

# BOOKS AND READING



“To be sure, one thing is necessary above all if one is to practise reading as an *art* in this way, something that has been unlearned most thoroughly nowadays - and therefore it will be some time before my writings are “readable” – something for which one has almost to be a cow and in any case not a “modern man”: *ruminatio*.”

F. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*

## Phrases to talk about books (from *The Guardian*)

writing of a hooky quality

book fetishism

to pore over sth

to savour the novel

mind-boggling

a page-turner

bookworm

litterateur

a cartographer of the human psyche

to grind eyes against print at three o'clock in the morning

zeitgeisty publications

binge reading

to read compulsively

get rid of the extraneous books that seem to clog the arteries of my reading life

to mesmerise the reader

to get sb's teeth into some non-fiction

eye-fatigue

It's popcorn Jane Austen

to pen undying words

an unputdownable book

to crack the book open

to find oneself swallowed inside a book

to lose oneself in the book

the section that grates most

cliff-hanger

a Stieg-Larsson-shaped hole on the bedside table

to read frenetically

a book nourishing his soul

an undemanding book

pungent style of writing

a girly book

boyish literature

My teenage reading diet was rich in ...

He fed his spirit with the bread of books.

### SOME QUOTATIONS ON BOOKS AND READING:

"we are friends of *lento* I and my book. I have not been a philologist in vain—perhaps I am one yet: a teacher of slow reading. I even come to write slowly. At present it is not only my habit but even my taste—a perverted taste perhaps—to write nothing but what will drive to despair everyone who is "in a hurry". For philology is that venerable art which exacts from its followers one thing above all—to step to one side to leave themselves spare moments to grow silent to become slow—the leisurely art of the goldsmith applied to language: an art which must carry out slow fine work and attains nothing if not *lento*. For this very reason philology is now more desirable than ever before; for this very reason it is the highest attraction and incitement in an age of "work": that is to say of hurry of unseemly and immoderate haste which is intent upon "getting things done" at once even books whether old or new. Philology itself perhaps will not "get things done" so hurriedly: it teaches how to read well: i.e. slowly, profoundly, attentively, prudently with inner thoughts with the doors of the mind ajar with delicate eyes and fingers. My patient friends this book appeals only to perfect readers and philologists: learn to read me well!"

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Day of Dawn*

„ja i moja książka, oboje lubimy lento. Nie-darmo byłem filologiem, może jestem nim jeszcze, a filolog jest nauczycielem powolnego czytania: — w końcu przywykłem też pisać powoli. Obecnie nie tylko z przyzwyczajenia, lecz także z upodobania — złośliwego snadź upodobania? — , kreślę jeno to, co każdego człowieka, któremu »się spieszy«, doprowadza do rozpacz. Filologia jest bowiem ową czcigodną sztuką, która od swego cziciela domaga się przede wszystkim jednego, by stał na uboczu, by nie liczył się z czasem, by nawykł do cichości i powolności — , sztuka to złotnicza i znawstwo Słowa, li delikatnej i przezornej oddane pracy, która niczego nie osiągnie, jeżeli nie sięga lento. Aliści właśnie dlatego jest potrzebniejsza dziś niż kiedykolwiek, właśnie dlatego czaruje i najsilniej pociąga nas ku sobie w tem stuleciu »pracy«, chcę rzec: pośpiechu, nieprzyzwoitego i uznajonego pośpiechu, który ze wszystkim chciałby »prędko się załatwić«, a więc i z każdą starą czy nową książką: — gdyż ona nie zbywa niczego naprędce, uczy czytać dobrze, to znaczy 9 powoli, głęboko, oględnie i przezornie — przy drzwiach na ścieżaj otwartych, przenikliwą myślą, subtelnymi palcami i oczyma czytać uczy... Moi cierpliwi przyjaciele, książka ta pragnie jeno doborowych czytelników i filologów: uczcie się czytać mnie dobrze!"

Tłum. Leopold Staff

"a man must never have spared himself, he must have been hard in his habits in order to be good-humoured and cheerful among a host of inexorable truths. When I try to picture the character of a perfect reader I always imagine a monster of courage and curiosity as well as suppleness, cunning and prudence – in short a born adventurer and explorer."

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*

"Reading well is one of the great pleasures that solitude can afford you, because it is, at least in my experience, the most healing of pleasures. It returns you to otherness, whether in yourself or in friends. Imaginative literature is otherness and as such, alleviates loneliness."

"[...] only deep, constant reading fully establishes and augments an autonomous self."

Harold Bloom, *How to Read and Why?*

“A book is more than a verbal structure or series of verbal structures; it is the dialogue it establishes with its reader and the intonation it imposes upon his voice and the changing and durable images it leaves in his memory. A book is not an isolated being: it is a relationship, an axis of innumerable relationships. One literature differs from another, prior or posterior, less because of the text than because of the way in which it is read.”

Jorge Luis Borges, “A Note on (towards) Bernard Shaw”

“Always read something that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it.” /P.J. O'Rourke/

“A book must be an ice-axe to break the seas frozen inside our soul.” /Franz Kafka/

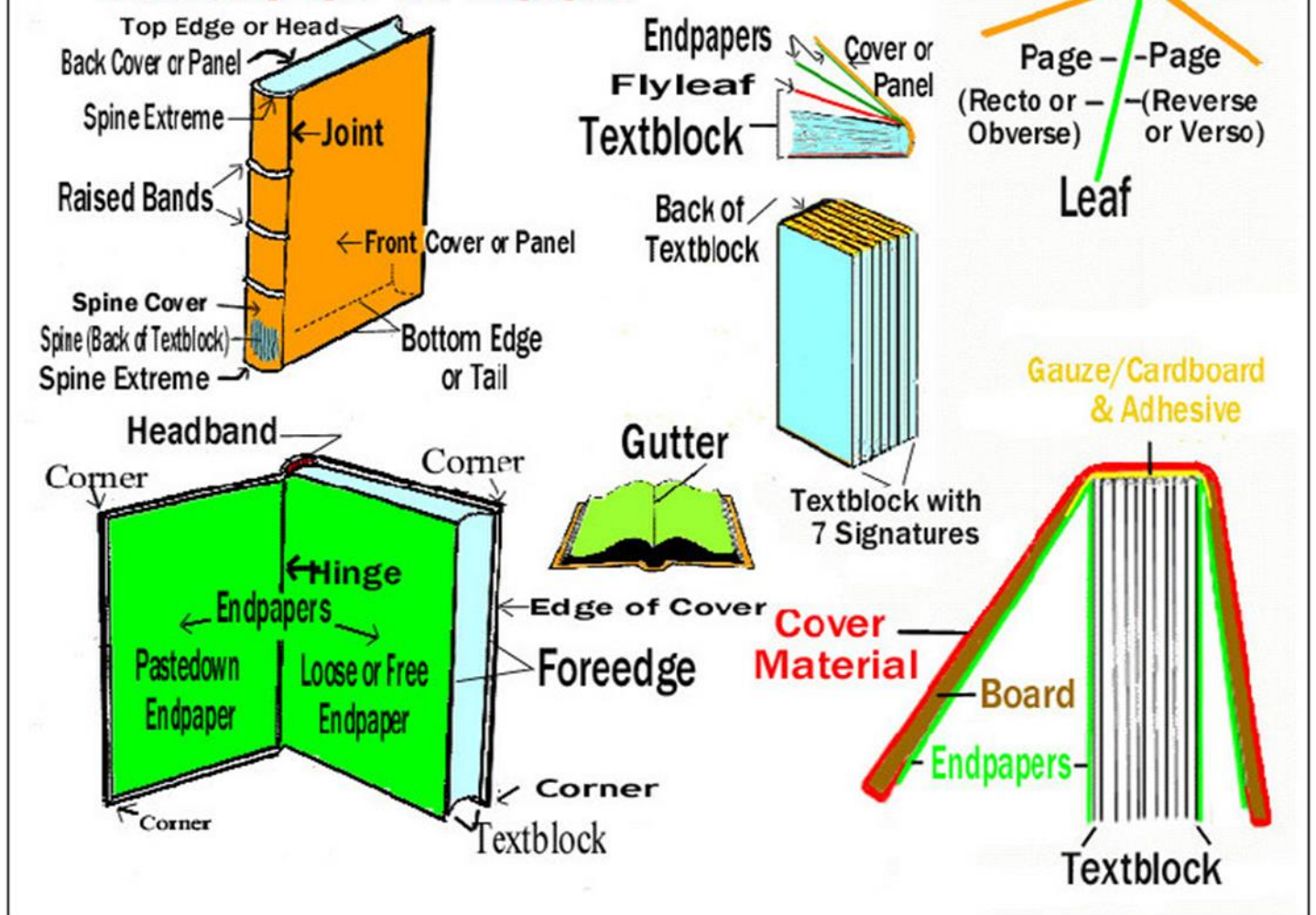
“If you resist reading what you disagree with, how will you ever acquire deeper insights into what you believe? The things most worth reading are precisely those that challenge our convictions.”/Author Unknown/

“A house without books is like a room without windows.” /Heinrich Mann/

“Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.” /Francis Bacon/

FIGURE 5

## PARTS OF A BOOK



## Sitting, lying or standing: what's the pole position for reading? by Alison Flood

**AbeBooks wonder if it's weird to read lying on your stomach. The answer is yes: everyone knows the side is best. Don't they?**

I don't mean to boast, but I think I have quite strong hands. Strong because they are forced, every night in bed, to hold up whatever hefty tome I'm currently reading (they generally seem to be long, the books I choose). It's an essential end to my day: I find I can't actually go to sleep unless I've read for at least five minutes, and I'll even do it when I'm somewhat intoxicated, words blurring and all – although in the morning I'll never remember what happened during the bit I read.

Anyway, I've been moved to consider how I do it – not something I ever really thought about before – by the nice folk over at AbeBooks, who've been wondering if it's weird to read lying on your stomach, propped on your elbows (and yes, I reckon it sounds painful).

"I unspokely assumed other people read like this, too, until I mentioned to my coworker Julie that I had sore elbows because the book I was reading (Three Day Road by Joseph Boyden) was so good that I'd been reading a lot more per night than usual," writes one employee on the company's Reading Copy book blog. "She made a confused face, and when we got into it she informed me that when she reads in bed she reads on her side, propping her face/head on one hand."

Other techniques mentioned at AbeBooks include sitting up against the headboard with some pillows, "scooching slowly down as I get sleepier and sleepier", and the bizarre pillow-under-the stomach approach, with the book propped against the wall.

My technique is also lying on my side, but I prop myself up on a few pillows and hold the book in both hands. If it's a particularly large book I'll balance one edge of it on the bed. This can quite annoying, as the pages get caught on the bedsheet and my thumbs gets sore, but in general it's comfortable enough for me to stay in one position for ages – often until I fall asleep, glasses pressed into my face.

I'd love to know how you guys do it – and also if, like me, your bedtime reading can differ substantially from your daytime. I might well continue with whatever reading the day has brought, but quite often I'm in the mood for something easy, something I've read before, something which soothes me off to sleep. At the moment, my bedside table carries the eclectic mix of Jack Vance's Tales of the Dying Earth, Mary Stewart's The Wicked Day and Andrew Motion's 1987 biography of Keats. The thriller I'd been reading during the day, Linwood Barclay's Never Look Away, was too scary for the night – particularly as I'm home alone.

Anyway, what's your position on this?

(From The Guardian Books Blog)

**Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words underlined in the text:**

1. We do not, by ..... agreement, talk about politics when we meet.
2. The album features a(n) ..... collection of old blues, jazz, and romantic pop standards.
3. We have to make room for another person. Can you ..... a little?
4. The mechanic was a big, ..... man who could lift up the front of a truck with his bare hands.
5. You may also have a dry cough, a ..... throat and a runny, itchy nose.
6. He ..... his bicycle against the fence and ran inside.
7. Alcohol was the only thing she knew to ..... the pain of her divorce.
8. Woods disappeared in very ..... coincidences and no trace of him has ever been found.
9. Jackie was found guilty driving while .....

## DICKENS AND HIS WORLD

With the (1) ..... of Pickwick Papers in 1836, young Dickens enjoyed an (2) ..... ascent into the favour of the British reading public. He magnificently (3) ..... a theory that his fame would (4) ..... just as quickly as it had come. He remained until his death 34 years later (5) ..... the most popular writer the English-speaking world had ever known.

CIRCULATE  
PRECEDENT  
PROVE  
APPEAR  
DENY

The public displayed an (6) ..... appetite for his works, and there was also a great (7) ..... of them through (8) ..... dramatic adaptations (nearly all completely (9) ..... , the copyright laws being much weaker).

SATIATE  
DIFFUSE  
NUMBER  
AUTHORITY

His immense popularity was based on the widespread (10) ..... of him as a great champion of the poor and (11) ..... against all forms of (12) ..... and abuse of power. In his personal life, however, he was (13) ..... of achieving the level of (14) ..... that he enjoyed with the public, and his close emotional relationships with women (15) ..... ended in (16) ..... . Yet out of his needs and fears, his disappointments and his (17) ..... , Dickens created an extraordinary range and (18) ..... of female characters. They live in our minds and our culture in all their strangeness and distinctiveness, (19) ..... any other female characters created by Victorian (20) ..... , no matter how well they may have understood women.

PERCEIVE  
POSSESS  
JUST  
CAPACITY  
FULFIL  
VARY  
FAIL  
LONG  
VARIOUS  
LIKE  
NOVEL