Reading (and Writing) Online, Rather Than on the Decline

KATHLEEN FITZPATRICK

The changing perceptions of and assumptions about the book in contemporary culture, and particularly those perceptions as situated within an increasingly complex media and communication landscape, have been at the heart of my research for nearly fifteen years. One would think that the situation would have stabilized over that time—after all, if the book were genuinely on its way out, having been shunted aside by movies or television or video games or the Internet, one would expect its trajectory to be clear. One would expect the tale to be unambiguously one of decline. Yet while ongoing technological developments have produced an ever-increasing number of new challengers to the book's primacy, the forms that the book takes and the ways that readers encounter the book proliferate. While the Western relation to the book as an object is certainly changing, those changes may indicate a more thorough imbrication of books and reading with popular culture, rather than their marginalization.[1]

My first book, *The Anxiety of Obsolescence: The American Novel in the Age of Television*, focused on the anxieties produced by television's apparent displacement of the novel from centrality in cultural life in the United States. I argued that these anxieties were premised on two different misconceptions. First, the vision of a utopian past in which everyone read serious literature and, as a result, participated actively in civic life was vastly

The author is director of scholarly communication at the MLA. A version of this paper was presented at the 2012 MLA convention in Seattle.

PROFESSION   *© 2012 by The Modern Language Association of America*   41

overblown; reading, especially of texts other than the sacred, was always an activity dominated by those with time to spend at leisure. Second, the vision of a dismal present in which the novel was being forced out of its culturally central position by newer, image-based media forms such as film and television was equally overstated and, in fact, was overstated for clearly ideological purposes. These fears about the decline of the novel were used, I argued, to create what one might think of as a kind of cultural wildlife preserve, in which the endangered form, under threat from the predatory mass media, was granted a protected space within which it could continue to flourish among an elite group of cultural producers and consumers. Such a preservationist focus of course provided the added benefit of allowing that elite to refashion itself as a marginalized population. The threat that television and other forms of mass media posed to the novel, it was often hinted, bore with it the potential for the more general downfall of Western culture, as the novel's apparently declining popularity was posed as a clear sign of a more general cultural decline.[2]

This sense of cultural decline carries forward in popular thought about the relation between literacy and the Internet. Anxieties about the effects of digital media abound: it's too often assumed that the technologies that facilitate such easy communication are causing our actual communication skills to deteriorate. There's little new in this; media theorists, confronted with a narrative about the deleterious effects of new modes of communication, have long pointed to Plato on the "forgetfulness" that the technology of writing would produce in the souls of those who learn it (79) or even to Alexander Pope's sense of print as a "scourge" for learned souls (420). It has always been so: new technologies are perennially imagined to be not simply the enemy of established systems but in fact a direct threat to the essence of what it is to be human.[3] For this reason, declarations of cultural decline always bear complexly submerged ideological motivations. Such motivations can be seen, under erasure, in statements like "No one reads anymore." Given the fact that Westerners who are active on the Internet arguably read more in their daily lives than they ever have before, a statement such as this one almost always means "No one reads [anything good] anymore" or, even more pointedly, "No one reads [anything (I think is) good] anymore," thus leaving the speaker's evident value judgments and personal taste unspoken in what winds up simply presented as bald fact.[4]

There is, as always, a kernel of truth in anxieties about media change. Our ways of knowing today, and our ways of communicating, are in flux. But it is always equally true that a too-close focus on the change that makes us anxious can cause us to miss other important things that are also happening, even—or, perhaps, especially—when the narrative of decline

is backed up by empirical research. Such blind spots are apparent, for instance, in two often cited reports released by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), *Reading at Risk* and *To Read or Not to Read*. These two highly anxious studies famously put forward "a detailed but bleak assessment of the decline of reading's role in the nation's culture," presenting compelling survey data indicating that "[f]or the first time in modern history, less than half of the adult population now reads literature, and these trends reflect a larger decline in other sorts of reading" (*Reading at Risk* vii). The conclusions drawn by these reports underscore a set of very conventional anxieties about the contemporary media landscape: the decline in reading uncovered by the report is not just a value-neutral shift in forms of information consumption but also "an imminent cultural crisis" (xiii), given the ties the reports draw between literary reading and forms of active citizenship vital to a thriving democracy. While the reports are careful to stipulate that "no single activity is responsible for the decline of reading" (xii), they nonetheless argue powerfully for the role of various forms of electronic media, including television, video games, and the Internet, in contributing to the decline.

Such, in any case, is the conventional wisdom. But the apparently overwhelming evidence of reading's decline in the United States uncovered by these reports might run the risk of blinding us to signs of literary culture's continued proliferation, including the increasing number of devices and platforms and services through which we read today. The field of the literary continues to expand, even if its forms are changing in ways that might make it more difficult to recognize and more difficult to understand. These changing forms seem to have presented unrecognized difficulties in the two NEA studies, since the narrowness with which reading was defined in these studies—the consumption of book-length printed and bound fiction, poetry, and drama, solely for purposes of pleasure—excluded many of the forms that reading takes in the twenty-first century. By excluding from consideration periodicals, nonfiction, anything associated with school or work, not to mention anything digital, the studies radically overdetermined the decline in reading that they uncovered.[5]

It comes as less of a shock, in that context, that the NEA's 2009 followup report, *Reading on the Rise*, would find a surprising turnaround in reading in the United States. This most recent report, which has gotten far less attention from pundits than did its doomsaying predecessors, claims that the efforts put forward by the NEA to "save" reading seem to be working. But, in fact, the definition of reading has been opened in this latest report to include online reading, at least as a tangentially related form. The report, for instance, points out that "84 percent of adults who read literature

(fiction, poetry, or drama) online or downloaded from the Internet also read books, whether print or online" (*Reading on the Rise* 8). This claim is difficult to parse, since it seems to suggest that people who read literature online are also likely to read books, some of which are online—a potentially tautological claim. Yet *Reading on the Rise* clearly indicates that online reading—contrary to the suggestions of the NEA's earlier two reports—is not a cause of literary reading's decline: "For adults who read online articles, essays, or blogs, the book-reading rate is 77 percent" (8). In other words, people who read read. The report doesn't go quite so far as to acknowledge that reading online is reading, but it comes close, and there are certainly indications here that if more people are reading online, more people are reading, period.

This is not to suggest that there are no substantive differences between reading online and reading in print. As Naomi Baron's research demonstrates, there are clear indications that online reading is more associated with multitasking, and it's certainly more associative and nonlinear than the ideal of reading in print, since online readers navigate through links from one text to the next, often finding themselves somewhere down a chain of links without a clear sense of how they got there. Reading online also tends to be a bit more characterized by the *tmesis* that Roland Barthes uses to describe the print reader's ability to skip and skim over passages at will. Of course, Barthes understands this *tmesis* to be one of the hallmarks of the reader's autonomy in consuming a text, a playful mode not at all associated with being the "bad" reader usually described by skipping and skimming. In fact, most of our sense of the ways that *tmesis* operates in online reading comes from research done in service of SEO, or search-engine optimization, including eye-tracking studies indicating that Web-based readers tend to follow an F shape over a page of text, reading the headline, the lede, and any subheads and then skimming quickly down the page (Nielsen, "F-Shaped Pattern"). The origins of these studies make it clear that they're less important for the Web as a reading platform than as an advertising platform, since their goal is to help content developers keep visitors on a given Web site as long as possible and keep those visitors returning often. In this framework for understanding textual interactions, "good" reading has more to do with being a good consumer than with comprehension or engagement with ideas. Thus studies indicating that people consume no more than a small percentage of the words on any page before moving on tell us little about actual reading: we do not know what those readers are absorbing or what chain of ideas is inducing them to click away (Nielsen, "How Little Do Users").

Nonetheless, it's clear that the act of reading online is different from the

act of reading in print. As Cathy Davidson has explored at length, the ways that we pay attention are changing fairly dramatically in contemporary networked environments. Readers are today asked to shift among different kinds of focus from moment to moment, moving back and forth between broad overviews and fine details while moving rapidly among different kinds of reading. The online environments in which many of us read may heighten such rapid shifts, but they do not create those shifts. As Davidson points out, this is how the brain works: it is, "above all, interactive, . . . it selects, repeats, and mirrors, always, constantly, in complex interactions with the world" (69–70). "Better" and "worse" fail to describe what is most significant about changes in our modes of paying attention online:

> [W]e concentrate in a different way when we are making the connections, when we are clicking and browsing, than when we are watching (as in a TV show or movie) or listening or even reading a book. Indisputably, the imagination is engaged in making connections in all of those forms, as it is in anything we experience. It is engaged in a different way when we ourselves are making the connections, when we're browsing from one to another link that interests us and draws our attention. (70)

Attention is different online, Davidson acknowledges, precisely because of the creative activity involved in moving from one text or mode of engagement to another. Within this mode of "clicking and browsing," reading is highlighted as an active process of meaning making. As Barthes would note, it has always been so; reading has never been a straightforward means of downloading meaning constructed by an author into a reader's brain, but it has always been a form of negotiating meaning through a complex, and often selective, process of interpretation. Digital reading platforms foreground that activity, however, since they use the reader's direct manipulation of a text in a fashion that reflects readerly production as much as consumption. Moreover, these digital platforms call attention to the degree to which reading is a communal process rather than an individual activity, since online texts often become a pretext of sorts for discussion with friends, colleagues, and other readers. Readers expect to be able to comment on what they read, and they often respond to online texts with more texts—blog posts expanding on or disagreeing with other blog posts, for instance. And readers expect the author to respond as well. As a result, the relationship between writers and readers online has become less focused on the one-way broadcast of information and more productive of a multidimensional conversation that takes place within a community.[6]

In no small part, this multidimensionality has been made possible by the Web's increasing development into a read-write rather than read-only

platform, in which reading online has become part of a more general system of networked communication. The assumption that reading is a process separate from, and secondary to, writing has resulted in a fairly narrow mainstream view of their relation, the effects of which can be seen in the NEA's *Reading at Risk*. The study raises but fails to account for one curious bit of data: "Contrary to the overall decline in literary reading, the number of people doing creative writing—of any genre, not exclusively literary works—increased substantially between 1982 and 2002. In 1982, about 11 million people did some form of creative writing. By 2002, this number had risen to almost 15 million people (18 or older), an increase of about 30 percent" (22). That is, even before the spread of blogs and *Facebook* and *Twitter* and *Tumblr*, more people in the United States were doing more writing than ever before—and just as the opportunities for reading online have grown dramatically, the opportunities for writing and for sharing one's writing have exploded since 2002.

Given this explosion, I would argue that the greatest challenge we face today in our encounter with the digital future of literacy does not come from a media culture or a student population that refuses writing. Instead, it lies in the need for members of traditional literary culture to acknowledge that the forms of reading that are done online today *are reading* and that the modes of writing that engage so many *are writing*. These forms and modes can help support the literacy we value, if we can find ways to work with them instead of dismissing them as inherently frivolous and degraded. This is a challenge that many instructors today are meeting in their classrooms, by experimenting with individual and group blogs, with *Twitter*, and with other forms of social, networked communication, often to great effect. These engagements with online writing often work to give students a sense of audience, of writing as an act of communication and critical exchange, that far exceeds what can be produced by the research paper. Online, writing is subject not just to the scrutiny of a single evaluator but also to that of a broad group of readers engaged in thinking about the same questions. However formal or informal the location of the writing may appear to us in comparison with the properly formatted research paper, the act of communicating on an ongoing basis with a broad audience, practicing over and over the art of staking out a position, presenting evidence, engaging with counterarguments—or, frankly, even just the art of being interesting and amusing—can undoubtedly help produce better writers and clearer thinkers in any venue.

The need to understand these new, networked, often less-than-formal modes of writing as writing exists as much for scholars as it does for students. How might the idea of a community of readers and writers work-

ing with and responding to one another influence our ideas about how communities of scholars might best conduct their work together? The horror that too often greets the idea of taking a blog seriously as a locus of scholarly writing—or the idea of taking *Twitter* seriously as a form of scholarly communication—reveals a serious misunderstanding of the nature of those forms, what they are, and what can be done with them. The standard dismissal of *Twitter* as a scholarly tool, for instance, suggests that no serious argument can be made in 140 characters; while there's an obvious truth to that claim, it is in its way the equivalent of faulting the sonnet for its inability to sustain a long-form narrative. This dismissal betrays a failure to engage with the ways that scholars actually use *Twitter* today and the things that can be done in 140 characters: scholars share links to longer pieces of writing; they engage in complex conversations in real time, with many colleagues, over multiple tweets; and especially, perhaps, they build a sense of community. This community is ready with congratulations and sympathy and is eager to share jokes and memes, but it's also ready to debate, to discuss, to disagree. More than anything, it's ready to read—it's not just a community of friends but a community of scholars, an audience for the longer work in which its members are engaged.

The significance of this community should not be underestimated. After all, if there were ever a mode of writing meant to be dialogic, it's scholarly writing: scholars are always writing in response to the ideas of others, and they are primarily writing for a relatively small audience composed of their peers. In part because of this smallness of audience, the apparatus of conventional scholarly publishing has become untenably expensive to operate. In the United States, university presses are increasingly expected to be self-supporting, since their host institutions have slashed the subsidies they provide, but the revenue produced from sales of published texts isn't enough to fully recoup the costs of their production. This isn't true for every press, of course; Cambridge and Oxford are sufficiently profitable that they actually contribute funds to their universities, but those two presses have very different remittances from the average university press in the United States, operating much more like commercial publishers, with far wider general interest lists and genuinely international markets. But in response to the need to be self-sustaining, presses in the United States are increasingly pressured to make publication decisions based on their assessment of a project's potential sales, rather than strictly focusing on scholarly merit. And while the problem of the scholarly book's future is only a problem in certain fields, mostly within the humanities, and perhaps more in the United States than elsewhere, the uncertainty about that future highlights the conundrum of scholarly communication: it's ultimately all

user-generated content, in the sense that the same people are both producing and consuming it, and yet unlike blogs or *YouTube* or any number of other Web 2.0 forms, it's not freely shared but sold. One might imagine how much sooner the music industry might have found itself in trouble if the only people who could be counted on to buy music were other musicians.

An increasing number of scholars, however, have begun to route around this blockage in the system by publishing their work not in books and journals but on blogs. These scholars are publishing significant chunks of their writing in these informal online venues, sometimes as a means of getting feedback on work in progress and sometimes as an alternative channel through which an author can reach an audience more quickly and directly. There is certainly work that cannot be done in the form of the blog post—there are times when a scholar can benefit from the format of the journal article or the discipline of the book—but that the blog might not be everything does not mean that it is nothing. It is a mode of communication, of engaging with an audience, that must be taken seriously on its own terms. The blog has never been just a forum in which one can gripe about the travails of day-to-day life, whatever the conventional assumptions about it might suggest; the blog instead provides an arena in which scholars can work through ideas in an ongoing process of engagement with their peers. That spatial metaphor—the arena—is much to the point here: grasping how something like a blog might serve scholarly communication requires understanding that a blog is not a form but a platform. The blog is not a shape that extrudes certain set kinds of material but a stage on which material of many different varieties—different lengths, different time signatures, different modes of mediation—might be performed.

Many scholars experience a kind of reflexive horror at the thought of everyone having their own platform; there is already too much for us to keep up with without everyone in the field being able to publish whatever random thoughts occur to them. But perhaps we can imagine what our writing lives might be like if we did each have our own platform. What if an individual scholar could "subscribe" to another scholar, following her work over time and engaging with her as it comes into being? What if that relationship were mutual, and the conversations that these scholars develop around their shared work were able to produce new collaborative projects? What if others were able to follow those conversations in process, providing input along the way? What if those conversations produced a trusted community of scholars, a community that could be relied on to filter the wealth of new scholarly content on the Internet, alerting one another to new work by new scholars to whom the community should start paying attention? What if communities of scholars like this were able

to say to one another the academic equivalent of "Hey, I've got a trunk of costumes, and we can use my uncle's barn: let's put on a show"? What kinds of performances might scholars begin to develop on such a flexible, dynamic communication platform?

There are better and worse ways to use all of these writing platforms; there are pointless *Twitter* accounts, and there are bad blogs, just as there has always been no shortage of pointless journal articles and bad books. The difference is that in the age of print, in which access to publishing platforms was controlled, we came to associate the conferral of distinction with the moment of publication: the fact that a text existed meant that somebody somewhere thought it worthy of attention. In the age of the open platform, however, distinction is associated no longer with publication but with reception, with the response produced by a community of readers. To take the work that is done on the Web seriously, on its own terms, we need to understand how communities of scholars engage one another on such platforms, how they respond to the work published there, and how those responses generate more work of better quality. What we know to be true of our students is equally true of ourselves: the work we do gets better with practice, since more regular informal communication with one another leads to more meaningful formal communication, and a wider audience leads to broader engagements and better feedback.

That better feedback is significant enough that several publications have begun experimenting with open online peer review. As a means of exploring such a process, in September 2009 I worked with my collaborators at MediaCommons to post the draft of my book *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy*, which has since been published in print. The open review process was sufficiently successful—producing 295 comments from 44 unique commenters, as well as more extensive discussions in 20 other Web publications, including a review in a scholarly journal[7]—that MediaCommons was approached by the editor of a special issue of *Shakespeare Quarterly*, who wished to collaborate with us on a similar open-review project.[8] Other traditional publications, including the journal *postmedieval*, are similarly testing online review processes, and new sorts of publications and publishing models are being born in read-write environments, including *Digital Humanities Now* (http://digitalhumanities now.org) and the related *Journal of Digital Humanities* (see Cohen, Hoffman, Wieringa, and Troyano), both of which are PressForward publications (http://pressforward.org). All these experiments recognize that the critical element in scholarly engagement is participatory exchange and that the dialogic spaces of the read-write Web can be used to support the process of reading and writing within a community in productive ways.

Along the way, however, these open-review and open-publishing projects are working to expand the audience for scholarship in the humanities. This is vital: that wider audience is at one and the same time a crucial aspect of the Web's open publishing platforms and a key component of what makes many scholars nervous about them. Open platforms like blogs and *Twitter* enable scholarly work to reach a broader reading public, but they also allow that broader public to respond, a prospect that can be quite anxiety-producing for many scholars. But if the so-called crisis in the humanities, and especially in humanities publishing, is in some sense a problem of audience—too few people buying books in the humanities, too few students studying the humanities, too little public funding for the humanities—then doing our work in the open, where it can be seen, is a crucial step. If we reach out to a broader audience, by encouraging intellectual exchange with readers and writers beyond the academy, we have the potential to help not just our own work but also the academy in its attempts to communicate its continuing importance to contemporary society. If we're brave enough to engage directly with the voting public, we might have the opportunity to demonstrate a bit more about what it is that we do and why what we do matters.

That communication requires an open platform, and it requires an openness to speaking a language with which a generally educated public can engage. This does not mean "dumbing things down"; scholarly blogs need not inevitably turn into scholarship "lite." But just as writing on a networked platform has the potential to help students think seriously about audience, it can help scholars think about what readers we want to reach, when, and why. There is a time and a place for highly professionalized language, for difficulty, and there is equally a time and a place for drawing more general readers into our discussions. Like our students today, we need to be fluent in multiple vernaculars, and we need to be able to translate our ideas across them. In the process, we'll undoubtedly find that claims that no one outside the academy is interested in our work—much like claims that no one reads anymore—are significantly overstated.

Reading has not declined in significance in contemporary Western culture, but it has increasingly moved online, where it has taken on an increasingly social, increasingly active form. Such might be the case for scholarly communication as well; whatever becomes of the journal article or the print monograph, we owe it to the scholarly community to consider how online publishing structures might work for us, how we might reconceive the relation of reading and writing in ways that help support new forms of scholarly work, and how we might take advantage of open, critical conversations to raise the quality and increase the distribution of that work.

NOTES

1. On the changing role of the book in contemporary culture, particularly its interconnections with popular culture, see Collins; Striphas.

2. On these narratives connecting the spread of mass media with the general decline of Western culture, see Birkerts; Postman, *Amusing* and *Technopoly*.

3. See Heidegger; McLuhan, *Gutenberg Galaxy* and *Understanding*; Turkle; Carr; and any number of other contemporary pundits, many of them, ironically, Internet-based.

4. Publishing industry sales figures seem clear: sales are up—"way up"—over the last two decades, and Withers and Ross point out that, contrary to popular assumptions, "young people are reading more than you." Striphas reminds us that over "the last fifty years or so retail bookselling has reached unprecedented proportions" (2) and further explores the ways in which readers interact with these books. And this growth is visible even with our focus restricted to books: when we remember that the bulk of our engagement with the Internet involves reading, it becomes clear that our technologies are producing new forms of literacy, rather than diminishing literacy; see Leu et al.

5. This is not to mention, of course, the degree to which the reports glossed over the correlation between the distribution of wealth and the distribution of leisure reading. If, as I argue in *The Anxiety of Obsolescence*, nostalgic imaginings of a time when "everyone" read are overblown, it is well worth considering the effects that the concentration of wealth might have on reading patterns across what the NEA blithely refers to as "modern history" (*Reading at Risk* vii).

6. Because this online conversation takes place within a community, the critics of online writing practices who emphasize the low readership figures for blogs miss the point: most blogs aren't written for an audience, they're written for the blogger's friends. See boyd.

7. I want to emphasize that this review appeared long before the print edition of the book; given how long it takes before substantive reviews of traditionally published books appear, this is no small accomplishment.

8. On the outcomes of that experiment, see Fitzpatrick and Rowe.

WORKS CITED

Baron, Naomi S. "Does Medium Matter? Reading Onscreen Versus in Hard Copy." Workshop on Electronic Textuality. Sabançi Univ., Istanbul, Turkey. 15 June 2010. Address.

Barthes, Roland. *The Pleasure of the Text*. New York: Hill, 1975. Print.

Birkerts, Sven. *The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age*. New York: Random, 1994. Print.

boyd, danah. "A Blogger's Blog: Exploring the Definition of a Medium." *Reconstruction* 6.4 (2006): n. pag. Web. 18 Aug. 2012.

Carr, Nicholas G. *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*. New York: Norton, 2010. Print.

Cohen, Dan, Sasha Hoffman, Jeri Wieringa, and Joan Fragaszy Troyano. "Introducing the *Journal of Digital Humanities*." *Digital Humanities Now*. Digital Humanities Now, Feb. 2012. Web. 25 June 2012.

Collins, Jim. *Bring on the Books for Everybody: How Literary Culture Became Popular Culture*. Durham: Duke UP, 2010. Print.

Davidson, Cathy N. *Now You See It: How the Brain Science of Attention Will Transform the Way We Live, Work, and Learn*. New York: Viking, 2011. Print.

Fitzpatrick, Kathleen. *The Anxiety of Obsolescence: The American Novel in the Age of Television*. Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 2006. Print.

———. *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy*. MediaCommons, 2009. Web. 25 June 2012.

———. *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy*. New York: New York UP, 2011. Print.

Fitzpatrick, Kathleen, and Katherine Rowe. "Keywords for Open Review." *LOGOS: The Journal of the World Book Community* 21.3–4 (2010): 133–41. Web. 25 June 2012.

Heidegger, Martin. "The Question Concerning Technology." *Basic Writings*. Ed. David Farrell Krell. New York: Harper, 1992. 307–41. Print.

Leu, Donald J., Jr., et al. "Toward a Theory of New Literacies Emerging from the Internet and Other Information and Communication Technologies." *Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading*. Ed. Robert B. Ruddell and Norman J. Unrau. 5th ed. Newark: Intl. Reading, 2004. 1570–613. Print.

McLuhan, Marshall. *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1962. Print.

———. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge: MIT P, 1994. Print.

National Endowment for the Arts. *Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America*. Natl. Endowment for the Arts, 2004. Web. 25 June 2012.

———. *Reading on the Rise: A New Chapter in American Literacy*. Natl. Endowment for the Arts, 2009. Web. 25 June 2012.

———. *To Read or Not to Read: A Question of National Consequence*. Natl. Endowment for the Arts, 2007. Web. 25 June 2012.

Nielsen, Jakob. "F-Shaped Pattern for Reading Web Content." *Alertbox*. Nielsen, 17 Apr. 2006. Web. 25 June 2012.

———. "How Little Do Users Read?" *Alertbox*. Nielsen, 6 May 2008. Web. 25 June 2012.

Plato. *Phaedrus*. Trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995. Print.

Pope, Alexander. "The Dunciad." *The Major Works*. Ed. Pat Rogers. New York: Oxford UP, 2009. 411–571. Print.

Postman, Neil. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. New York: Penguin, 1986. Print.

———. *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*. New York: Vintage, 1993. Print.

Striphas, Ted. *The Late Age of Print: Everyday Book Culture from Consumerism to Control*. New York: Columbia UP, 2009. Print.

Turkle, Sherry. *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*. New York: Basic, 2011. Print.

Withers, Hannah, and Lauren Ross. "The State of Publishing: Young People Are Reading More than You." *McSweeney's Internet Tendency* (2011): n. pag. Web. 18 Aug. 2011.