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Repeat

Christina Lupton

In honor of this essay, I have started re-reading Proust. What a trope, re-reading Proust. Julian Barnes recollects Anita Brookner saying that she had just finished a novel and was doing, for a while, exactly as she liked. Teasingly he says: “Well, in your case that probably means rereading Proust.” How did he know, she wonders?<sup>1</sup> Still, it’s a trope that works. Like the memories Proust conjures to life, mine come rushing back through that keyhole of contact with the first volume of the paperback edition on our shelves. The pink and orange cover transports me back to the heady days of meeting my great love and us reading Proust aloud to each other in the evenings. All six volumes. Twenty years ago. French names, stumbled over forgivingly. I even find a slip of paper, instructions for a digital alarm clock, which we’d used as a bookmark. Re-reading takes me right there; leaves me wondering if I can read Proust now. Again? Or for the first time?

Repeat reading happens all the time, of course. As a teacher who returns regularly to a set of books each year or two for class preparation, and a parent entering my second round of reading *Swallows and Amazons* and *Little House on the Prairie* at bedtime, it’s not an activity I have to stage. But repeat reading is also hard to describe. It can be as easily associated with thoroughness as with the dimming down of thought; with populist sentiment, as with the kind of elitism that makes it seem as if some people were just born on their second or third reading of the classics. In 1745, at a time when literate women were supposedly being swept off their feet by the pleasures of fiction, Catherine Talbot wrote to her friend after a day spent reading Milton and Dante: “Not a new book has showed its head this century, but the comfort

is, old ones will bear reading over very often, and I think there is full as much pleasure in reading a very excellent book the fifth or sixth time, as if one had it from the press.”<sup>2</sup> Her friend, Elizabeth Carter, a scholar of classical texts and copious re-reader of the texts she was translating from Greek, writes back in enthusiastic agreement: between bookish friends, there is nothing quite like the fifth or sixth reading of the right thing.

But are repeat readings always compliments to a text? Are they always evidence of readerly discrimination? A twentieth-century steelworker describes the bulk of his reading as voracious and hasty until “slowly out of this welter of reading I began to discover the few books which I could go on reading and re-reading.”<sup>3</sup> Samuel Johnson describes the merits of Goldsmith’s prose lying in the fact that “his plain narrative will please again and again” and E.M Forster writes affirmatively of his friend’s text that “the second time I read it, I enjoyed it more.”<sup>4</sup> Certainly, Carter and Talbot’s terms—and perhaps Brookner’s too—suggest that re-reading is a way to consolidate one’s relationship with the right sort of text. In re-reading Proust, I am inevitably hopeful of becoming the sort of reader who can claim to know him.

But the repetitive reader can also be full of anxiety, conscious that a first untutored attempt to internalize a text might have failed. Thomas Hardy despaired for this reason of reading texts a single time as a futile kind of labor: “I have been led to think again of this by looking over some notes of reading that I took years ago, and finding I had forgotten them entirely. To stick to a few books and read these over and over again is the only way.”<sup>5</sup> Patrick Süskind deems his “amnesia in literatis” a problem so severe that not even a second reading helps: enthusing over a book drawn from his shelves, he encounters his own scrawlings in the margins of a book as those of a stranger whose reactions align mysteriously with his own, struggling to recall the

details of even passages he remembers in outline with affection.<sup>6</sup> In this perspective, readers re-read partly out of fear that class or status or age reduces their mind again to a state of blankness. Without the matrix of prior knowledge, of cultural capital, a first reading may not stick. Geoff Dyer, making such self-deprecating representations of his own scholarship the mainstay of essays, describes himself returning, like Süskind, to a familiar copy of a D.H. Lawrence novel to find that he has forgotten reading it:

“When I re-read *The Rainbow* I thought I might discover, like a flower pressed between the pages, the dried remains of my younger self preserved within it.”

Although he finds the annotations he made as a student, “there was nothing, no traces of my earlier self, no memories released by the act of re-reading the same page that I had read years before one particular afternoon wherever and whenever that was.”<sup>7</sup>

But there’s also the possibility that repeat reading induces rather than cures amnesia. All kinds of repeat reading make the non-event of our encounter with familiar text a virtue. Re-readings of the bible and favorite songs, recipes, forms we’ve filled in before, and brand names on the toothpaste tube work like this. Gabriel Betteredge, the butler in Wilkie Collin’s *The Moonstone* (1868) treats his seventh copy of *Robinson Crusoe* as fetish and talisman, a text to be taken like tonic by the page in times of need and uncertainty. Rather than stirring up emotions, opening this overly familiar novel helps Betteredge return things to their place, allowing him to carry on in his position of devoted servitude. Young children sometimes want a certain book read to them so often that a carer learns to recite it without even really seeing the words. Repeat readings can be like the instructions for emergency landings given out in airplanes in an era when we all know what they say but have stopped hearing them. At worst this state of repetition approaches the cultural condition Nietzsche describes in 1873 as rumination, that of active forgetting and sublimation

by which one blithely absorbs the knowledge that might otherwise awaken us to history.<sup>8</sup>

But this kind of textual repetition is not necessarily dull-witted. There's a close association between re-reading and affection, one that can be distinguished both from the mindless and from the scholarly relations to a text that are forged through re-reading. Deidre Lynch argues that literature is born at this juncture, describing it an approach to books that from the late-eighteenth century onwards seem to "*bear iteration and also mandate it.*" Reading, she argues, emerges as an activity laced with love precisely at that point where it describes "literature as that which we are always rereading and never reading for the first time."<sup>9</sup> Under these conditions, her readers close in upon their object through rituals of re-visitation, with John Clare reading the *Vicar of Wakefield* every winter and Benjamin Disraeli being known to have read *Pride and Prejudice* seventeen times. Through loving the canon, the literary reader becomes in Lynch's terms part of the beat of daily and seasonal time. He may not ruminate, exactly, but he holds a world in balance through habit, partaking of a modern temporal economy in which the circular is restorative and as powerful as the linear.

The avid re-readers of the canon in Lynch's *Loving Literature* (2014) are overwhelmingly men of a certain privilege and class. Ownership of books is not essential, but it's conducive to them being able to re-read favorite texts. In his sonnet "On Sitting Down to Read King Lear Once Again" (1816), Keats is faced with the choice between two kinds of re-reading on a wintry day, the re-reading of Romance and reading Shakespeare. In choosing *King Lear*, a play he already knows well, he immerses himself anew in the play while shutting up other books that he also possesses: "Shut up thine olden pages, and be mute," he tells the Romances:

Adieu! for once again the fierce dispute,  
Betwixt damnation and impassion'd clay  
Must I burn through; once more humbly assay  
The bitter-sweet of this Shakespearian fruit.<sup>10</sup>

While this sonnet can and has been read as suggesting a move in Keat's own literary development, the scene also suggests the more literal prerogative that permanent library access bestows upon the reader, to move between and return to texts as choices that stand open. Karl Ove Knausgård nails the equation simply when he singles out his relation as a child to *The Children of the New Forest*, "which I loved and read again and again as I had been given it and didn't borrow it."<sup>11</sup> This privilege is not only male. Albert Manguel introduces Collette as a reader of few books who "rereads the same ones over and over again. She loves *Les Misérables* with what she'll later call "a reasoning passion"; she feels she can nestle in its pages "like a dig in its kennel."<sup>12</sup> My teenage daughter likes to pack into her bag for any trip both a book she is reading and a novel she is re-reading, not confusing the different pleasures they bring.

But it is not through either the comforts of repetition or the intensities of possession that most working-class readers have felt their love of reading. Lynch's argument, which suggests some of the ways connecting literary reading with love has allowed the humanities to become suspiciously disinvested as a legitimate field of work, recognizes this. For less privileged readers, there is anyway quite enough equilibrium of daily life: reading is an escape from repetition. This is Lavena Saltonstall, a nineteenth-century tailoress describing the world her use of books offsets:

I am supposed to make myself generally useless by ignoring things that matter—literature, music, art, history, economics.... In my native place, the women, as a general rule, wash every Monday, iron on Tuesday, court on Wednesdays, bake on Thursdays, clean on Fridays, go to market or go courting

again on Saturdays, and to church on Sundays... The exceptions are considered unwomanly and eccentric people.<sup>13</sup>

The genres of literature addressed to readers in this working-class setting, if we follow Richard Hoggart's indictment of the dailies and magazines in *The Uses of Literacy*, are themselves formulaic and predictable. But reading of the kind Saltonstall goes on to celebrate disrupts the routines of work and plot. The pace and the interest with which she devours "literature" is not a sign of commitment, or "steadiness" as Lynch's describes it, but of greed for the unknown; for that vast field of novelty there will not be time to cross even once in a lifetime. And I am, in this sense, of Saltonstall's camp. I read fiction quickly and promiscuously, to my detriment as a real lover of literature. It was fine but, no, I do not want to spend time reading Ferrante again.

2

It is interesting that the genre of the novel, which Lynch points out is so well suited to being read cyclically, and loved faithfully and routinely, is generally theorized as a single-use object. If literature can be defined as something we are always re-reading, narrative has often been understood as something we are always reading for the first time. Frank Kermode's *Sense of an Ending* insists on the way in which novels model, not the spatial arrangements in which we actually live, but unrealistic temporal ones in which we are propelled by the idea of an ending, the forward-sloping organization of fiction precluding disorder and contingency.<sup>14</sup> In *Reading for the Plot*, Peter Brooks writes with similar conviction of the dynamism of plot as "that which moves us forward as readers of the narrative text, that which makes us... want and need plotting, seeking through the narrative text as it unfurls before us a precipitation of shape and meaning."<sup>15</sup> Readers by these calculations are committed to movement and

expectant of resolution. They are like the fictional readers in meta-fictional novels, from Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* to John Fowles' *French Lieutenant's Woman* who, spurred on by curiosity and suspense, are fictionalized and sent up in their own first, breathless encounter with this narrative terrain.

Another recent account of the novel, Viv Soni's *Mourning Happiness* suggests that before the arrival of novels, we treated narrative very differently, as a process in which meaning collected and could only make itself felt only once all the parts of a puzzle were in place. Call no man happy before he is dead, warned Aristotle. In Soni's account, the moral importance of waiting-to-see was lost to eighteenth-century novel readers, who bought into the causality of narratives, accepting challenge and hardship as things to be overcome if a character—and a reader—were to be rewarded by a satisfying ending. Novels never really represent the happiness they promise but the allure of reading them is the comfort of knowing their last pages will deliver us from struggle. Knausgård, for instance, writes that what a childhood of reading has taught him is that “you must never give in, never give up, because if you have been resolute, upright, brave and honest, however lonely it has made you and however alone you stand, in the end you are rewarded.”<sup>16</sup> This positions him, despite his special relation to *The Children of the New Forest*, less as a reiterative worshiper of literature and more as a consumer of narrative anxious to know how things to turn out, a turner of pages who pursues a plot through its twists and turns as a journey to be undertaken and justified by its outcome, hardly one to be repeated.

Reader response theory assumes readers like Knausgård. But what can it make of the reader who knows how the journey will turn out? Not the reader like Süskind, who only dimly remembers its previous iteration as a reading experience, but the reader who internalizes the lay of the land and anticipates what is coming

next? What of the reader who goes back repeatedly to the erotic scenes of a novel or uses the index to get back as quickly as possible to the sentimental or erotic ones she remembers best? What of Proust, whose teenage self reads very differently from Knausgård's, with deep devotion to the novels of the fictionalized writer, Bergotte:

And so I would read, or rather sing his sentences in my mind, with rather more *dolce*, rather more *lento* than he himself had perhaps intended, and his simplest phrase would strike my ears with something peculiarly gentle and loving in its intonation. More than anything else I cherished his philosophy, and had pledged myself to it in lifelong devotion.<sup>17</sup>

Bergotte is a composite of Anatole France, John Ruskin, and other writers Proust admired. His prose, imagined and hinted at in *In Search of Lost Time* (1913) enters Proust's narrative as a medium in which he will permanently immerse himself. Does the kind of reader posited here have the same motivation to move quickly towards happiness as resolution, the same sense of an ending, that Kermode, Brooks, and Soni assume?

3.

One way to parse this question would be to suggest that critique of any kind of text has always involved a second and third reading. "First reading and critique," argues Stephen Best, "are viewed largely as anathema; second thoughts inspire us to relinquish first impressions, in a process of questioning and revision infused with a skepticism and doubt."<sup>18</sup> Best is participating here in a debate that has arisen in the discipline of Literary Studies, about whether critical reading is something to celebrate at all. Perhaps, various theorists of reading have now suggested, there's a framework in which other kinds of affective and even superficial or first-time encounters with a text might be valued as much as deep and critical reading has been in the past. Rita Felski's *The Limits of Critique* comes out strongly in favor of this possibility,

emphasizing the way that the reception of literature is enmeshed in what Bruno Latour describes as an actor-network, a spatially and temporally diffuse chain of events and encounters connecting objects and people without being structured by forces like agency or history. Without getting into this debate fully, it is worth pointing out some of the problems that arise when we try to look at repeat reading as an event in the terms of this model.

For whatever the problems with critical or deep reading, one of its advantages is that it justifies repeat reading epistemologically. Read the text once through, then read it again as you analyze it: this is what we tell our students. If Proust loves Bergotte as a teenager, reading him again as an adult will add something to that infatuation. Repetition is part of that trajectory of intellectual growth. But, like narrative theory concerned with the first time reader, a sociological account of reading that sticks more closely to the flat description of reader's encountering a text immediately encounters repetition as a problem. Does an encounter with a text that is more affective stay so at each reading, or does the tenor and weight of the encounter change with repetition? Perhaps re-reading a book makes it more powerful in actor-network terms--but why would this be? Eating an apple or driving a car every day arguably has the opposite effect, as the action becomes less significant each time we do it. Is Proust more or less moved by Bergotte as an author he re-reads?

We can make this problem more concrete by looking at some of the challenges facing those doing the history of reading today -- with databases of book sales and lending records at their disposal. Those working with the records of the small lending library at Innerpefferay have, for instance, created an almost complete digital record of the books borrowed from the collection in the last three hundred years. Such information offers new opportunities to trace what one might call different actor

networks. We can quickly map out connections between various members of the Scottish community who read the same book, and between items in the collection and the gender of their readers, or the seasons at which they are read. We can see at the push of a button how often a certain book was borrowed, understanding its infectious power quantitatively without relying on evidence of the particular depth or quality of its effect as text. With a bit more effort, it is possible to visualize this activity through graphs or diagrams, where visual representation might show a book's history as a series of readings.

But what of the case where a borrower takes out an item more than once? Mary Ewing is just one of the many repeat borrowers who shows up in the Innerpefferay database. In 1898, she borrows Edna Lyall's *Their Happiest Christmas* (1890) twice, once on the 2nd of May and once on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August.<sup>19</sup> But what weight should we give to this? The book is a trite piece of juvenile fiction. Did she like it so much that she wanted to re-read it? Or so little that she didn't finish it the first time she borrowed it? Did re-reading it (if she re-read it) make Mary Ewing more critical or more of a fan of Lyall's fiction? Was she a Proust, keen to immerse herself in the text, or a Knausgård, wanting to survive the moral tale's challenges? The more descriptive work that Felski advocates might help us understand the positive effects of reading, but it doesn't help much in distinguishing Ewing's second loan from her first. Even if we were to encode repeat encounters with a book so that they were doubly or triple stressed in a network, it's hard to know exactly what we'd be coding for as we tracked repetition.

The British Library holds the notebooks of a reader who tried explicitly to track his own activity as a re-reader. William Grenville was a prominent politician in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. He served as Home Secretary and

Foreign Secretary and very briefly as prime minister for a year in 1806, before ending his working life in 1817 as leader of the Opposition party. But during the 1790s, when he was in his late 30s and his political work was at a low, he retired briefly to Dropmore, the country estate to which he had moved his reading and writing materials. Grenville had an Oxford degree in classics, and he remained a regular reader of classical literature in the decade after he graduated in 1780. The program of reading he devised for himself for himself during his early retirement involved deepening his acquaintance with the authors he was already in the habit of reading: Plutarch, Cicero, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Homer.

For the purpose of this dedicated period of study, Grenville started a series of notebooks, the pages of which he folded distinctively so as to form two columns. In reading Aristotle and Demosthenes, Grenville writes his notes only in the right hand columns of his folded pages. His notes recording what he's read each day indicate that he proceeds in careful loops of repetition. Tackling a new translation of Aristotle's *Ethics and Politics* in February 1799 he reads pages 39-52 on Feb 6<sup>th</sup> he reads these pages again before continuing to page 86 the next day.<sup>20</sup> But the format he's designed for his pages record another kind of repetition too. When he begins *The Life of Pericles* in February 1797, he records his doubts in the left hand column of the page about details he thinks might be missing from the translated text. Then, as the image below shows, in December 1798 he uses the left hand column to write: "In reading this passage again, I feel more confident that the omission of these words is the right emendation of the text."

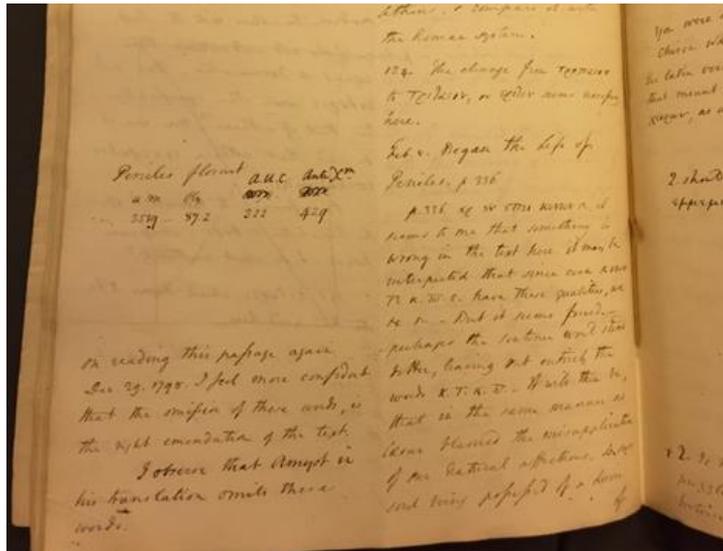


Image: William Grenville, BL Dropmore Papers, Add MS 59430 (Dropmore Papers), ff. 16.

The left hand columns in all three of Grenville's repurposed notebooks are surely if sparsely populated in this way with records of repeat readings; their blank spaces left open to the many that Grenville hoped were still to come.

Overall, Grenville charts re-reading as something that happens along both a vertical and a horizontal axis. The two-column format of his notebooks allows him to go back in time and show how a second reading corrects, amends, and supplements the event of the first reading, changing the way we encounter it for the first time on the page. Represented properly, Proust's encounters with Bergotte would have to look something like this. They are not distinct points in a network, but events whose repetition gives the network another temporal dimension from the outset. Whether or not this involves Proust becoming more critical, it means that the nature of the repeat encounter with the book differs, both from the one we have every day with the fork or the car, and from the one we have with a narrative we churn through in pursuit of an ending.

4.

Based on what I've suggested so far, repeat readings of a page seem to add up to something more than the sum of their parts. But maybe this is a special case, as Lynch suggests, of literary reading being iterative, and less true of our engagement with other kinds of texts and other media interfaces. Repeatedly listening to a song, playing a computer game, reading a daily paper, or watching a video clip can seem like an impasse to development. So perhaps there are two kinds of repetition that can be associated with reading. This seems to be what Ali Smith suggests in *How to Be Both* (2014), a novel invested in the ethics of looking long and digesting deeply various scenes and images. At one point we encounter Smith's keenly observant teenage protagonist, George, watching a violent, pornographic video clip on repeat. Her motivation, she explains to her father, is not erotic:

*This really happened, George said. To this girl. And anyone can watch it just, like, happening, any time he or she likes. And it happens for the first time, over and over again, every time someone who hasn't seen it before clicks on it and watches it. So I want to watch it for a completely different reason. Because my completely different watching of it goes some way to acknowledging all of that to this girl. Do you still not understand?*<sup>21</sup>

George suggests here that her obsessive replaying of the scene can go some way to rescue the girl from the violence inflicted on her. It's not that the scene isn't made to be viewed repeatedly—it is repetitive and productive of repetition in a number of ways—but this kind of erotic, mindless repetition is different from the reiteration that George now advocates. Although the scene isn't art, isn't *iterative* in the sense Lynch argues literature is by the nineteenth century, George is perversely determined to treat it as if it were. By revisiting the scene as a *reader* bent on recognizing the girl in the video, she protests against that other pornographic register in which an image can be replayed and replayed without the viewer ever reading it more deeply.

Arguably, new media work against the ethical possibilities of this kind of re-reading at the level of their materiality, and not just by favoring the superficial at the

level of content. Because the formats in which we now encounter digital texts are themselves unstable, going back to them may involve habitual movement on the reader's part without a deepening a relationship of any kind of a text. I pick up a tablet or a phone again and again and again. But I do so mostly in the hope that a page has been updated. A document edited. A status renewed. In these terms, the repetitive nature of reading online is premised on the possibility of text's change; continuity rarely motivates me to look at the text-interfaces I carry around. While I might look back at an article or email on our phone in recollection, it's much harder to find our way back to something online than to stumble into something new. And if it were continuity we were after, we would often be disappointed: electronic files, even of kindle books, can disappear and change.

Thus, ironically, in a historical moment where reading seems to have made certain repetitive movement a haptic commonplace, the benefits of returning over and over again to the same object have become harder to achieve. In an age when distant readers of data, searcher and scanners of text, and seekers of new paths through even the oldest of texts proliferate, we may have to acknowledge that repeat reading, for better or for worse, is less likely than it was to involve following materially worn grooves. The pleasure and surprise that Keats associates with reading his old copy of *King Lear* yet again differs greatly from the one that we get from returning habitually to a favorite website to check the day's postings.

And yet I want to end here with another recent kind of text, a graphic novel that pays homage to repeat reading. Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* (2006) explores a complex relationship between a father and a daughter, honing in on the opportunities that a writer has to play with and reverse historical sequences as she represents them. In the last image of the novel, through "the trick reverse narration that impels our

entwined stories” the dead father is able to catch his adult daughter, Alison.<sup>22</sup> But *Fun Home* is also a novel about reading that is non-linear. Reading is an occupation the father of the story is obsessed with—so obsessed that he’s vicariously followed Alison’s progress through a course on *Ulysses* at college, trying to force his own copy of the novel into her hands in order to make her experience a literal retracing of his own. Reluctant to take the gift, Alison asks if she can write in this copy, and then goes on to struggle with the course after a lackluster engagement with the novel. But *Fun Home*, written many years later, takes *Ulysses* as its major inter-text. Clearly Bechdel has eventually re-read and loved Joyce in her own terms, and it’s that second, successful reading of the novel that underpins her telling of the story of her relationship with her father. As re-writing of *Ulysses* that is premised on this re-reading—this second take on her first dismissal of the novel—Bechdel’s graphic story diverges from and converges with her father’s reading of it in complicated ways. But it also suggests more simply that reading the same thing again remains a cornerstone of the most creative enterprises as well as being vital to our more critical ones.

#### Further Reading

Stephen Best, “La Foi Postcritique, on Second Thought,” *PMLA* 132.2 (2017), 337-343: 337.

Bronstein, Michaela. “How Not to Re-Read Novels: The Critical Value of First Reading.” *Journal of Modern Literature*, 39.3 (2016), 76-94.

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London: Penguin, 2009. Lynch, Deidre. *Loving Literature* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2014)

Rose, Jonathan. *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

Süskind, Patrick. "Amnesia in litteris. The Books I have Read (I think)," Harpers March 1987.

Soni, Vivasvan. *Mourning Happiness: Narrative and the Politics of Modernity*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> Julian Barnes, "Diary: People Will Hate Us Again," *London Review of Books*, 20 April, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Carter and Catherine Talbot, *A Series of Letters Between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot, From the Year 1741 to 1770* (London: J Rivington, 1809), 101.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 371.

<sup>4</sup> For Johnson, see: James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. R.W. Chapman (Oxford: OUP, 1998), 528. For Forster: E.M. Forster, *Selected Letters of E. M. Forster*, ed. Mary Lago and P.N. Furbank (London:1983), 1:207.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Hardy to Florence Henniker. *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy: 1893-1901*, eds. Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 87.

<sup>6</sup> Patrick Süskind, "Amnesia in litteris. The Books I have Read (I think)," Harpers March 1987.

<sup>7</sup> Geoff Dyer, *Out of Sheer Rage: Wrestling with D.H.Lawrence* (New York: Picador, 1997), 104.

<sup>8</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Use and Abuse of History For Life," *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, Vol. 2, trans. Richard Gray (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press), 87.

<sup>9</sup> Deidre Lynch, *Loving Literature: A Cultural History* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2014), 150.

<sup>10</sup> John Keats, *Collected Poems*, ed. John Barnard (London: Penguin, 1998), 220.

<sup>11</sup> Karl Ove Knausgård, *Boyhood Island*, trans. Don Bartlett (London: Harvill Secker, 2014), 306.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Alberto Manguel, *A History of Reading* (London: HarperCollins, 1996), 149.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Jonathan Rose, *Op. Cit.*, 278.

<sup>14</sup> Frank Kermode, *Sense of an Ending* (Oxford: OUP, 1967).

<sup>15</sup> Peter Brooks, *Reading for The Plot* (Oxford: OUP, 1984), 35.

<sup>16</sup> Knausgård, *Op. Cit.*, 307

<sup>17</sup> Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, Vol 1, trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (London: Vintage, 1996), 134.

<sup>18</sup> Stephen Best, "La Foi Postcritique, on Second Thought," *PMLA* 132.2 (2017), 337-343: 337.

<sup>19</sup> I am using Katie Halsey's unpublished database, which is based on the information contained in the Innerpeffray Library Borrowers' Registers, and has been edited by Jill Dye. Mary Ewing appears here under borrower ID No. 2041.

<sup>20</sup> William Grenville, "Notes on Reading of Gilles translation of Aristotle" (BL Dropmore Papers, Add MSS 59429), unpublished manuscript, ff.17.

<sup>21</sup> Ali Smith, *How to Be Both* (London: Hamish Hamilton/Penguin, 2014a), 224.

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<sup>22</sup> Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2006), 232.