space for replacement titles. Both readers, separated at either end of the age and gender spectrums, have similar reading drives, such that the anxiety of potentiality being without something to read was palpable. Here, the ability to retain many books in a single uniform object is ideal. However, the ability to hoard, with the user losing track of the books they retain in their collection is obvious and stated by each participant. The willingness of the ludic eReader to buy books in response to marketing material, or for collecting 'classics' which they may never find the motivation to actually read, is not restricted to the eBook. However, the ability of the digital eReader to hold these titles out from sight, with no physical material presence, can lead to duplication of purchases. While this form of consumption appears relatively harmless, and carries with it overheads of energy consumption, it appears symptomatic of an underlying anxiety which, rather than being addressed by the eReader, is in fact being exasperated by it. The owner is unaware of the contents of their electronic library and without any significant object acting as spore, for either their ownership of the text itself, or to offer a sign to enable the memory of the text as previously read.

Pleasure as a Social Practice

Here the community practices associated with Bookcrossing.com might offer a model for a future strategy to the ownership of a text. Here, a member is urged to release their books once read, as a way of sharing the experiences of the text, and as part of a grand treasure hunt game. Each book is recorded on the members' profile and Bookcrossing bookshelf, with a visual image of the cover of the book and a

review to document the reader's appreciation and response to the text itself. Finally, to announce the book as a gift, the owner creates a release note to announce where, when, and potentially to whom, the book will be released.

Each book has a unique key, which allows the subsequent reader to document their own reading experience, and thus document the life of the book as it travels after its release. Any book found and updated in this way is recorded as caught, and statistics on capture and subsequent releases are generated and shared through the website. This community of book readers and sharers has a global reach, and the number of countries where this practice has failed to take off is notable and formed part of the discussion of the practice in general (chapter 3). While undoubtedly in decline, the community is still active internationally, with the next World Convention being staged in Oxford, United Kingdom in April 2015.

The ludic nature of the relationship between a member of Bookcrossing and their book collection in no way undermines the experiences of reading, with the excitement of shared reading experiences triggered by the capture and reading by a future reader more than compensating for the loss of access to the book. The personal profile page manages the experiences of any book read and released in such a way that the community member has easy access back to their own reading history in a form other reading practices would find hard to replicate. Several members of reading groups interviewed discussed the possibility of using Bookcrossing as a source of reading material, both for themselves and for other members of their group. Bookcrossing has been condemned by authors and described as anti-capitalist in both mainstream press and academic writing (Dalli & Corciolani, 2008), but their internal discourse and convention activities view their activities as supporting literacy and access to text which would be waste otherwise. Like other practices associated with the free circulation of surplus goods and services (Freecycle, Uber, etc) users share environmental and community concerns, subscribing to a commitment to the concept of freedom of access over and above the commercial control of access to the object being distributed. With the members of Bookcrossing, this freedom and immaterial trace of the experience of reading demonstrates that the digital materiality of the book in itself is not likely to be the cause of the anxieties associated with the medium in question. Rather it is the lack of sufficient structures to support the reader in a manner they are accustomed to that exasperates the anxiety associated with the lack of a transitional object, here in the form of a book.

The significance one might expect to be associated with the book, with assemblages formed of linguistic, structural and semiotic systems complicated by the personal, cultural and materialistic strata or layers of engagement, is here dispensed with. These layers of engagement, which adhere to the object throughout its various stages: of being sourced by the reader, being owned, being experienced as a textual object, and that latter stage where the book offers access to the experience of the textual object during reading, might be considered to offer the reader the chance to access to that version of themselves at the time of reading the text. However, subsequent reading would rather offer the reader a new textual object, in response to the ludic moment of the text, and the current nature of the experiential life of the reader.

Aside from the cultural capital present in any display or conspicuous consumption, there is a sense of the book granting access to the experience of the text, which has been used to offer the pleasure of the text as the goal within the game provided by Bookcrossing. The 'catch', and its success within the game, visible to the community, also grants the Bookcrossing member access to their own experience of the pleasure of the text. The new response from the reader of their book updates their own knowledge and experience of the text, their pleasure is modulated through the proximity of the experience of the unknown other. The cultural capital of the text is manifest in it popularity, with the catch and subsequent release authenticating the previous owner's taste and knowledge of reading, their taste in literature. The agreement, or otherwise, of the subsequent reviewers, enables cross-community communication as relative to the quality of the text. This visibility within the community represents a negotiated compensation for the denial of access to the text, while its presence on the Bookcrossing profile bookshelf offers the previous owner access to the memories of the text and the shared experiences of its subsequent readers. The act of release offers access to this ludic thrill, and here this association represents a new assemblage or regime of signs not available to those outside of the community of Bookcrossing.

As the later capitalist cultural epoch summarily dispenses with the cultural object and replaces these things with the apparent non-things of digital materiality, it might seem likely that the significance previously associated with the objects of cultural matter would fall into disuse, or achieve a value in society where access to the object is impossible for all but the extremely wealth. While the prospect of the aura of the object might remain in place for the foreseeable future, there is likely to be the need to

replace the emotional aspect of the strata of cultural experience with some structure of digital materiality, with all the issues of transience this entails. Whether or not the communal experience of Bookcrossing might survive in the way that a traditional library has thus far is open to question. That Amazon attempted to graft a community of active readers onto the commercial operations of book distribution through the purchase of GoodReads.com in 2013 (Flood, 2013) might indicate that the social practice of documenting reading activity offers communities of readers an opportunity to digitally share their own ludic experiences of a text within a wider social network form. However the limited adoption of the existing network and site might appear to demonstrate that while the practice of documentation is essential for a book where that physical book will be 'released', with its associated potential for ludic compensation of the treasure hunt game being successful, the associated immaterial labour demanded by the practice of book review attracts insufficiently affective compensation within the network of readers.

The Trace of the Machine

The work of Fox and Mensah serves to underline the potential losses which accompany the remediation of the physical artefact to a digital image. While the destructive implementation of the process of scanning inflicted on this particular book is no longer considered 'best practice', the guillotining of the spine of the book to remove the binding serves as a metaphor for the scanning process (Darnton, 2010). The removal of the embodied response to the physical object from the image of the book only serves to dislocate the historical resonance that volume might have. It is unlikely for instance that the 'Book Collector' in Benjamin would be as enthusiastic about a file of images which purports to replicate a copy of a book, as he is in describing his participation at auctions in his youth. The obvious deficit of the image when compared to the object failed to uncover the full scale and implications of the missing component. The materiality, weight and scale, are directly responsible for the positioning of the reader in relation to the book. As described by Fox, the smallness of the book itself positioned both artists in close proximity, demanding that their collaboration be intimate in a manner difficult to maintain, uncomfortable in the public spaces of the British Library. The inability of the artists to secure access to the real thing lead to the use of the digital copy, with the shared space of collaboration removed. The embodied relationship between reader and book is replaced with a

relationship between user and screen, a hermeneutic experience is restructured, such that the aesthetic image of the object demands attention in a manner usually irrelevant to the reader. Size, position, illumination, location, medium; attributes which all become open to manipulation in place of the previously fixed relation of the reader to the book. With the digital copy, the age of the object is reduced to the level of tag, metadata and open to misadventure. As hard as Fox strove to reclaim the object for her project, the words of Kitchiner resonated too loudly in the object shorn of any other resonance. As foreseen by McLuhan, here the language of the text is distorted by its mediation in image, its electronic -- digital -- materiality demanding attention away from the other codex texts and media sources. A recalibration was in order for Fox and Mensah, and potentially in the wider context of digital humanities, where the availability of digital material can force the muted social voice of traditional media objects out of focus and attention.

Différance Revisited

Technology and the anxiety associated with its potential absence is a central theme of Stiegler's (2013), with media in its current networked digital form, influential in the development of neurological and societal instabilities. The eBook and eReader/Tablet technologies fit within this model, with people who use eReaders adopting the device for ease of transport and ability to access a near limitless quantity of books to read. However, before we extend further into this area of interest, it should be noted that reading was used as a key qualification for the participants whose view are used here. Therefore the desire of each reader to use literary texts as a transitional object, used to alleviate the anxiety associated with the absence of distraction, is already apparent.

Silverstone identifies how television programmes might be associated with the transitional space determined by Winnicott (Silverstone, 1994, Winnicott 1980). Stiegler, while make no mention of Silverstone in his work on the subject, has through the process of making generic the specific case of television, succeeded in identifying how the current paradigm of network media devices become personal and intimate, such that they are an object of constant comfort and surveillance. That the book has been drawn into this technical paradigm in the period since the launch of the Gutenberg Project and the development of eLiterature should be of no surprise. However the consequences of the apparent willingness of the reader to reject the

object of the book is worthy of comment. The advantages associated with the ability to distribute texts digitally, supply friction free access to the knowledge of society in a manner few who lived before the later half of the last century would have conceived or believed possible. That control of this opportunity, for the English-speaking world at least, is being commandeered so ruthlessly by the titans of the digital media era, in the form of Amazon and Goggle, is a concern frequently voiced and constantly apparent.

On Returning

Derrida, at the very beginning of *On Grammatology* (Derrida, 1998), predicts the end of the epoch of the book. This is not statement of futurology, however informed it might have been by the emerging genus of electric media and intercontinental communications; this is a statement about language. The era of the book would come to a close and an era of writing would begin. As predictions go, this is potently close to the present paradigm of social media production, where the ability and perceived demand to share oneself constantly in the form of status updates make presence and connectedness paramount. This way lies integrity, trust, and potentially, democracy and interdependency, for the society of the 21st century (Castells, 2006).

Derrida focuses not on the immediate media future, but discusses the validity of the sign as an object of mediation in language, as language mediates thought, in both a written and spoken context. By removing the distinction of the primacy of the spoken word over writing in any of its forms, he proposes that the epoch of the book is close to its end, and writing is liberated from its secondary role, if not the structural and metaphysical limitations of an eternally differed resolution. The dependance Derrida traces in both Phenomenology and Structuralism upon an absent, mediated thought, and of the truth this grants access to, demands the necessities for an approach to philosophy that enables a dialogue between both experience and significance if it is going to contain our knowledge of the world. Derrida identifies the inability for either school of philosophy to address these issues alone, based as they are in the structural opposition detailed above, and offers a historical and material procedure with which to overcome this paradoxical predicament. Hence the emergence of the procedure Derrida later named 'deconstruction' (Bradley, 2008).

I start with this summary of Derrida to explain the role of language as technology in culture. This phenomena provides our ability to communicate, both amongst ourselves and through culture with others across time and space. Language and the

marks we use to capture it are the basis for any mediated thought, whether via an official document, postcard or book.

The book as a cultural object: tablet, scroll or codex form, has undoubtedly been with human society for a period longer than any other documental form, except perhaps the leaves or pages the book is formed from. The emergence of the codex, made up of individual leaves bound into a form of book, has been widely acknowledged to be part of an epoch, with the object appearing at the beginning of the common era (Ong, 2012, McLuhan, 1962, Baron, 2009). The emergence of printing in Europe enabled the standardisation of texts, beginning with the production of religious works, which could be relatively easily distributed and shared, enabling the emergence of literature in new, accessible forms. The co-emergence of the industrial practices with the expansion of religious and political thought in Europe potentially accelerated the processes of adoption for both literature and radical thought at the time (Eisenstein, 2005, Eliot et al. 2007). However, the acceleration in technological development associated with the late capitalist period has enabled the development of new modes of consumption, challenging the commodification of the object of culture. The emergence of the computer in the late-capitalist era has enabled the development of digital production and networked distribution practices. These replace the distribution of previously discreet analog objects that encapsulated media forms for exchange, and as with music, the photograph and film, the text and partially the book has become a digital material object, stripped of its previous physical materiality (Chartier, 2004, Thompson, 2005).

The separation of physical form of the book from the material form of the text has been a goal perceived long before it became technological achievable. As identified earlier, Bush, McLuhan, Nelson, Warnock, amongst many others, have at different times, predicted, anticipated or argued for the development of technology which would replace documents in their current material form, separate and closed form. Supplanting printed documents with a new interconnected, digitally distributed form, open for machinic reading and recomposition, might enable human society to develop culturally through the enhanced opportunities to use the knowledge trapped within the physical form (Bush, 1945). The technological paradigm of digital media and its involvement in publishing might appear to have made the development of screen readers inevitable, once the use of computers became incorporated into the production of most books (Thompson, 2005, 2010). However, the pressure of capital and limited resources have long been apparent in the production of books, with the

protectionist taxes common in Europe during the 18th century, the development of alternative paper and binding technologies through the 19th century up until the closure of the remaining paper mills in the UK in the period immediately after WW2 (Basbanes, 2013, Eisenstein, 2005, Eliot et al, 2007). So, while the presence of the book in the late capitalist era might be considered a cultural pillar, a symbol for knowledge and a sign of mature appreciation and sophistication across western society, the book itself has always been an object in transition. In the case of Derrida, the book is viewed as an object, which exemplified the epoch of logocentric thought, where the dialectical opposition between experience and significance limited our ability to perceive and discuss our real world. In part, the emergence of digital technology, which enables a media object, in this case a text, to be separated, or parsed, from the physical constrains of an encapsulation object, such as a book, might be considered to be the cultural expression of Derrida's thought. The role of the reader is manifestly reduced from one who reads a 'book', a description which includes embodied, cultural memory and experience which supplements the experience of any diegetic storyworld of a text, to the experience of one who is granted access to a text. This act of service, enabled through the use of a specific, proprietary hardware, replaces the connection between the act of reading and the body of the text, with the experience of the text free of any specific or related encapsulating technology, or book. The intention of this research and thesis has been to examine the impact this deconstruction of the relationship that the reader has to the book as a physical object has on the experience of the reader, as expressed through their own words and, where appropriate, their behaviour shared through a community of readers.

Bibliography

Adams, D. (1979) *The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Pan original. London: Pan Books.

Allington, D. (2012) Private experience, textual analysis, and institutional authority: The discursive practice of critical interpretation and its enactment in literary training. *Language and Literature*. 21 (2).

Allington, D. & Swann, J. (2009) Researching literary reading as social practice. *Language and Literature*. 18 (3).

Altieri, C. (2007) The Sensuous Dimension of Literary Experience: An Alternative to Materialist Theory. *New Literary History*. 38 (1).

Altieri, C. (2011) Where Can Aesthetics Go? *New Literary History*. 42 (1).

Amjadali, S. (2002) Read and Release. *Sunday Herald Sun*. 30 June U03.

Anderman, N. (2005) This Internet Revolution Is Tangible. *Haaretz*. 13 December. . Available from: http://www.haaretz.com/culture/arts-leisure/this-internet-revolution-is-tangible-1.176470.

Anon (n.d.) *Adobe Standards* . Available from: http://www.adobe.com/enterprise/standards/pdfa/ (Accessed 9 May 2014).

Anon (n.d.) *Bookcrossing - Find Members* . Available from: http://www.bookcrossing.com/findmembers (Accessed 15 March 2013).

Anon (n.d.) *Bookcrossing - Frequently Asked Questions* . Available from: http://www.bookcrossing.com/faqs (Accessed 15 March 2013).

Anon (n.d.) *Bookcrossing - Go Hunt* . Available from: http://www.bookcrossing.com/hunt/45 (Accessed 2 October 2013).

Anon (2005) *Bookcrossing Israel Community Forum* . Available from: http://www.tapuz.co.il/communa/userCommunaMsges.asp?CommunaId=13254&firstmsg=0 (Accessed 10 February 2012).

Anon (2005) *Bookcrossing - Profile Page* . Available from: http://www.bookcrossing.com/mybookshelf/ruse1966/ (Accessed 15 March 2013).

Anon (2010) *Document management -- Electronic document file format for long-term preservation -- Part 1: Use of PDF 1.4 (PDF/A-1)* . Available from: http://www.iso.org/iso/iso_catalogue/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=38920 (Accessed 2 October 2014).

Anon (2014) *Sustainability of Digital Formats Planning for Library of Congress Collections* . Available from: http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/formats/fdd/fdd000125.shtml (Accessed 9 May 2014).

Anon (n.d.) *The World Factbook - Greece* . Available from: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gr.html (Accessed 15 March 2012).

Armstrong, C. (2008) Books in a virtual world: The evolution of the e-book and its lexicon. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*. 40 (3).

Armstrong, P. B. (2008) Form and History: Reading as an Aesthetic Experience and Historical Act. *Modern Language Quarterly*. 69 (2).

Armstrong, P. B. (2011) In Defense of Reading: Or, Why Reading Still Matters in a Contextualist Age. *New Literary History*. 42 (1).

Armstrong, P. B. (2000) The Politics of Play: The Social Implications of Iser's Aesthetic Theory. *New Literary History*. 31 (1).

Ayers, D. (2003) Materialism and the Book. *Poetics Today*. 4 (24).

Baron-Cohen, S. et al. (1985) Does the autistic child have a 'theory of mind'?*. *Cognition*. 21.

Baron, D. E. (2009) *A Better Pencil: readers, writers, and the digital revolution*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Barthes, R. (1989) *The Pleasure of the Text*. New York, N.Y.: Noonday Press.

Basbanes, N. A. (2013) *On Paper: the everything of its two-thousand-year history*. New York, N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf.

Bassett, C. (2007) *The Arc and the Machine*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Benjamin, W. (1999) *Illuminations*. London: Pimlico.

Benjamin, W. (2002) *The Arcades Project*. 1st paperback ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Benwell, B. (2005) 'Lucky this is anonymous.'Ethnographies of reception in men's magazines: a 'textual culture'approach. *Discourse & society*. 16 (2).

Benwell, B. (2012) Common-sense anti-racism in book group talk: The role of reported speech. *Discourse & Society*. 23 (4).

Benwell, B. & Stokoe, E. (2006) *Discourse and identity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Berry, D. M. (2014) *Critical Theory and the Digital*. New York, N.Y.: Bloomsbury Academic.

Blanchot, M. (1993) *The Infinite Conversation*. Susan Hanson (ed.). University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis and London.

Blanchot, M. (1988) *Thomas the Obscure*. Barrytown, N.Y.: Station Hill Press.

Bloom, J. (2001) *Paper before Print: the history and impact of paper in the Islamic world*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Bogue, R. (1991) *Deleuze and Guattari*. Critics of the twentieth century. London; New York: Routledge.

Bolter, J. D. & Grusin, R. (2003) *Remediation: understanding new media*. 6. Nachdr. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Bova, B. (1990) *Cyberbooks*. U.K.: Mandarin.

Bradley, A. (2008) *Derrida' s Of Grammatology*. Edinburgh University Press.

Brier, S. (2008) *Cybersemiotics: why information is not enough!* Toronto studies in semiotics and communication. Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press.

Brook, T. (2000) Restaging the Reception of Iser's Early Work, Or Sides Not Taken in Discussions of the Aesthetic. *New Literary History*. 31 (1).

Brown, B. (2007) Thing Theory. *Critical Inquiry*. 28 (1).

Caillois, R. (2001) *Man, Play, and Games*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Castells, M. (2007) Communication , Power and Counter-power in the Network Society. *International Journal of Communication*. 1 (June 2006).

Certeau, M. de (1988) *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.

Chartier, R. (1995) *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances, and Audiences from Codex to Computer*. New cultural studies. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Chartier, R. (1994) *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.

Conboy, G. et al. (eds.) (2011) *EPUB 3 Overview Recommended Specification. .* Available from: http://www.idpf.org/epub/30/spec/epub30-overview-20111011.html (Accessed 24 February 2014).

Cunliffe, A. L. (2010) Retelling Tales of the Field: In Search of Organizational Ethnography 20 Years On. Organizational Research Methods. 13 (2).

Dalli, D. (2008) Collective forms of resistance: the Transformative Power of Moderate Communities. *International Journal of Market Research.* 50 (6).

Darnton, R. (2010) *The Case for Books: Past, Present, and Future.* New York, N.Y.: PublicAffairs.

Darnton, R. (1982) What Is the History of Books? *Daedalus.* 111 (3).

Dehaene, S. (2010) *Reading in the Brain: the new science of how we read.* New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books.

Dehaene, S. & Naccache, L. (2001) Towards a Cognitive Neuroscience of Consciousness: Basic Evidence and a Workspace Framework. *Cognition.* 79 (1-2).

Deleuze, G. (1983) *Nietzsche and philosophy.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Deleuze, G. (2000) *Proust and Signs: the complete text.* Theory out of bounds v. 17. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Deleuze, G. (2004) *The Logic of Sense.* London: Continuum.

Deleuze, G. (2011) *Difference and Repetition.* Continuum impacts changing minds. Repr. with corr. London: Continuum.

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1984) *Anti-Oedipus: capitalism and schizophrenia.* London: Athlone.

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. F. (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.* London: University of Minnesota Press Minneapolis.

Derrida, J. (1982) *Margins of Philosophy.* Brighton: The Harvester Press Limited.

Derrida, J. (1998) *Of Grammatology.* Corrected ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Derrida, J. (1994) *Specters of Marx the state of the debt, the work of mourning, and the new international.* New York, London: Routledge.

Derrida, J. (2001) *Writing and Difference.* London: Routledge.

Derrida, J. (2004) *Dissemination.* London: Continuum.

Dilthey, W. & Jameson, F. (1972) The Rise of Hermeneutics. *New Literary History.* 3 (2), 229.

Eagleton, T. (1981) *Walter Benjamin, or, Towards a revolutionary criticism.* London: Verso Editions and NLB: Distributed in the USA and Canada by Schocken Books.

Eede, Y. V. D. (2011) In Between Us: On the Transparency and Opacity. *Sci.* 16.

Eisenstein, E. L. (2005) *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe.* Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Eliot, S. & Rose, J. (2007) *A Companion to the History of the Book.* Blackwell companions to literature and culture. Simon Eliot & Jonathan Rose (eds.). Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

Fairclough, N. (2012) Critical Discourse Analysis. *International Advances in Engineering and Technology.* 7 (July).

Fairclough, N. (1992) Discourse and Text: Linguistic and Intertextual Analysis within Discourse Analysis. *Discourse & Society.* 3 (2).

Febvre, L. P. V. et al. (2010) *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450-1800*. Verso world history series. London: Verso.

Finkelstein, D. & McCleery, A. (eds.) (2006) *The Book History Reader*. 2nd ed. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge.

Fish, S. (1978) Why No One's Afraid of Wolfgang Iser. *Diacritics*. 11 (1).

Flint, K. (2006) Women and Reading. *Signs*. 31 (2).

Flood, A. (2013) Amazon purchase of Goodreads stuns book industry. *The Guardian*. 2 February. . Available from: http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/apr/02/amazon-purchase-goodreads-stuns-book-industry (Accessed 20 June 2015).

Flood, A. (2015) *Sales of printed books fall by more than £150m in five years*. 13 January. . Available from: http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jan/13/sales-printed-books-fell-150m--five-years (Accessed 20 June 2015).

Flood, A. (2014) UK publishes more books per capita than any other country, report shows. *The Guardian*. 22 October. . Available from: http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/oct/22/uk-publishes-more-books-per-capita-million-report (Accessed 20 June 2015).

Fluck, W. (2000) The Search for Distance: Negation and Negativity in Wolfgang Iser's Literary Theory. *New Literary History*. 31 (1).

Fuller, D. (2008) Reading as social practice The Beyond the Book research project. *Popular Narrative Media*. 1(2).

Fuller, D. & Proctor, J. (2009) Reading as Social Glue? Book Groups, Multiculture, and the Small Island Read 2007. *Moving Worlds: A Journal of Transcultural Writings*, 9(2).

Fuller, D. & Sedo, D.R. (2006) A Reading Spectacle for the Nation: The CBC and 'Canada Reads'. *Journal of Canadian Studies*. 40 (1).

Fuller, D. and Sedo, D.R., 2014. "And Then We Went to the Brewery" Reading as a Social Activity in a Digital Era. *World Literature Today*, 88(3-4).

Genette, G. & Crampe, B. (1988) Structure and Functions of the Title in Literature. *Critical Inquiry*. 14 (4).

Gitelman, L. (2014) *Paper Knowledge: toward a media history of documents*. Sign, Storage, Transmission. Durham; London: Duke University Press.

Glass, J. D. (2013) A Neurobiological Model for the 'Inner Speech' of Conscious Thought. *Journal of Consciousness*. 20 (9).

Gobo, G. (2008) Doing ethnography. Los Angeles Calif.; London: SAGE.

Goodman, N. (1978) *Ways of Worldmaking*. Indianapolis,: Hackett Pub. Co.

Griswold, W. (1987a) A Methodological Framework for the Sociology of Culture. *Sociological Methodology*. 17 (1987).

Griswold, W. (1987b) The Fabrication of Meaning: Literary Interpretation in the United States, Great Britain, and the West Indies. *American Journal of Sociology*. 92 (5).

Griswold, W. et al. (2013) Objects, Words, and Bodies in Space: Bringing Materiality into Cultural Analysis. *Qualitative Sociology*. 36 (4).

Griswold, W. et al. (2005) Reading and the Reading Class in the Twenty-First Century. *Annual Review of Sociology*. 31 (1).

Griswold, W. et al. (2014) The Ideas of the Reading Class. *Contemporary Sociology*. 30 (1).

Gubrium, J. F. & Holstein, J. A. (eds.) (2002) *Handbook of interview research: context & method*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.

Hansen, M. B. N. & Nicola, B. (2004) The Digital Topography of Mark Z. Danielewski's House of Leaves. *Contemporary Literature*. 45 (4).

Hartley, J. & Turvey, S. (2001) *The Reading Groups Book*. 2002nd–2003rd edition. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Hayles, N. K. (2008) *Electronic literature: new horizons for the literary*. The Ward-Phillips lectures in English language and literature. Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame.

Hayles, N. K. (2007) Intermediation: The Pursuit of a Vision. *New Literary History*. 38 (1).

Hayles, N. K. (2005) *My Mother was a Computer: Digital Subjects and Literary Texts*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hayles, N. K. (2004) Print is flat, code is deep: The importance of media-specific analysis. *Poetics Today*. 1 (Spring 2004).

Hayles, N. K. (2003) Translating Media: Why We Should Rethink Textuality. *The Yale Journal of Criticism*. 16 (2).

Hayles, N. K. (2002) *Writing Machines*. Mediawork pamphlet. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Heidegger, M. (1977) *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*. New York: Garland Pub.

Holt, D. B. (1997) Poststructuralist of Lifestyle Analysis: the Conceptualizing Social Patterning Consumption in Postmodernity. *Journal of Consumer Research*. 23 (4).

Iser, W. (2014) *Talk like Whales: A Reply to Stanley Fish*. 11 (3).

Iser, W. (1980) *The Act of Reading: a Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Iser, W. (1993) *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology*. Baltimore: J. Hopkins University Press.

Iser, W. (1972) The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach. *New Literary History*. 3 (2).

Jacobs, A. (2011) *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction*. New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press.

Johns, A. (1998) *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making*. Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press.

Kitchiner, W. (n.d.) *The Cooks Oracle and Housekeepers Manual* . Available from: https://ia800306.us.archive.org/2/items/cooksoracleandho00kitcrich/cooksoracleandho00kitcrich.pdf (Accessed 28 February 2014).

Kittler, F. (2011) Perspective and the Book. *Grey Room*. 5 (5).

Kittler, F. A. (1997) *Literature, Media, Information Systems: essays*. Amsterdam: GB Arts International.

Landow, G. P. (1992) *Hypertext: the convergence of contemporary critical theory and technology*. Parallax. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Lessig, L. (2004) *Free Culture - How Big Media Uses Technology and the Law to Lock Down Culture and Control Creativity*.

Leurs, L. (2013) The History of PDF. Prepressure.com . Available from: http://www.prepressure.com/pdf/basics/history (Accessed 9 May 2014). . Available from: http://www.prepressure.com/pdf/basics/history (Accessed 9 May 2014).

Long, E. (1986) Women, Reading, and Cultural Authority: Some Implications of the Audience Perspective in Cultural Studies. *American Quarterly*. 38 (4).

Long, E. (1987) Reading Groups and the Post-Modern Crisis of Cultural Authority. *Cultural Studies*. 1 (April 2012).

Long, E. (2004) Literature as a Spur to Collective Action: The Diverse Perspectives of Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Reading Groups. *Poetics Today*. 25 (2).

Ludovico, A. (2012) *Post-digital print: the mutation of publishing since 1894*. Eindhoven: Onomatopee.

Mangen, A. (2008) Hypertext fiction reading: haptics and immersion. *Journal of Research in Reading*. 31 (4).

Manguel, A. (1997) *A History of Reading*. London: Flamingo.

Manguel, A. (2010) *A Reader on Reading*. New Haven, [Conn.]: Yale University Press.

Marcus, G. E. & Saka, E. (2006) Assemblage. *Theory, Culture & Society*. 23 (2-3).

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. B. (2016) *Designing Qualitative Research*. Sixth edition. Los Angeles, California: SAGE.

Martins, R. et al. (2014) Differences between patterns of brain activity associated with semantics and those linked with phonological processing diminish with age. *PloS one*. 9 (6), e99710.

McKenzie, D. F. & McKenzie, D. F. (1999) *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*. Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press.

McLuhan, M. et al. (1971) *Do Books Matter*. Brian Baumfield (ed.). Leeds, Yorks, UK: Morley Books. McLuhan, M. (1962) *The Gutenberg galaxy the making of typographic man*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

McLuhan, M. (2010) *Understanding media: the extensions of man*. Routledge classics. Repr. London: Routledge.

McLuhan, M. & Zingrone, F. (1997) *Essential McLuhan*. London: Routledge.

Mendelsund, P. (2014) *What we see when we read: a phenomenology; with illustrations*. Vintage original. First Vintage Books edition. New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books, a division of Random House LLC.

Nell, V. (1988) *Lost in a book: the psychology of reading for pleasure*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Ong, W. J. & Hartley, J. (2012) *Orality and literacy: the technologizing of the word*. Orality and literary. 30th anniv. London; New York: Routledge.

Perfetti, C. a & Tan, L.-H. (2013) Write to read: the brain's universal reading and writing network. *Trends in cognitive sciences*. 17 (2), 56–57.

Pimlott, H. (2011) 'Eternal ephemera' or the durability of 'disposable literature': The power and persistence of print in an electronic world. *Media, Culture & Society*. 33 (4), 515–530.

Pink, S. (2009) Doing sensory ethnography. London; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Piper, A. (2012) *Book Was There: Reading in Electronic Times*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press.

Poulet, G. (1969) Phenomenology of Reading. *New Literary History*. 1 (1), 53.

Pound, E. (1979) *A.B.C. of Reading*. Faber Paperbacks. Repr. London: Faber and Faber.

Premack, D. & Woodruff, G. (1978) Does the chimpanzee have a theory of mind? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. 1 (04).

Price, L. (2009a) From The History of a Book to a 'History of the Book'. *Representations*. 108 (1).

Price, L. (2009b) Reading as if for Life. *Michigan Quarterly Review*. 48.

Radway, J. A. (1984) *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Ricøeur, P. (1991) *From Text to Action*. Essays in hermeneutics. Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press.

Ricœur, P. (1981) *Hermeneutics and the human sciences: essays on language, action, and interpretation*. Cambridge [Eng.]; New York: Paris: Cambridge University Press; Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme.

Ricoeur, P. (1974) Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics. *New Literary History*. 6 (1).

Ricoeur, P. (1980) Narrative Time. *Critical Inquiry*. 7 (1).

Ricoeur, P. (1973a) The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text. *New Literary History*. 5 (1).

Ricoeur, P. (1973b) The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text. *New Literary History*. 5 (1).

Riquelme, J. P. (2000a) Introduction: Wolfgang Iser's Aesthetic Politics: Reading as Fieldwork. *New Literary History*. 31 (1).

Riquelme, J. P. (2000b) Iser â ™ s Aesthetic Politics: Wolfgang Reading as Fieldwork. *New Literary History*. 31 (1).

Riquelme, J. P. (2000c) The Way of the Chameleon in Iser, Beckett, and Yeats: Figuring Death and the Imaginary in The Fictive and the Imaginary. *New Literary History*. 31 (1).

Roberts, C. H. & Skeat, T. C. (1987) *The Birth of the Codex*. London: Oxford Univ. Press.

Robson, H. et al. (2014) The anterior temporal lobes support residual comprehension in Wernicke's aphasia. *Brain*. 137 (3).

Royle, N. (2003) *Jacques Derrida*. Routledge critical thinkers. London; New York: Routledge.

Ryan, M. (2009) From Narrative Games to Playable Stories: Toward a Poetics of Interactive Narrative. *StoryWorlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies*. 1 (1).

Ryan, M.-L. (2006) *Avatars of story*. Electronic mediations v. 17. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Ryan, M.-L. (ed.) (2004) *Narrative Across Media: the Languages of Storytelling*. Frontiers of narrative. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Schumpeter, J. A. (1983) *The Theory of Economic Development: an inquiry into Profits, Capital, Credit, interest, and the Business Cycle*. Social science classics series. New Brunswick, N.J: Transaction Books.

Schwab, G. (2000) 'If only I were not obliged to manifest': Iser's Aesthetics of Negativity. *New Literary History*. 31 (1).

Sedo, D.R. (2008) Richard & Judy's Book Club and 'Canada Reads': Readers, books and cultural programming in a digital era. *Information, Communication & Society*. 11 (2).

Sellen, A. J. & Harper, R. H. R. (2003) The Myth of the Paperless Office. *New Library World*. 104 (3).

Shteyngart, G. (2010) *Super Sad True Love Story: a novel*. 1st ed. New York, N.Y.: Random House.

Silverstone, R. (1994) *Television and Everyday Life*. London; New York: Routledge.

Socken, P. (ed.) (2013) *The Edge of the Precipice: Why Read Literature in the Digital Age?* Montreal: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press.

Spradley, J. P. (1980) *Participant Observation*. New York, N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Starobinski, J. (1989) *The Living Eye*. Harvard studies in comparative literature. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Steenbakkers, J. F. (2005) Digital Archiving in the Twenty-First Century: Practice at the National Library of the Netherlands. *Library Trends*. 54 (1).

Stiegler, B. (2013) *What Makes Life Worth Living: on pharmacology*. Oxford: Polity Press.

Stivale, C. J. (2005) *Gilles Deleuze Key Concepts*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Striphas, T. (2011) *The Late Age of Print: Everyday Book Culture from Consumerism to Control*. New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press.

Sweeney, M. (2003) Living to Read True Crime: Theorizations from Prison. *Discourse*. 25 (1).

Sweeney, M. (2004) Prison narratives, narrative prisons: Incarcerated women reading Gayl Jones's 'Eva's Man'. *Feminist Studies*. 30 (2).

Sweeney, M. (2008a) Books as Bombs : Incendiary Reading Practices in Women's Prisons. *Pmla Publications Of The Modern Language Association Of America*. 123 (3).

Sweeney, M. (2008b) Reading and Reckoning in a Women's Prison. *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*. 50 (3).

Tampio, N. (2009) Assemblages and the Multitude: Deleuze, Hardt, Negri, and the Postmodern Left. *European Journal of Political Theory*. 8 (3).

Theisen, B. (2000) The Four Sides of Reading: Paradox, Play, and Autobiographical Fiction in Iser and Rilke. *New Literary History*. 31 (1).

Thoburn, N. (2010) Communist Objects and the Values of Printed Matter. *Social Text*. 28 (2 103).

Thomas, B. (2000) Restaging the Reception of Iser's Early Work, Or Sides Not Taken in Discussions of the Aesthetic. *New Literary History*. 31 (1).

Thompson, J. B. (2005) *Books in the digital age: the transformation of academic and higher education publishing in Britain and the United States*. Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Thompson, J. B. (2010) *Merchants of culture: the publishing business in the twenty-first century*. Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity.

Timmers, P. (1999) *Electronic commerce: strategies and models for business-to-business trading*. Wiley series in information systems. Chichester, West Sussex, England; New York: Wiley.

Tomasello, M. (ed.) (2014) *The New Psychology of Language: Cognitive and Functional Approaches to Language Structure*. Psychology Press Classic Editions. Classic Edition. New York; London: Psychology Press, Taylor & Francis Group.

Trager, K. D. (2005) Reading in the Borderland: An Ethnographic Study of Serious Readers in a Mega-Bookstore Café. *The Communication Review*. 8 (2).

Ulin, D. L. (2010) *The Lost Art of Reading: Why Books Matter in a Distracted Time*. Seattle, Wash. Sasquatch Books.

Vandendorpe, C. (2008) 'Reading on Screen: The New Media Sphere', in Susan Schreibman & Ray Siemens (eds.) *A Companion to Digital Literary Studies*. Oxford: Blackwell.

De Waal, E. (2011) *The Hare with Amber Eyes: a family's century of Art and Loss*. London: Vintage.

Wallace, D. F. (2012) *The Pale King: an unfinished novel*. London: Penguin.

Warwick, H. et al. (2014) *Radical Tactics of the Offline Library*. Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures.

Weber, S. (2007) on Benjamin's '-abilities'. *Daedalus*. 136 (2).

Weller, M. (2011) *The Digital Scholar: How Technology is Transforming Scholarly Practice*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Winnicott, D. W. (1980) *Playing and Reality*. Harmondsworth, Eng.; New York: Penguin Books.

Wolf, M. & Stoodley, C. J. (2008) *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain*. Thriplow: Icon.

Zeman, A. et al. (2013) By Heart. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*. 20 (9).

Ziehe, T. & Baines, R. (1994) From living standard to life style. *Young*. 2 (2).

Zunshine, L. (ed.) (2010) *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Zunshine, L. (2008) Theory of Mind and Fictions of Embodied Transparency. *NARRATIVE*. 16 (1).

Zunshine, L. (2006) *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel*. Ohio State University Press.