INTRODUCTION

Bookishness is a twenty-first-century phenomenon, and it is omnipresent. Once you recognize it, you see it everywhere.

In the twenty-first century, we no longer *need* books, physical codices, as reading devices. We have other means of reading, writing, communicating, and archiving. But that doesn't mean some of us don't *want* books. And that want manifests everywhere. Indeed, at the moment of the book's foretold obsolescence because of digital technologies—around the turn of the millennium—we saw something surprising: the emergence of a creative movement invested in exploring and demonstrating love for the book as symbol, art form, and artifact.

This is what I describe as "bookishness": creative acts that engage the physicality of the book within a digital culture, in modes that may be sentimental, fetishistic, radical. Cell-phone covers crafted to look like old books; decorative pillows printed with beloved book covers; earrings, rings, and necklaces made of miniature codices; store windows that use books as props; altered book sculptures exhibited in prestigious collections; and bookbound novels that revolve around a book as a central character. Although the bookishness I will chart is primarily Anglophone, bookishness

FIGURE 0.1 Example of bookishness: Twelve South's BookBook for iPhone, a cell-phone cover crafted to look like an old book.

Source: Permission to use image granted by TwelveSouth.com.

happens across countries, languages, media, and genres. This obsession with the materiality of books spans the spectrum from high art to absolute kitsch, and it signifies a culture grappling with its own increasing digitization.

The book has historically symbolized privacy, leisure, individualism, knowledge, and power. This means that the book has been the emblem for the very experiences that must be renegotiated in a digital era: proximity, interiority, authenticity. So what happens when the books get digitized and bookish culture goes digital—when the word "book" may or may not refer to a material object? Bookishness signals a culture in transition but also provides a solution to a dilemma of the contemporary literary age: how to maintain a commitment to the nearness, attachment, and affiliation that the book traditionally represented now that the use value of the book has so

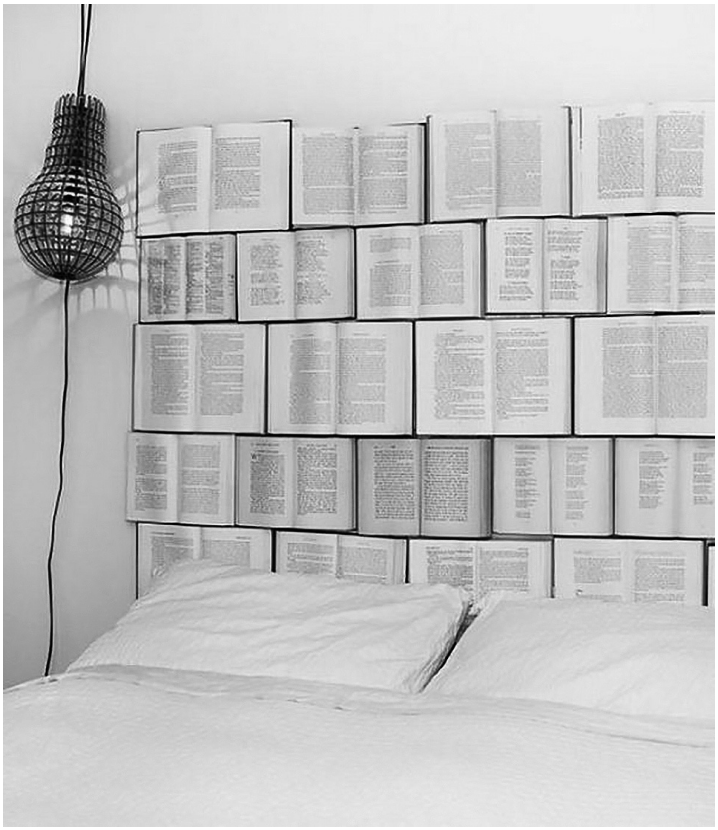

FIGURE 0.2 Example of bookishness: a headboard made from books.

Source: Permission to use image granted by Diycraftsy.com: https://www.diycraftsy.com/diy-headboard-ideas/.

radically altered. Books aren't going anywhere, but they are being repurposed and reimagined. Our relationships to books are changing, and often the results are surprisingly poetic and generative.

When I first started thinking about bookishness in 2008, I had to defend my claim of its existence. Ten years later, things have changed dramatically. Bookishness is now nearly inescapable. A few months ago, I encountered a wall of bookishness in a store at

FIGURE 0.3 Example of bookishness: necklace comprising miniature books, by Peg and Awl.

Source: Accessed at Esty: https://www.etsy.com/listing/87301368/literary-book-necklace-miniature-leather. Photo and necklace by Peg and Awl. Permission to use image granted by Peg and Awl.

FIGURE 0.4 Example of bookishness: store window in New Orleans using books as decorations.

FIGURE 0.5 Example of bookishness: bookish cupcakes by Cakes and Cupcakes Mumbai.

Source: https://cakesandcupcakesmumbai.com/2013/01/13/book-lover-cakes-and-cupcakes/book-novels-lovers-cakes-cupcakes-mumbai-29/.

the Los Angeles International Airport: socks printed with the design of an old library card and titled "Out of Print / Books Worn well" hung above a box of "I Love Books" buttons sold with the tagline "Buttons for Book Lovers." This was all was displayed in a store that contained very few actual books and in a place where many people were reading but were doing so on their phones.

But the object that started it all for me was my Mac BookBook: a large brown leather computer case made to look like an old hardbound book. It is a beautiful and kitschy thing, and in 2010 it was a source of surprise to those who watched me unzip it and reveal a shiny silver laptop inside (see figure 0.6). There is also something sad about the Mac BookBook. Its presence signals an absence. Instead of pages and text, the hollowed-out codex is a storage device for a computer. It is the ultimate victory of simulacra over the original.[1] The Mac BookBook functions through indexical

FIGURE 0.6 Bookishness as laptop case: Twelve South's Mac BookBook.

Source: Permission to use image granted by TwelveSouth.com.

reference and a kind of spectral haunting. It makes books appear in places and scenes where they used to be physically present but are no longer. The cultural theorist Raymond Williams identified "the residual" as an important part of cultural formation. It is what "has been effectively formed in the past but is still active in the cultural process."[2] My Mac BookBook displays the book to be a powerful form of residual media actively shaping digital culture.[3]

Another point of origin for this book was the 2009 exhibit *Slash: Paper Under the Knife*, curated by Dave McFadden for the Museum of Art and Design in New York City. *Slash* featured fifty-two artists from sixteen countries, displaying "a virtual renaissance of interest in the use of paper as an independent medium beyond collage" and representing "an international phenomenon."[4] The exhibit

captured well the cultural zeitgeist. Artists from around the world were shown to be exploring and exploiting the physical properties and aesthetic possibilities of paper and books. The book-based sculptures particularly riveted me. The medium of my profession (as an English professor) and personal passion (as a reader) was here treated as solid matter for making three-dimensional sculpture. *Slash* presented the book as a complex and compelling form of residual media, one that was being repurposed for new artistic shapes, sculptural forms, and aesthetic practices.

"Bookwork" is the term used to describe this genre of book-based sculpture. Artists such as Doug Beube, Brian Dettmer, Guy Laramée, Cara Barer, and Long Bin-Chen have made bookwork a signal genre of the digital age. It is a staple in contemporary exhibits and also proliferates on blogs and curated feeds across the internet. In bookwork, the book is presented as a physical thing of beauty, complexity, and fascination, not just as a storage container for text. We can't read the words contained in Pamela Paulsrud's *Touchstones* (books altered to look like small beach-tossed stones; see figure 0.7) or in Brian Dettmer's *New Funk Standards* because pieces of the pages have been cut away, shellacked, and otherwise altered (see figure 0.8).[5] Garrett Stewart identifies bookwork as a distinct genre of contemporary art in which the codex is "demediated," its medial function stripped away to become sculptural and aesthetic.[6] Stewart locates bookwork in a genealogy of conceptual and readymade art, thereby identifying bookwork as making us see books differently in order to reconsider what we expect from the concept, word, and image of "book."

It feels right to me that this exhibit of slashed and demediated books began the series of thoughts that would lead to this "book" I have written: a series of words that you, reader, may be finding on paper pages or may be encountering digitally in something called "page view." *Slash* lived up to its name. It slashed my way of seeing books and in doing so made me encounter books with a visceral,

FIGURE 0.7 Example of bookwork: Pamela Paulsrud's *Touchstones* (2013).

Source: https://pamelapaulsrud.com/artwork/197502_Touchstones.html.

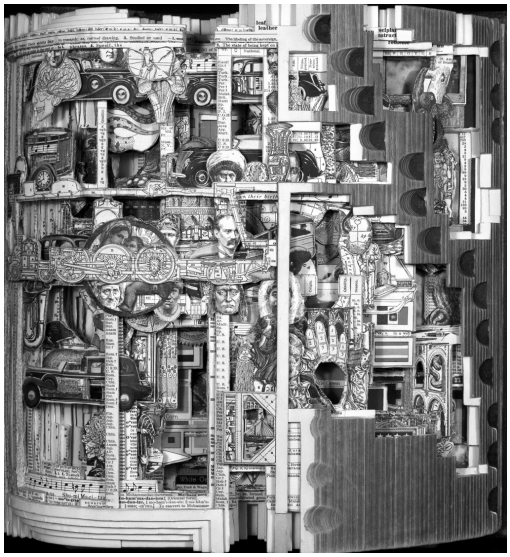

FIGURE 0.8 Example of bookwork: Brian Dettmer, *New Funk Standards* (2017), hardcover book, acrylic varnish, 12.75" × 12" × 5.75".

Source: Permission to use image granted by artist.

immediate force. It is that sense of immediacy, disrupted and enabled by the digital, that bookishness works to navigate.

Bookishness is about maintaining a nearness to books. "Bookishness" comes from "bookish," a word used to describe a person who reads a lot (perhaps too much). When coupled with "-ness," the term takes on a subtle new valence. The first listing of "-ishness" in the *Oxford English Dictionary* states that it derives from Old English, wherein "-ish" served chiefly to form adjectives from national names (British, English, Scottish); so "-ishness" is about identification, even nationalism. It is about subject formation through relationality, about locating and identifying a community of subjects in physical and spatial contexts. In this case, "bookishness" suggests an identity derived from a physical *nearness* to books, not just from the "reading" of them in the conventional sense. The "-ishness" also indicates that objects rub off on us. They affect us, opening interpretive modes. Moreover, as in the example of my Mac BookBook, objects mark us—making us identifiable and even "readable" to others—as "bookish."

A few other objects from my personal collection of bookishness—objects I have used to mark myself, in my particular ways, as bookish—include a painting depicting a stack of closed books, a hanging mobile made from the *MLA Style Guide*, and a sculpture carved out of a hardbound *Moby-Dick* whose folded pages form the word "book." And there's a much wider swath of bookishness online: stop-motion book-based films, Pinterest sites dedicated to bookish fashion, Facebook communities that share photos of beautiful libraries around the world, and more . . . so much more. Collectively, these individual objects become representative of a larger movement and promote questions about what binds them. My survey of bookishness takes seriously the presence of these objects and the questions they promote about twenty-first-century digital life and meaning making.

Consider an example of bookishness kitsch that shows this meaning making in action: this *Pride and Prejudice* duvet cover (figure 0.9). How might we hold in view Jane Austen's classic novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) alongside a bedspread that references it? The duvet cover signifies one's knowledge of literary culture, and

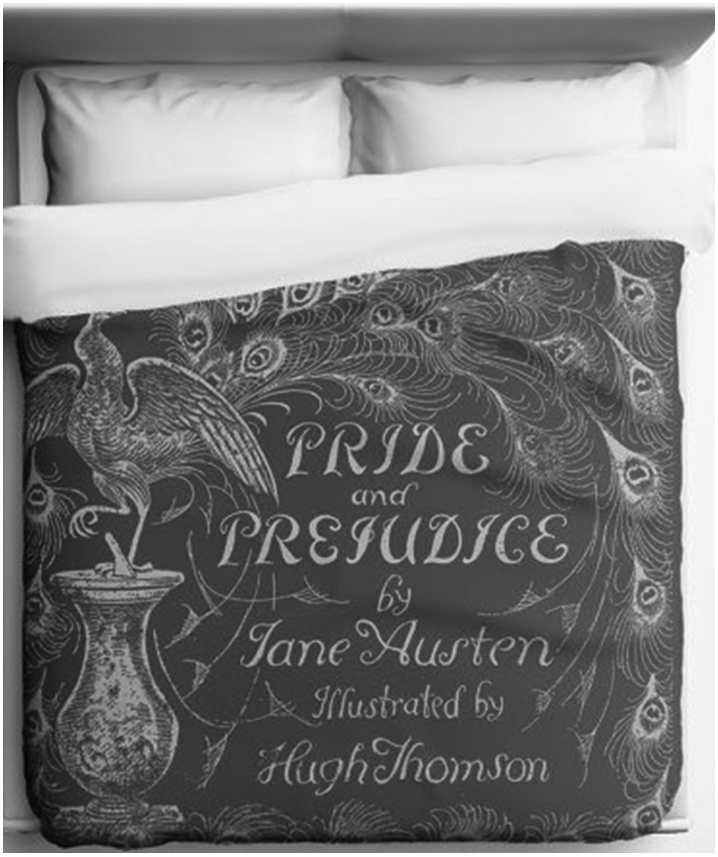

FIGURE 0.9 Bookishness in the form of a duvet cover printed with bookshelves.

Source: https://www.cafepress.com/+bookshelf7100_queen_duvet,1103715894.

probably one's identification with this classic and much-commodified bildungsroman, but it does not guarantee that its owner has actually read the canonical novel.[7] Yet the duvet cover does serve to draw the novel (and literature more generally) through the commodity form and into the realm of the personal and affective, even the intimate space of the bedroom: to assert the attachment to books as a powerful form of self-making. And, when posted to social media, this bookish duvet cover also extends those private realms into cyberspace. Much like the Great Books of the Western World series or the hardbound encyclopedia sets that filled the bookshelves of mid-twentieth-century bourgeois American living rooms, bookishness is about class and consumerism. It is about constructing and projecting identity through the possession and presentation of books. The difference here is that unlike the shelf of leather-bound but never-opened canonical texts, books no longer need to be owned or physically displayed in order to do the work of self-construction. Digital images posted to social media now serve that purpose. They help to maintain a "nearness" to books in a digital realm that is becoming ever more an extension of our intimate living and personal spaces, a process that makes evaluating what counts as "near" ever more complex.

Another way to consider the stakes of bookishness might be to reverse the seeming "literariness" of my example. If we might ask about the relation of the words that make up the story *Pride and Prejudice* to the representation of *Pride and Prejudice* on a bedspread, we might equally ask what it means when we find a character in a novel reading *Pride and Prejudice* or discover diverse adaptations of the classic story updated for contemporary times (a Muslim version, a gay version, etc.).[8] Neither the duvet cover nor the words "Pride and Prejudice" are the book *Pride and Prejudice*; instead, the bedspread and the beloved novel, I would say, combine to serve as examples of bookishness. Put differently, we see bookishness *in* the

books we read; it is a literary mode even as it is also a way to commodify (as in the duvet cover) literariness. From avant-garde experimental literature to best-selling middlebrow fiction, "chick lit" to children's storybooks, contemporary literature depicts the book as a central character in narrative plots and also plays with the aesthetic possibilities of the codexical format. Even born-digital literature, a genre with no physical allegiance to the codex, gets in on the bookishness game. Electronic literature adapts the appearance of books into screen-based poetics and incorporates actual books into augmented-reality, transmedial storytelling.

Bookishness pervades nonliterary books too. Consider *The Repurposed Library: 33 Craft Projects That Give Old Books New Life* by Lisa Occhipinti, with photography by Thayer Allyson Gowdy. A "how-to" book for wannabe bookwork artists, *The Repurposed Library* presents the book as physical material for making things: shelves, hanging mobiles, bracelets, birdhouses, wreathes for the front door, chandeliers, vases, sculpture, and more. Occhipinti's introduction begins with an act of not-reading: "As a child I adored books, despite the fact that I hated to read." She describes seeking out her mother's family Bible: "I wouldn't read a word, but I would marvel at the translucent, onionskin pages and the faux shagreen cover embossed with gilt letters." A self-proclaimed book lover but not book reader, Occhipinti writes, "Repurposing a book is simply a different way of experiencing it and embracing its beauty." Her introduction to *The Repurposed Library* concludes with the promise that her book will alter your view of books in general, in effect holding on to interpretation and evaluation as bookish processes that are quite separate from "reading": "You won't look at them the same way again."[9] Bookishness, in general, performs this same trick—although not always to the same nonreading ends—promoting an appreciation of the physical book in, through, and against an orientation toward the digital.

Such lessons are not just for adults. Children's literature also uses bookishness to share and teach a love of books' materiality, even for those who might appreciate other forms of reading and writing. Lane Smith's *It's a Book* is a short picture book for young readers. It depicts a monkey reading a book while an annoying donkey asks him questions about it. The donkey represents the digital native, and for him the book is a strange device. "Do you blog with it?" the donkey asks; "No, it's a book," says the monkey. More questions ensue: "Does it need a password?" The monkey repeats the refrain: "No, it's a book."[10] The question-and-answer session continues until the donkey finally takes a turn with the book. He holds it in his hands and gets hooked. The book's final page depicts the donkey immersed in a book while a little mouse (a character, not an interactive device) delivers the pedagogical punch line. The donkey, still not fully understanding how a book works but evidently smitten with it nonetheless, promises to charge it when he's finished reading. The mouse responds: "You don't have to . . . it's a book, Jackass." The joke inculcates young readers into a bookish set, elevating those who get the joke and who love books apart from those jackasses who prefer digital devices.

Hervé Tullet's *Press Here* is another example of a popular children's book that teaches young readers to see the book as a powerful and compelling medium, particularly in relation to interactive screens.[11] *Press Here* begins with a yellow dot and the words "press here and turn the page" in a font that resembles handwriting. The next page displays two yellow dots, sitting side by side. The words "Great! Now press the yellow dot again" appear underneath. The text infers an interactive reading experience (à la a touchscreen device), rewarding the reader for her action of presumably pressing the dot and turning the page afterward. Of course, there is no actual change in content on the book's pages, regardless of readerly action. The reader knows this and plays along, and the play is part

of the fun. *Press Here* references the digital in an act of parody with a pedagogical purpose: it teaches the young reader to play with the book and to appreciate it, endearing the reader to the codexical medium. This lesson is an introduction in being bookish, but it depends upon familiarity with interactive screens. *Press Here*, like *It's a Book*, reorients young readers toward the book medium through a relationship with the digital. Such literature reinforces a sense of being bookish in a digital age and for digital natives.

WHY NOW?

Bookishness speaks to and from a particular historical moment. From 2000 to 2015, the period of my investigation, a lot happened to our relationship to the book and, more generally, to how we get information and entertainment and establish bookish communities. During this time, we saw the emergence of Google (taking off in 2000), Wikipedia (2001), Web 2.0 (2004), social media platforms (Facebook in 2004, Twitter in 2006, Instagram in 2010), Google Books (2005), and the general acceptance of constantly connected mobile devices that dramatically transform our everyday lived experience into a culture of "always on."[12] The Kindle arrived in 2007, the most successful in a longer genealogy of e-readers that preceded it, and reading on a digital device became popular and pervasive.[13]

A 2008 *New York Times* article works as a useful benchmark for my study; its title alone speaks volumes about the impact of these rapid technological changes on what it means to be bookish: "Literacy Debate: Online, R U Really Reading?" The article begins with a large color photograph of an upper-middle-class family sitting in their stately living room in Old Greenwich, Connecticut—a vision of bourgeois bliss and simultaneous domestic conflict wrought by the

digital. Father reads the newspaper and mother a book while each kid has a MacBook on his and her lap. The photo caption reads, "The Simses of Old Greenwich, Conn., gather to read after dinner. Their means of text delivery is divided by generation."[14] The image replicates older gendered norms associated with reading: the man/father reads the newspaper while the woman/mother curls up with a book. Her physical position implies that, unlike her husband, who studies the objective news, she is engrossed in a novel. The gender norms at work in this scene of reading suggest a history of normative values associated with literary media that are being transferred to a new site of conflict: print versus digital.

The pairing of the photo with the article's title expresses anxiety about reading in an increasingly digital age. The first two lines focus this concern on the children: "Books are not Nadia Konyk's thing. Her mother, hoping to entice her, brings them home from the library, but Nadia rarely shows an interest." The article establishes a generational divide based on reading devices, a conflict that's carried out via a synecdoche that depends on bookishness: while the title asks a question about reading, the first lines synecdochally transfer the activity (reading) to the object (the physical book). In 2008, a year after the advent of the Kindle, the idea of reading a book digitally was still surprising. The article expresses a commonly felt apprehension that family members might be unable to share knowledge and a sense of cultural history because, according to the logic of the article's title, reading on a screen just might not count as reading at all.

Yet only two years later—in 2010—the *New York Times* announced that the paper would include an e-book bestseller list in fiction and nonfiction.[15] In other words, only two years after publishing the article about the Simses, the *New York Times* changed course. Today, the image of the Simses sitting together with different reading devices probably no longer strikes fear in the hearts of those

concerned about the future of books, reading, and a common core of knowledge. It is now possible to imagine the young Simses, on their digital devices, reading titles suggested by the reputable *New York Times Book Review*.

Fears about the death of the book, which pervaded and bookended (as it were) the turn of the century, have subsided a bit. If we think back to the year 1999, specifically to the hysteria surrounding the approach of January 1, 2000, we can see how much has changed in cultural attitudes toward digital technologies. Y2K, as the year 2000 was called, laid bare primal fears about the transition to a digital culture. There was the Y2K bug, a computer error projected to create havoc in computer systems globally because of a flaw in representing dates beyond December 31, 1999. It ended up doing little actual technological damage but did expose how a seemingly small technical concern could potentially affect global markets, transportation systems, and the cultural imagination.

Such fears may seem wild and far off now; two decades into the twenty-first century, people seem all too willing to trust their personal data to the unseen but significantly named "cloud" and to submit regularly to corporate privacy-setting policies in exchange for faster online service and sleeker apps.[16] We have accepted omnipresent computing and corporate surveillance into our homes and most intimate contexts—our mobile phones, cars, refrigerators, watches, and, yes, even our reading devices. Computers are now a central and culturally accepted reading platform. And not only are e-readers such as Kindles and Nooks (introduced in 2007 by Amazon and in 2009 by Barnes & Noble, respectively) sold alongside books at bookstores, but data also shows that the sales of digital releases can increase, not diminish, the sale of printed books.[17] The contemporary situation is not a binary of print versus digital or books versus screens. We face something far more complex and interesting.

The period of this book's study also encompasses dramatic shifts in book publishing. Innovations in digital techniques for book design, color and typographic printing, die-cuts, and other page elements go hand in hand with new capacities for augmented-reality elements and transmedial storytelling as well as digitally enhanced advertising and distribution modes. The digital is now a staple of book publishing, from the creation of content on word-processing software to the point-of-sale scanning of ISBNs as digital barcodes. N. Katherine Hayles rightly claims that "digitality has become the textual condition of twenty-first century literature."[18] Printed bookbound novels and the readers who buy them are, whether they realize it, affected by major shifts in digital production and corporate "convergence culture" that have revolutionized the film, television, and, of course, book-publishing industries.[19] Just think of how Amazon.com (originally marketed as a bookseller) is now a producer of television and film. The effects of these changes are seen and felt in the books we read and also in how they arrive at our front door: in a brown box with a big, black, arrow-pointed smile from Amazon.com.

Amazon.com went online in 1995; its effects on bookselling might be compared—in the scale of influence and the complexity of interaction—to the rise of the digital on books. The changes represented by this one company (even this one word, "Amazon") are well known both in lived experience and in cultural history. During the fifteen years of my study, Amazon.com became a giant. In 2019, it is ranked as the third-largest company in the world by market value.[20] Amazon.com was blamed for the death of the brick-and-mortar bookstore and then started opening its own storefronts (in 2015). Indeed, I would argue that the recent resurgence of bookstores is evidence of bookishness at work.

The literary scholar Mark McGurl queries, "Should Amazon.com now be considered the driving force of American literary history?"[21]

Even if the answer is not a certain "yes," then at least we must acknowledge that Amazon.com is one of the main driving forces of contemporary literary culture. Not only do many people find, buy, read, and recommend books via the online "everything store," but Amazon.com is more and more becoming the mediatized environment through which we encounter and experience the literary more broadly. The example of Amazon.com shows how and why we must read across and between that kitschy Jane Austen duvet cover and her canonical bookbound novel. Both are found and purchased on the same website, where they are programmatically connected by metatags, hyperlinks, and more. This technical situation invites us to pay attention to the attachments between these literary objects and, beyond them, the relationships that constitute the literary in this new media world.

MY METHOD

In the chapters that follow, I pursue bookishness across diverse texts, objects, and aesthetics. I suture methods from literary studies, book history, and media studies. I take inspiration from Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore's very bookish book from 1967, *The Medium Is the Massage*, which proclaims to be "a look-around to see what's happening. It is a collide-oscope of interfaced situations."[22] I adopt a kaleidoscopic perspective, collecting and curating an array of texts and genres into constellations that, through their arrangement, show us something new about how and why we continue to love books in a digital age.

Media studies, particularly media-specific analysis and media archaeology, support my efforts.[23] Indeed, my goal is to show how the literary and literariness are reliant on our digital network, our technologies, and also habits of use. I heed Craig Dworkin's

warning: "We are misled when we think of media as objects."[24] Approaching literary culture through a media perspective means thinking not just about objects or subjects—texts, books, readers, authors, genres—but also about the relationships, networks, and infrastructures that constitute and connect them. Similarly, as David Thorburn and Henry Jenkins suggest: "To comprehend the aesthetics of transition, we must resist notions of media purity, recognizing that each medium is touched by and in turn touches its neighbors and rivals."[25] Applied to literary studies, we must approach texts as media operating within specific networks of connection and "touch." I am moved by Rita Felski's call to reorganize literary critical practice around attachment rather than detachment—to think seriously about how literary objects are actors (to "acknowledge poems and paintings, fictional characters and narrative devices, as actors").[26] "If literary studies is to survive the twenty-first century," Felski writes, "it will need to reinvigorate its ambitions and its methods by forging closer links to the study of other media rather than clinging to ever more tenuous claims to exceptional status."[27] Bookishness generates such links, for example, those between Melville's *Moby-Dick* and my Isaac Salazar–folded bookwork made from it. In the digital network, such attachment is not just affective and aesthetic but also programmatic and enacted. Hyperlinks connect webpages, and metadata tags and search-engine cookies foster connections between bits of bookish data. Invisible algorithms enable a user's search-engine history to generate new, perhaps adjacently related bookish content and—of course—potential purchases. A focus on bookishness illuminates where and how the literary works now.

Attachment, pleasure, disgust, intrigue, and play are all important parts of the literary and deserve to be understood as such. These are reasons why we read, study, teach, share, and own books. I am indebted (and attached) to work by literary critics like Leah

Price and Andrew Piper, who think about the role of the book, past and present, as well as Deidre Shauna Lynch, whose *Loving Literature: A Cultural History*, shows how Literature (with a capital *L*) developed into a serious discipline and object of study during the eighteenth century due to a nexus of cultural efforts that collectively turned bookbound literature into something to love. Lynch writes: "Recovering the historicity of the love of literature" means "tracing a counterplot to those orthodox accounts of the development of aesthetics, since these tend to make, not attachment but detachment their end point."[28] A focus on bookishness shows how the digital inspires literary innovation around an emergent bookish sensibility. My hope is that this book shows the literary—and literary criticism, too—to be flourishing, perhaps even having a kind of renaissance in and, indeed, because of our digital age.

THE CHAPTERS

The chapters that follow examine bookishness as a complex constellation of technological, social, aesthetic, and affective forces that converge to present the book as aesthetic artifact par excellence for our digital culture. Chapter 1, "How and Now Bookishness," situates bookishness historically, explaining how bookishness emerged as a response to anxieties and rhetoric about the death of the book in the 1990s. Chapter 2, "Shelter," explores how these fears get enacted in narratives that share a central trope: the presentation of the book as an allegorical outpost, a safe space and shelter. Across a wide variety of narratives—Jennifer Egan's mystery novel *The Keep* (2006); the 9/11 novels *The Zero* (2006), by Jess Walter, and *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (2005), by Jonathan Safran Foer; William Joyce's children's book *The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore* (2012); and Robin Sloane's page-turner

Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore (2012)—we see a central goal of bookishness emerge as an effort to depict the book allegorically as a space of refuge from an encroaching digital world.

Bookishness affects literature not only at the level of content and story but also in form and format. Chapter 3, "Thing," examines bookishness literature that depicts the book as a thing, a poignant artifact and fetish object for the digital age. In diegetic narrative and in formal presentation, these works take advantage of digital publishing and production capacities to focus readerly attention on the beauty and power of the book object. Leanne Shapton's *Important Artifacts and Personal Property from the Collection of Lenore Doolan and Harold Morris, Including Books, Street Fashion, and Jewelry* (2009) is a unique little book that presents a narrative in the form of an auction catalogue. Objects left over from a romantic relationship are used to tell the story of a human relationship and reflexively comment on the power of the book as artifact and archive. Carlos María Domínguez's *The House of Paper* (2005) and Amaranth Borsuk and Brad Bouse's augmented-reality work *Between Page and Screen* (2012) are very different texts, one print and one digital, but both adapt an older literary genre that fetishizes and anthropomorphizes the book object into a narrative actor. Sean and Lisa Ohlenkamp's short stop-motion film *The Joy of Books* (2012) exemplifies a genre of bookishness that proliferates online and depicts the book as thing coming to life, thereby animating the very definition of fetish object by depicting the book as an important fetish object for a literary culture dependent upon digital infrastructures.

Digital technologies enable intricate book design and cheap, mass-produced quantities of bookish beauty but also piracy, fakery, and knockoffs. Chapter 4, "Fake," shows how digital culture operates through fakery—an essential cultural value that, like nearness, is interrupted by the digital—and, specifically, how the contemporary literary condition is indebted to bookish remediations and kitsch. From digital files presented as books to "blooks" (objects made to

look like books), dummy spines to bookish kitsch, I consider bookish fakes as an important aspect of literary culture. I read examples of bookishness kitsch in relation to two novels that operate through the conceit of bookish fakery: J. J. Abrams and Doug Dorst's *S.* (2013) and *The Ice-Bound Concordance* (2016), by Aaron A. Reed and Jacob Garbe, an augmented-reality narrative game. Fakery is part of the literary, both literature's past and its present, and bookishness provides an opportunity to consider the importance of fake books to our bookish future.

My final two chapters adopt a different method, shifting from demonstrating through curation to close reading one or two literary examples. Chapter 5, "Weapon," considers the role of experimental literature and book design within bookishness by diving into two exemplary novels, Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves* (2000) and Steven Hall's *The Raw Shark Texts* (2007). These highly experimental novels play with the materiality of the book to present narrative allegories that figure the digital as monstrous and the book as a powerful weapon against it. *House of Leaves* exploits the possibilities of the codex in ways that demonstrate its durability and phoenix-like ability to regenerate. *The Raw Shark Texts* uses typographical play and a mind-bending plot to critique posthuman theories that disentangle information from materiality, self from body. Both of these texts were origin points of sorts for the book you're now reading. Returning to them, we can see how they registered aspects of early fears about the digital and established an aesthetic of bookishness as a response.

Bookishness registers a sense of loss and promotes remembrance. Chapter 6, "Memorial," addresses the memorializing function of bookishness by examining a single, exemplary work: Jonathan Safran Foer's *Tree of Codes* (2010). A memorial and fetish object for bookish culture, *Tree of Codes* is full of holes—gaps in the page that are aesthetic and deeply meaningful. Foer employed a digitally enhanced process of die-cutting to carve into an English-language

edition of the Polish author Bruno Schulz's *The Street of Crocodiles* (1934), creating a beautiful, hole-y, and very bookish thing from it. Schulz died during the Holocaust, and his writing was largely lost to history. The sense of loss—the loss of people, books, and cultural memory—permeates *Tree of Codes*, figuratively and formally. I read *Tree of Codes* as a memorial not only to Schulz and the Holocaust but also to bookish culture in the twenty-first century. Reading attentively the experimental pages of Foer's *Tree of Codes*, we see bookishness registering and memorializing a time of signal change in literary culture—our own.

This book ends with a short and rather personal "Coda" that attends to the feelings motivating my thoughts (and years of research) on bookishness. Loving books in a digital age is personal and communal, especially since those distinctions are being blurred by digital infrastructures and cultural practices. As our lives and loves depend increasingly upon the digital, we literary critics need to be attuned to how feelings matter to the literary and also to literary criticism.

In the end, loving books is about attachment. This is especially true in a digital age because digital culture operates through attachment, through networks of hyperlinks and programmatic connections. But it's more than that. In our neoliberal times, in which digital corporations invade our private space and reading time, claiming a bookish identity can constitute an act of rebellion, self-construction, and hope *within* this sphere.

May the book that you hold in your hands strengthen your own attachments to the literary and support reflection on why loving books matters so much now.

1

HOW AND NOW BOOKISHNESS

In the years leading up to the new millennium, fears of the digital were articulated as threats to the book. Rhetoric about the death of book proliferated and spurred a response in the form of bookishness.

THE DEATH OF THE BOOK

The book was not always under threat—often the book itself *was* the threat. In a pivotal scene in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831), set in fifteenth-century Paris during the emergence of the printing press, Victor Hugo poses the archdeacon Claude Frollo, the narrative embodiment of the Catholic Church, alongside a book and a view of Notre Dame: "The archdeacon gazed at the gigantic edifice for some time in silence, then extending his right hand, with a sigh, towards the printed book which lay open on the table, and his left towards Notre-Dame, and turning a sad glance from the book to the church,—'Alas,' he said, 'this will kill that.' "[1] The statement "this will kill that" expresses a belief that new media (here, the book) will destroy older, established forms of knowledge production and distribution (here, the church).

History shows that fears about new media "killing" older ones say more about the changing social contexts and power structures of the time than about actual readers, books, or literary practices. Five hundred years after Gutenberg's invention, we have become used to books as accessible, ever-present commodities and personal comforts. We forget that the book was once the new media raising concern about its potential power. Indeed, even before the printing press revolutionized the manufacture of books, cultural critics feared the impact of the codex. In 1525, Erasmus wrote, "Is there anywhere on earth exempt from these swarms of new books?"[2] He continues, expressing anxieties about how emergent literacy and the presence of books will "fill the world with pamphlets and books [that are] . . . foolish, ignorant, malignant, libelous, mad, impious and subversive; and such is the flood that even things that might have done some good lose all their goodness."

I begin with these examples because they anticipate so clearly—in their tone, their concerns, and their intelligent misapprehension—familiar accounts about the media shift of our own era. Hugo's archbishop was clearly wrong that the printed book would kill the church (though it did significantly affect its power and how it exercised it), but he was not wrong that the book would be what Elizabeth Eisenstein, in her history of the printing press, famously calls "an agent of change."[3] Early responses to the rise of digitization share with these earlier writers a tone of lament that is incorrect in its hyperbole—the book has not died any more than the church did—but also correct in its expressive estimation of digitization's impact. Bookishness literature learns from this history, updating the idea that the book can serve as a weapon and reminding us of its power.

Leah Price rightly states, "Every generation rewrites the book's epitaph; all that changes is the whodunit."[4] In the early stages of thinking about bookishness, I considered writing a history of "the

death of the book" genre, focusing on its rhetorical practices and assumptions.[5] Approaching the death of the book as a distinct (and reoccurring) discursive genre invites consideration of how and why that genre operates, not just whether it is right or wrong. Bookishness is a response to the most recent bout of claims about the death of the book at the hands (or digits) of the digital, and as such it invites us to return to the particular cultural conversation about the death of the book that flourished at the turn of the last century. The melancholy expressed in this conversation is not "right," in that it does not reflect an accurate historical awareness of the media (which to say, the book) it longs for, nor does it register any perspicacity in predicting the media future. Yet the tenor and content of this discourse express a powerful set of values that's worthwhile for us to understand.

Two of the period's most famous laments about books in the digital age are Sven Birkets's *The Gutenberg Elegies* (1994) and Nicolas Carr's "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" (2008), a pairing that bookends the year 2000. These two highly influential and often-cited texts share certain operating assumptions.[6] "My core fear is that we, as a culture, are becoming shallower," Birkets writes.[7] Fifteen years later, after the emergence of Web 2.0, Carr concurs: "Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a jet ski."[8] In both accounts, digital media promote the wrong kind of reading: not deep, linear, and immersive but instead shallow, hyperlinked skimming. Hear the depth metaphors at work. Associated with literary criticism since at least (and informed by) Freud, the depth model of reading understands good, serious reading to be an act of excavating subtexts and hidden meaning.[9] For both Birkets and Carr, computational culture produces a shift from reading as deep diving to superficial skimming of the surface. The results, our representative hand-wringers note, are not for the better. These familiar rationales yoke the book medium to a particular

method of use (linear reading) and to a particular value (good). They see the internet as the opposite. Birkets and Carr build their claims about the death of books and bookish values upon the following assumptions: books are for reading; reading is beneficial, especially when it is done in a linear, immersive fashion; and books and literature are one and the same.

Yet even as they praise slow, careful thinking, the rationale posited by Birkets, Carr, and others lacks, perhaps predictably, any deep understanding of media or book history.[10] While it is not my aim to seek to disprove a set of writers whose ideas are already outdated, it's useful to compare the ahistorical and ideological *idea* of the book they present to the reality of the book we can find in media histories. The first assumption—that books are for reading—is dispelled in Leah Price's *How to Do Things with Books in Victorian England*, which charts the many ways a person in nineteenth-century Britain might use a book: the book as an object to share and shape relationships between people, the book as an obstacle to shield oneself from others in the pursuit of private space, and the book as raw material to take to the privy.[11] In Price's history, reading becomes one among many embodied encounters with books, and certainly not the most intimate. The second foundational assumption undergirding Birkets's and Carr's death-of-the-book claims—that reading is beneficial—crumbles under the analysis of Deidre Shauna Lynch, among others, who describes that assumption as "neither inevitable nor historically constant."[12] Victorian fears about the dangerous physical and mental effects young women faced because of their novel reading—the very kind of immersive reading Birkets and Carr praise—are just one familiar point of evidence that reading has never been understood as good for all people.

Assuming that reading is good when it is done in a linear, immersive fashion rather than, say, in a jet-ski-like skimming is also

ahistorical. Peter Stallybrass argues that the major innovation of the book over the scroll was the ability to skip around in it.[13] The book, in other words, was the first random-access reading machine. The third assumption—that books and literature are one and the same—is just historically inaccurate. Reading from cover to cover in a linear fashion, generating a form of literary escapism, is actually a relatively new and still comparatively small part of reading practice.[14] The media scholar Lisa Gitelman has shown that literature, especially the novel, is only a minuscule part of printed materials, even printed reading materials.[15] In other words, it is *not* that reading is at risk or that books are in threat of demise but rather that certain cherished associations about books are being challenged in our new media age.

My second example of rhetoric about the death of the book in this turn-of-the-millennium period comes not from individual pundits but from a national institution. In 2004, the National Endowment for the Arts released the report "Reading at Risk," a document that has since become a cultural touchstone.[16] The report drew from large-scale surveys conducted by the Census Bureau in 2002, and it concluded that people were reading less literature and also that the United States will suffer because of this. "For 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," the NEA's chairman, Dana Gioia, writes in his preface to the report. "Anyone who loves literature or values the cultural, intellectual, and political importance of active and engaged literacy in American society will respond to this report with grave concern."[17] Responses to the report were swift and cutting. Some critics pointed out the flaws in the report's analysis and interpretation—and many even at the time saw the cultural and ideological underpinnings at play in the NEA's ahistorical and universalizing document. The linguist Geoffrey Nunberg, for example, retorts, "But let's get

real. The people who have been lost to novel reading aren't the dévotés of great literature"; what is at risk "isn't the monuments of Western literature, but only the leisure activity that we describe as 'curling up with a good book.'"[18] Nunberg points out that leisure time, and the sensibility that one should use such time to read a novel, is a class privilege and predilection. What is at stake in calling such changes "risks" has less to do with reading per se than with changes to who gets to read (that is, who has leisure time and class privilege).

Other responses to the NEA report took issue with its underlying assumption that a decrease in reading *print* literature means a decrease in reading literature more generally. Matthew Kirschenbaum, writing on behalf of the Electronic Literature Organization, explains, "Electronic media need not put literary reading at risk; in fact once we begin taking screens as well as pages seriously as venues for literature and written expression, organizations such as the NEA may well find that rates of literacy are again on the rise."[19] What is at risk, in Kirschenbaum's account, is not the end of reading or the death of books but changes in reading practices, readerly publics, and the material constitution of literature. New types of literature (including electronic literature, video games, and fan fiction) and new ways of reading (including reading across hyperlinked, networked sites) may threaten older presumptions of what "literature" and "reading" mean but do not mean the end a literary (or literate) republic.

Whether or not one concludes from the NEA report that reading is actually at risk in the digital age, the report represented a signal moment in literary and bookish culture: it articulated a sense of cultural concern for the sea change underway caused by digital media. It was part of the cultural landscape that stimulated bookishness.

Twenty years into the new millennium, some effects of that sea change are becoming apparent. We have new authorial voices accessed through new modalities of content production and distribution. We have new markets and business models for the literary, new modes of review culture, and new platforms to support them. We even have new college courses to address these new forms. Simone Murray writes, "Literary culture has become a complex hybrid of print and digital outlets that exist in a state of mutual dependence."[20] This mutuality upsets the conceptual binary of print versus digital, which provided the foundation for fears about the death of the book around the year 2000. The situation is more complex than "this will kill that," and the concerns it signals are more far-reaching.

Changes in readership (who gets to read and who reads what), changes in literacy (both literacy rates and also qualifications about what counts as "literate"), changes in authority and authorial copyright, and of course changes in class boundaries and relationships entwined with these issues all propel contemporary rhetoric about the death of the book. Whose power might be threatened with changes to the established, print-based infrastructures that support literary values, publishing practices, academic institutions, and more? Who gets to be bookish and concerned about the death of the book in our digital age? Is it the white middle-class elite? Those with capitalized letters after their names, NPR listeners, devotees of independent bookstores, or some other group? A central argument of this book is that bookishness promotes such reflection because it directs our attention beyond hand-wringing over media obsolescence to questions of why we care. The changes the digital era has wrought in our lived experience—our habits, our schedules, our temporalities—shape how we feel about books, so looking at those feelings and their bookish emblems and practices shows us the contours of life in the digital age.[21]

THE BOOK

Thinking about *how* and *why* we care about books in a digital age requires us to think critically and historically about the object, symbol, and signifier at the heart of this issue. Even before Erasmus wrote anxiously about the book's ability to mislead and distract, the book had evolved into *the* symbol in Western culture of knowledge, selfhood, and the sacred. We learn to see ourselves in books and to understand ourselves through interactions with them. We are interpellated into becoming selves and subjects through books.[22] It is thus understandable that, in a digital moment, "As our shelves emptied out, we feared losing our selves."[23] The book is also a symbol of and a tool for producing a particular type of learned subject. "Certainly the object that most pervasively does culture to us, imposes or instills it, or at least did for most of modernity, is the bound print book."[24] The "us" here is important: Western, Judeo-Christian, middle class or at least instilled with ideals of bourgeois mobility. "Books are more than repositories of text; they are icons of knowledge."[25] The book has been used as a tool for learning and also for training the liberal human subject to know herself and know who she wants to become.[26]

For all these reasons, the book has been a powerful tool of Western power and colonization.[27] "The printed book was one of the most effective means of mastery over the whole world."[28] The successful spread of Christianity depended in part upon the book's format and the emergence of an iconography of the book as the word of God.[29] So too did Manifest Destiny and white, Christian power in the United States depend upon practices of alternately denying access to books (especially to people of color) and using them as a rationale or means for conquest. The promise and threat that the book medium can upend the status quo and threaten established power is part of its history. That is why nostalgia for the book in the

age of its supposed obsolescence is distinct from nostalgia for other kinds of older media like vinyl records, typewriters, fountain pens, or nearly anything else.[30] The history of the book is about power and politics, so its contemporary fetishization through bookishness demands analysis in that register.

The book has been used to control other people and also to control one's own sense of self. For centuries, "bookish" has registered Enlightenment ideals about the liberal human subject—an individual in possession of himself, a tabula rasa or white page open to education and social uplift via books.[31] This nearness to books is not always positive. Just recall Emerson's warning in "The American Scholar" (1837) about becoming too bookish: "instead of Man Thinking, we have the bookworm"; and, of course, his beautiful adage, "Books are the best of things, well used; abused, among the worst."[32] Or, consider how "bookish," when associated with young female readers in Victorian England, presumed pernicious improprieties: curling up with a book suggested a form of intellectual and physical masturbation.[33] Or, of course, we can return to arguably the first modern novel and see it as warning about reading too much and being too bookish: Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605 and 1615) follows a reader of romances who gets so carried away by the fiction he reads that he can no longer recognize reality. We use books to develop and project identities. In fact, we learn to do so from books themselves. Think of the moment in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) when we see Gatsby's library of uncut, and therefore unread, books. Gatsby hopes the books will demonstrate his wealth and attest to the success of this upwardly mobile, self-made man, but the narrator suggests to the reader that this idea of bookish power is flawed.

Proclaiming the self through the shelf goes back at least to Buonaccorso da Montemagno's fourteenth-century treatise *Controversia de nobilitate*. As Bonnie Mak shows, this story of a suitor vying

for the hand of his beloved, even though he does not possess the class or capital to compete for her hand, demonstrates how "books can attest to the character of their owner."[34] The suitor owns an impressive personal library, and the collection stands in to function as "a theatrical space of self-exhibition, a monument and a memorial to study."[35] The bookshelves serve as evidence that the noble pursuit of knowledge can offer an alternative to a noble birth. *Controversia de nobilitate* depicts bookshelves as a means of self-fashioning and self-representation, and books become equated with social mobility (as in Gatsby). So, what happens when we own Kindles or Nooks and rent, borrow, or store books in the cloud, rather than own their physical forms? How do we then project our constructed bookish selves out into the world?

A *New York Times* article from 2009 (in the wake of the introduction of the Kindle in 2007) addresses this question. Its provocative and telling title says it all: "With Kindle, Can You Tell It's Proust?" The article builds upon an understanding that books are barometers for self-fashioning and community construction as it blithely suggests the potential fallouts of e-readers:

> The practice of judging people by the covers of their books is old and time-honored. And the Kindle, which looks kind of like a giant white calculator, is the technology equivalent of a plain brown wrapper. If people jettison their book collections or stop buying new volumes, it will grow increasingly hard to form snap opinions about them by wandering casually into their living rooms.[36]

When we can longer judge others by the books they carry, how do we find (and avoid) one another? Like other aspects of contemporary literary culture, this too moves online.

"Shelfies"—the bookish version of the selfie—is a self-portrait in front of one's bookshelves or a photograph of the books on one's shelves. Thousands of shelfies can be found on social media. Just "type in 'shelfie' on Instagram and 582K posts appear," a fact that leads a *Telegraph* journalist to conclude, "The self-obsessed are also shelf-obsessed."[37] Whether bibliographies or aspirational reading lists, shelfies serve to project a bookish self-image out into the digital sphere. Digital self-making has become as versatile a practice as digital reading, and shelfies have emerged as important citation devices for producing bookish identities and communities.[38] The shelfie is just the latest configuration of equating books and selves and of judging others by their (virtual) bookshelves. Its presence registers the importance of the book as a particular type of object: a metonym for the self. The point is that bookish practices of self-construction persist. We need to look to the digital to understand the bookish.

As the example of the shelfie shows, our contemporary relationships to books happen as much through virtual bookshelves as through physical ones. One way of understanding how and why bookishness happens now is to look at the most famous example of a digital bookshelf. In 2010, Apple launched iBooks, and the interface design for this tablet-based program is a now-iconic bookshelf (see figure 1.1). This bookish design exemplifies bookishness because it enables a feeling of nearness to books where physical books and bookshelves do not exist. Let us take a quick look at the iBook interface to see what it can tell us about why bookishness is a distinctly twenty-first-century phenomenon.

The virtual bookshelf displays books with their covers, rather than spines, facing outward. This is a move that brick-and-mortar bookstores are now mimicking, a fact that reminds us that old and new media operate in complex loops of recursive influence rather

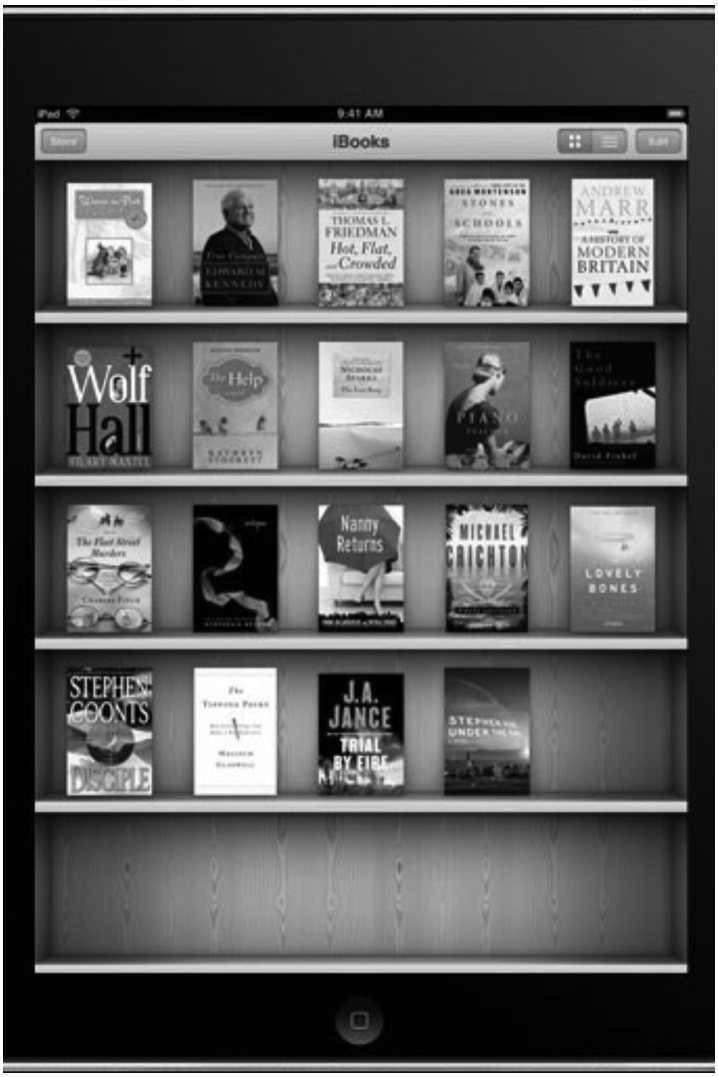

FIGURE 1.1 Apple iBook app interface.

Source: https://www.the-ebook-reader.com/ibooks.html.

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than in a linear "this will kill that" model.[39] Henry Petroski has shown how changes in bookshelf design expose more than just the evolution of a particular storage technology: they signal changes in cultural values about knowledge and power. When books were first arranged in rows on shelves, in the Middle Ages, they were placed with the spines turned inward. Books were then handmade and extremely precious; they had clasps to keep the parchment pages from wrinkling and were chained to shelves to keep the books from disappearing.[40] This was also far before public libraries, so each library had its own locating system, and the select patrons of these libraries knew the content and the locating system. When innovations in printing technologies expanded book production, libraries became public, and literacy rates swelled; bookshelves registered the changes. For example, the Dewey Decimal System (c. 1876 in the United States) imprinted bibliographic data on the book's spine, so that part of the book was most useful to face the reader/user. The iBook interface presents and organizes books not through the traditions of card catalogues and standard bibliographies (with the text-based content of title, author, publisher, date, etc.) but instead around book cover art. The strategy amplifies the books' visual ability to offer rich symbols for self-fashioning and display.

The highly visual fact of the iBook interface presumes certain technological conditions. High-speed internet access is necessary for multimedia content to flow. So too does the iBook user need certain proprietary hardware and software as well as a lot of computer memory to make the artful book covers appear clearly and instantaneously on the reading device. The cover-facing appearance of books on the iBook's remediated bookshelf indexes tremendous technological changes in digital history over the last twenty years. Recall that graphical browsers didn't emerge until around 1993, so the web at the time of Birkets's lament was text based. Gone are those text- and hypertext-based days of the 1990s. They

have been replaced by high-resolution imagery and multimedia content, and the iBook's bookish interface is a result. The now-iconic iBook bookshelf suggests that much has changed in the last few decades in how digital technologies operate and how they mediate our relationship to books. What remains present, however, is the fact that the imagery of the book is a kind of class marker and means of social infrastructure. Long gone are medieval libraries with spines facing inward, but the iBook shelf also presumes certain kinds of class privilege and (digital) literacies for the use of its books.

In the realm of big, digital data and highly visual interfaces, the symbol and vocabulary of the book still reigns. Though e-readers could have developed in multiple ways, they adopted the visual and linguistic semiotics of the codex.[41] Just think of how strange but also strangely familiar is the sound of a digital page turning on a tablet.[42] And, as bookishness demonstrates, books are everywhere in digital culture—as remediated content online, mimicked in the codexical design of laptops and e-readers that open to virtual "pages," and even in bookish accoutrements for digital devices such as laptop covers and cell-phone holders. It is now commonplace to find the presence of the book where it is not actually physically present. The example of the iBook interface demonstrates this fact of contemporary culture and references a central aspect of bookishness: the desire to have books face us even if they are only virtually there.

"To understand books is to understand the act of looking that transpires between us and them."[43] Andrew Piper reminds us that the physical presence of books, their *thereness*, matters to our understanding to them, historically and even today in our contemporary, digital age. "It is this thereness that is both essential for understanding the medium of the book (that books exist as finite objects in the world) and also for reminding us that we cannot

think about our electronic future without contending with its antecedent, the bookish past."[44] While early book eulogists like Birkets and Carr lamented an idea of losing bookish "depth," what they perhaps were speaking of was actually a particular kind of physical contact: a "thereness" we experience as depth because it's so deep within the constitution of ourselves. What happens when books don't face us anymore, when the mediating interface of the computer screen greets us more often than the book's physicality? The iBook interface is one answer. The following chapters explore a vast array of other ways that bookishness allows books to remain part of our digital lives and the objects of our affection.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

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1. HOW AND NOW BOOKISHNESS

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2. Qtd. in Ann M. Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information Before the Modern Age* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 55.

3. See Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).
4. Leah Price, "Dead Again," *New York Times Book Review*, August 10, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/12/books/review/the-death-of-the-book-through-the-ages.html. Also see her recent book, *What We Talk About When We Talk About Books* (New York: Basic Books, 2019).
5. Priscilla Coit Murphy identifies three theories that constitute writing about the death of the book: that "media are rivals of each other," that "a new medium so affects an existing one that the two converge to meet all prior purposes and perhaps a few new ones," and that "new media—following a period of shifting and settling—are thought to take on complementary functions with respect to other media." See Priscilla Coit Murphy, "Books Are Dead, Long Live Books," in *Rethinking Media Change: The Aesthetics of Transition*, ed. David Thornburn and Henry Jenkins (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003): 90–91. The death of the book genre is what the media scholar Erkki Huhtamo describes as a cultural topos, a central feature of media archaeology: "Cultural desires are expressed by being embedded them within topoi." Erkki Huhtamo, "Dismantling the Fairy Engine: Media Archaeology as Topos Study," in *Media Archaeology: Approaches, Applications, and Implications*, ed. Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 28.
6. Nicolas Carr's essay caught like wildfire and became the cornerstone of his book *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* (New York: Norton, 2010).
7. Sven Birkets, *The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in the Electronic Age* (New York: Faber and Faber, 1994), 228.
8. Nicolas Carr, "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" *The Atlantic*, July/August 2008, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/07/is-google-making-us-stupid/306868/.
9. See Frederic Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981).
10. Ted Striphas smartly states, "In the end, claims about the decline of books and book culture probably tells [*sic*] us more about the gaps in book history that need filling or about popular culture's proclivities toward crisis discourse than it does about the health of books in the

twentieth and twenty-first centuries." Ted Striphas, *The Late Age of Print: Everyday Book Culture from Consumerism to Control* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 188.

11. Leah Price, *How to Do Things with Books in Victorian England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).
12. Deidre Shauna Lynch, "Canons' Clockwork: Novels for Everyday Use," in *Bookish Histories: Books, Literature, and Commercial Modernity, 1700–1900*, ed. Ina Ferris and Paul Keen (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 90.
13. Peter Stallybrass argues, "To imagine continuous reading as the norm in reading a book is radically reactionary: it is to read a codex as if it was a scroll, from beginning to end." Peter Stallybrass, "Books and Scrolls: Navigating the Bible," in *Books and Readers in Early Modern England*, ed. Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Saur (State College: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 48.
14. "As cultivated by the nineteenth-century novel, cover-to-cover escapism of this sort is an anomaly in the long history of reading." Matthew Brown, "Undisciplined Reading: Finding Surprise in How We Read," *Common-Place* 8, no. 1 (October 2007), http://common-place.org/book/undisciplined-reading/.
15. See Lisa Gitelman, *Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).
16. National Endowment for the Arts, "Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America," June 2004, https://www.arts.gov/publications/reading-risk-survey-literary-reading-america-0.
17. Dana Gioia, preface to "Reading at Risk," National Endowment for the Arts, vii.
18. See Geoffrey Nunberg, "In Unread America," commentary for *Fresh Air*, December 8, 2004, http://people.ischool.berkeley.edu/~nunberg/curling.html. Nunberg provides a short history of the phrase "curling up with a good book," which is, of course, fraught with gendered and class connotations.
19. Matthew Kirschenbaum, "Reading at Risk: A Response," MGK: Matthew G. Kirschenbaum's Blog, July 21, 2004.
20. Simone Murray, *The Digital Literary Sphere: Reading, Writing, and Selling Books in the Internet Era* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018), 140.

21. On these changes, see Price, *What We Talk About When We Talk About Books*, where she writes, "When we mourn the book, we're really mourning the death of those in-between moments (waiting in line, riding a bus)" (8). Also see Jason Farman's examination of waiting as a lost art in a digital age, *Delayed Response: The Art of Waiting from the Ancient to the Instant World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018): "Our time is calibrated to a notion of efficiency that, in a single gesture, both demonizes waiting and preys on it as the opportune moment to occupy our attention" (16).
22. Here I am thinking of Michel Foucault's work illuminating the discursive tools used for governmental and societal control, of which the book is certainly one. For example, see *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (1969; New York: Pantheon, 1972).
23. Price, *What We Talk About When We Talk About Books*, 3.
24. Garrett Stewart, *Bookwork: Medium to Object to Concept to Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 67.
25. Florian Brody, "The Medium Is the Memory," in *The Digital Dialectic: New Essays on New Media*, ed. Peter Lunenfeld (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 135.
26. Patricia Crain has identified "a codicology of the modern self" emerging through book-based synecdoche in early American children's primers. "These two notions of bookness, as they relate to the codex form, are long-lived: the book as a sacred or quasi-sacred object and the book as a container for something that one must go to the book to acquire in order to fill the heart—or, in a sense, to have a heart at all, to become, that is, a self" (155). Patricia Crain, "Reading Childishly? A Codicology of the Modern Self," in *Comparative Textual Media: Transforming the Humanities in the Postprint Era*, ed. N. Katherine Hayles and Jessica Pressman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).
27. Scholarship on the relationship between books and hegemonic cultural values (Western, white, male, and class privilege) is long and varied, from D. F. McKenzie's classic *The Sociology of a Text: Oral Culture, Literacy, and Print in Early New Zealand: The Treaty of Waitang* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1985) to work on the history of the novel as a genre reflecting bourgeois identity and values, such as

Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

28. Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450–1800*, trans. David Gerard (1958, 1976; New York: Verso, 2000), 11.
29. See Stallybrass, "Books and Scrolls," 42–79.
30. "In an era in which even digital album sales have fallen, vinyl has bucked the trend. In 2014, record sales grew by more than 50% to hit more than a million, the highest since 1996—and the upward curve has continued in 2015." Lee Barron, "Why Vinyl Has Made a Comeback," *Newsweek*, April 18, 2015.
31. For example, John Locke and Sigmund Freud both describe, and thereby inscribe, an understanding of cognition (Locke) and consciousness (Freud) into Western thought through bookish metaphors: Locke's concept of the human mind as a blank slate or white page open to education and Freud's image of the mystic writing pad.
32. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar," in *Emerson: Essays and Poems*, 1st college ed. (New York: Library of America, 1996), 57.
33. See Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader, 1837–1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).
34. Bonnie Mak, *How the Book Matters* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 47.
35. Mak, *How the Book Matters*, 53.
36. Joanne Kaufman, "With Kindle, Can You Tell It's Proust?," *New York Times*, April 24, 2009.
37. Talib Choudhry, "The Rise of the Shelfie: How Good Looking Is Your Book Case?," *Telegraph*, February 2, 2017.
38. The Australian artist Victoria Reichelt remediates the shelfie by backward-designing it into painted portraits of people based on their bookshelves; see her *Bibliomania: The Bookshelf Portrait Project* (2008), http://www.victoriareichelt.com/. The literary scholar Garrett Stewart traces the history of a genre of portraiture that could be the elder sibling to the contemporary shelfie: paintings of individuals immersed in reading books, which he identifies as "the scene of reading." Garrett Stewart, *The Look of Reading: Book, Painting, Text* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

39. See Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999); and N. Katherine Hayles, "Intermediation: From Page to Screen," in *Electronic Literature: New Horizons for the Literary* (South Bend, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2008), which updates the concept of "remediation."
40. Henry Petroski, *The Book on the Bookshelf* (New York: Vintage, 1999), 94.
41. See Johanna Drucker, "The Virtual Codex from Page Space to E-Space," in *A Companion to Digital Literary Studies*, ed. R. Siemens and S. Schreibman (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), doi:10.1002/9781405177504.ch11.
42. On "skeuomorph," see N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), esp. chap. 1.
43. Andrew Piper, *Book Was There: Reading in Electronic Times* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 26. Henry Sussman, *Around the Book: Systems and Literacy* (Fordham University Press, 2011), 2, similarly suggests, "There is something irreducibly tactile in our relation to the book"; "It confronts us at eye-level. It addresses us face-to-face."
44. Piper, *Book Was There*, ix.

2. SHELTER

1. Jennifer Egan, *The Keep* (New York: Knopf, 2006), 47.
2. Egan, *The Keep*, 40, 26.
3. Egan, *The Keep*, 246.
4. Egan, *The Keep*, 255, 254.
5. Jess Walter, *The Zero* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 3.
6. Walter, *The Zero*, 306, 9, 97.
7. Walter, *The Zero*, 97, 19.
8. See Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), 91.
9. Jonathan Safran Foer, *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2005), 325.
10. I want to take the space of the page to express gratitude to my friend and former colleague Sam See, who suggested this passage in Foer's novel as an example of bookishness at this project's very early stages. He was a dear friend, and I miss him.