

Bibliotekarstudentens nettleksikon om litteratur og medier

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Ekstensiv lesing

Omfattende og rask lesing av store mengder tekster/bøker for å få kunnskaper, underholdes m.m., dvs. en “konsumerende” lesing (i motsetning til intensiv lesing, som er langsom, repeterende og gjelder få, spesielt utvalgte tekster/bøker).

Lesing kan være en “profan” handling, altså forbundet med verdslige interesser, i motsetning til “sakral” (Plaul 1983 s. 42). I middelalderen oppstod det en rekke universiteter i Europa. Ved disse institusjonene måtte professorer og studenter lese mye og raskt (Quinsat 1990 s. 267). Ekstensiv lesing ble først vanlig i universitetsmiljøer.

Den ekstensive lese måten slo igjennom blant borgerskapet i Europa i årene mellom 1750 og 1850 (Chartier 2003 s. 92). Tekstene blir lest raskere enn i tidligere perioder, lest innenat av hvert enkelt individ (eller ved høytlesing i grupper), mindre ærbødig og ikke som del av et fromhetsønske. Det leses mye, og nærmest på en “likeglad” eller respektløs måte sammenlignet med den intensive lese måten. Trykte tekster blir stadig vanligere og billigere fra 1700-tallet, og disse tekstene leses/brukes i økt tempo. Det skjer et “secular change as a revolutionary transition from ‘intensive’ to ‘extensive’ reading” (Wittmann 1999 s. 285).

“For the first time the bourgeoisie now had at its disposal enough time and purchasing power for reading. Reading acquired an emancipatory function, and became a productive social force: it expanded one’s moral and intellectual horizon. It made of the reader a useful member of society, allowed him to command his range of duties better, and was even an aid to his social career. The printed word became the vehicle of bourgeois culture.” (Wittmann 1999 s. 287-288) “Quiet and relaxation while reading were now regarded as bourgeois virtues and as the prerequisite for aesthetic appreciation. By no longer putting himself at the mercy of the text, the reader remained master of himself and consequently free to interact with the text in a controlled way.” (Wittmann 1999 s. 298)

Leseren “konsumerer” mye lesestoff, ofte av forskjellig slag. Det leses raskt og “grådig” (Cavallo og Chartier 2001 s. 35). Den ekstensive leser kjennetegnes ofte

av kritisk sans, tvilrådighet og mistenksomhet (eller direkte respektløshet). Det dreier seg om en sammenlignende og konfronterende måte å lese på (Cavallo og Chartier 2001 s. 41). Leseren kan trekke ut sitater og eksempler for å bruke i ulike sammenhenger, og på andre måter bruke tekstene til egen, verdslig dannelse.

Bokhistorikeren Robert Darnton skriver, basert på en tysk forsker: “De som følger Rolf Engelsing’s ideer, hevder gjerne at lesevanene ble forvandlet på slutten av 1700-tallet. Før denne “Leserevolution” pleide lesere å arbeide seg møysommelig gjennom et lite antall tekster, særlig Bibelen, igjen og igjen. Etterpå raste de gjennom all slags materiale, på jakt etter underholdning snarere enn oppbyggelse. Forandringen fra intensiv til ekstensiv lesning falt sammen med en desakralisering av det trykte ord. Verden begynte å bli overfylt av lesestoff, og tekster ble etter hvert behandlet som varer man kunne kassere, som gårsdagens avis.” (Darnton sitert fra Rem 2003 s. 64) Forskning viser imidlertid også at mange lesere fortsatte (og fortsetter) å praktisere intensiv lesing, f.eks. med almanakker og rådgivingsbøker. Og “ ‘intensive’, repetitive reading could be a ritual devoid of meaning, while ‘extensive’ reading could be performed with passionate intensity” (Wittmann 1999 s. 286).

John Brewers kapittel i *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England* (1996; redigert av Raven, Small og Tadmor) “refutes the grand claims of a ‘reading revolution’ (the shift from the intensive reading of a few books, to the extensive reading of many books), proposed by theorists such as Rolf Engelsing, by demonstrating that Larpent [britiske Anna Larpent levde i årene 1758-1832 og skrev dagbok gjennom store deler av sitt liv] engaged in both types of reading, and many others besides (such as reading aloud).” (Towheed, Crone og Halsey 2011 s. 3)

“Recovering the history of reading is Darnton’s goal, and he sees both macro- and microanalysis as useful approaches, the former being the study of conditions across broad geographic and temporal spaces [...] One microanalytic book historian, Rolf Engelsing, has proposed a general model, suggesting that a *Leserevolution* (“reading revolution”) took place at the end of the eighteenth century (165), which aligns with the aforementioned macroanalytical claims. Engelsing argues that people read “intensively” before about 1750, rereading the same few books over and over. By 1800, though, reading became more “extensive,” as individuals read a much wider array of materials, constantly moving on to new items. Darnton believes Engelsing’s thesis is too one-directional, but he admits the possibility that “a fundamental shift in the nature of reading took place at the end of the eighteenth century” (167). It might not have been a revolution, but it was the end of the “Old Regime” (167).” (http://www.ualberta.ca/~dmiall/Empirical_Studies/Darnton_1990.htm; lesedato 03.06.16)

“German historian Rolf Engelsing has identified a *Leserevolution*, or reading revolution, in the second half of the eighteenth century. A new breed of avid reader

emerged. [...] In Rolf Engelsing's account, "extensive" reading came at a high cost. According to Engelsing, in their pursuit of commodified amusement, people began to read a text only once before racing to the latest work. They also read more critically as texts lost their privileged status of sacredness and authority. In Engelsing's anxiety about the expansion of extensive reading and the desacralization of the printed word, we can see some familiar oppositional pairs that reappear in other context: deep reading versus superficial reading; active engagement with a central canonical text versus passive consumption of a stream of ephemeral materials whose apparent novelty conceals the fact that they are essentially the same commodified and repeated product" (Ross, McKechnie og Rothbauer 2006 s. 30-31).

"Middle-class intellectuals started to practise a new, extensive form of reading that was fostered in particular by the newssheets. Education was a desirable acquisition, and they had the money for books and time to read them. In the eighteenth century small, unbound books were also affordable for lower social classes. Towards the end of the century a decisive change took place in publishing and among the cultivated book-reading public. Fashions such as reading *al fresco* [dvs. utendørs] or the 'Werther fever' (after Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* published in 1774) gripped Vienna. Women in particular changed their reading habits: in edifying weeklies and almanacs they were given access to literature and developed a flourishing culture of correspondence. Innovations such as smaller book formats or modern reading furniture facilitated reading. The proportion of specialized religious, legal and medical literature diminished. Instead, the numbers of publications in the fields of philosophy, pedagogy, natural sciences and economics rose as a result of interest from trade and commerce and from the diversification of scientific disciplines and institutions and the book production associated with this. Novels were the favourite reading matter of the late eighteenth century. The new reading public consisted predominantly of members of the propertied and educated middle classes but also included labourers and artisans. The hunger for reading material was satisfied in particular by lending libraries. The *Cabinet littéraire de Vienne* owned by Thomas von Trattner carried more than 2,000 works in French. However, all lending libraries were banned in Austria between 1799 and 1811. Nonetheless, in coffee houses and even in some beer taverns pamphlets and newspapers were readily available." (Julia Teresa Friehs i <http://www.habsburger.net/en/chapter/i-want-more-revolution-reading-eighteenth-century>; lesedato 20.05.16)

Målet for ekstensiv lesingen er kunnskaper, opplevelser og dannelse. Lesingen skal være nyttig (Cavallo og Chartier 2001 s. 140). Leseren har en encyklopedisk innstilling til sakprosaetekster (Cavallo og Chartier 2001 s. 151) ved at hver tekst fungerer som en brikke som brukes til å fylle et tentativt helhetsbilde. Ekstensiv lesing kan være mer konsulterende enn faktisk gjennomlesing (Barbier 2000 s. 177), og forutsetter stor tilgang på bøker, f.eks. gjennom lån i leiebibliotek fra og med 1700-tallet.

Byborgere (og noen av deres tjenere) på 1700-tallet “enjoyed the necessary preconditions for reading: namely, that precious resource, light, together with brief times for reading throughout the day, and often when there were free meals and lodging, a small budget for a lending library too. By emulating the ruling class, the workers also acquired its fashionable reading habits, in particular its extensive consumption of *belles-lettres*. In the city the printed word was a natural component part of daily urban life: posters on houses, public notices on walls, town criers and market criers with their declarations, the ubiquitous newspapers in the smoke rooms and taverns. In the progressive England of 1740, Richardson’s *Pamela* [en brevroman som ble en bestselger; hovedpersonen er tjenestejenta Pamela] was already regarded as the ‘culture-heroine of a very powerful sisterhood of literate and leisured waiting-maids’. After an interval of several decades, this literary emancipation came about in Germany as well.” (Wittmann 1999 s. 291)

“In 1781 a Viennese author noted a true passion for *belles-lettres* among chambermaids: ‘Not satisfied with this alone, they also play the part of sentimental souls, demand the right to *belles-lettres*, read comedies, novels and poems conscientiously, and learn entire scenes, passages or verses off by heart, and even argue about the sorrows of young Werther.’ These reading tastes could no longer be disciplined by a moralizing work like the *Little Book of Morals for the People* (Lavater, 1773). Long hours of idleness on guard duty encouraged reading in the urban army, as one observer lamented in 1780: ‘Even the musketeers in the large towns have library books brought to them at the main guardroom.’ Apart from novels, the preferred reading materials in the garrisons were racy stories and pamphlets.” (Towheed, Crone og Halsey 2011 s. 41-42) Johann Kaspar Lavater var en sveitsisk teolog og filosof.

I boka *Appell til min nasjon: Om den tyske litteraturs pest* (1795) advarte tyskeren Johann Georg Heinzmann mot vanelesing som går over i eksess. Om den franske hovedstaden skrev han: “I Paris leser alle [...] Alle slags folk – og spesielt kvinnene – har en bok i lomma. Man leser i vogner, på promenade, på teatret mellom aktene, på kafé, i badet. I butikkene leser både kvinnene, barna, de ansatte og lærlingene. På søndager leser folk sittende foran portene sine; tjenerne leser på de bakerste benkene, kuskene på setene sine, soldatene når de går på vakt ...” (siteret fra Cavallo og Chartier 2001 s. 356)

I sin epistel nr. 3 skrev Ludvig Holberg at det på 1700-tallet skrives “fleere Bøger i et Aar, end fordem udi 10 eller 20” og “det er vanskelig at hitte paa Materier, som af andre forhen ikke ere udførte, saa maa de gamle Sager omkaages, og støbes i anden Form”. Rundt år 1800 ble det i Tyskland i noen kretser reist kritikk mot den omfattende lesingen: Altfor omfattende lesing fratår verkene deres verdighet (“Würde”) som autoriteter. Spesielt var det farlig for kvinner i drive ekstensiv lesing, fordi kvinnene var “de som har langt flere ledige timer til tidsfordriv enn mennene, og det er kvinnene som med sin livligere ånd og sterkere fantasi kun

sjelden og med ulyst dveler ved alvorlige ting” (anonym kilde fra 1795, sitert fra Kittler 1987 s. 148).

Forskeren Reinhard Wittmann har funnet en beskrivelse av “a day described by Luise Mejer in 1784, in a letter to her friend Heinrich Christian Boie. She worked as a lady’s companion at Tremsbüttel in Holstein, at the residence of the Countess of Stolberg, whose husband and brother-in-law were successful writers: “Breakfast is at ten o’clock. Then Stolberg reads out a chapter from the Bible, and a song from Klopstock’s *Lieder*. Everyone retires to his or her bedroom. Then I dip into the *Spectator* or *Physiognomy*, and a few books the Countess has given me. She comes downstairs while Lotte translates, and I spend an hour reading her Lavater’s *Pontius Pilate*. While she has her Latin lesson, I copy for her or read myself until dinner is served. After dinner and coffee, Fritz reads from the *Lebensläufen*, then Lotte comes downstairs and I read Milton with her for an hour. Then we go back upstairs and I read to the Count and Countess from Plutarch until teatime at around nine o’clock. After tea Stolberg reads a chapter from the Bible and one of Klopstock’s *Lieder*, then it’s ‘goodnight’.” Luise Mejer assessed this excessive kind of reading, which was both intensive and extensive in character, as follows: ‘Here people are stuffed with reading matter in the same way that geese are stuffed with noodles.’ ” (Towheed, Crone og Halsey 2011 s. 45)

“Too Much to Read: Intensive versus Extensive Reading. Suppose you own seven pairs of shoes. To use them equally, you wear each pair fifty-two times a year. Now say you possess 365 sets of shoes. (Imelda Marcos, wife of a disgraced president of the Philippines, is reputed to have accumulated well over 1000.) If you wear one each day, at the end of the year, you have only managed to use each pair once. The same principle applies to information. As Ann Blair explains in *Too Much to Know* [2010], early modern England experienced an explosion of new information and knowledge. Forays into science, geographic exploration, and discoveries of other cultures generated a wellspring of data – and books. Intellectuals of the time devised strategies for making their way through the deluge, including creating encyclopedias and compendia of selections. But the most obvious solution was, Don’t read everything. As Francis Bacon famously wrote in his 1625 essay “Of Studies,” Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested: that is, some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read, but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention.” (Naomi S. Baron i http://www.american.edu/ctrl/upload/Does_Mobile_Matter.pdf; lesedato 18.04.16)

“The “multitude of books” was a subject of wonder and anxiety for authors who reflected on the scholarly condition in the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. In the preface to his massive project of cataloguing all known books in the *Bibliotheca univeralis* (1545) Conrad Gesner complained of that “confusing and harmful abundance of books,” a problem which he called on kings and princes and the learned to solve. By 1685 the situation seemed absolutely dire to Adrien

Baillet, who warned: “We have reason to fear that the multitude of books which grows every day in a prodigious fashion will make the following centuries fall into a state as barbarous as that of the centuries that followed the fall of the Roman Empire. Unless we try to prevent this danger by separating those books which we must throw out or leave in oblivion from those which one should save and within the latter between what is useful and what is not.” ” (Blair 2003)

“Over time, the challenge of “too much to read” increased. By the mid-eighteenth century, western Europe saw the rise of what came to be known as print culture. The literate population expanded, as did book production. About 400 different titles were published in England between 1500-1510. By 1790, that figure had risen to about 60,000. [...] Between 1750 and 1770, about 600 different novels were published. That number rose to about 1,400 by 1770-1780. Periodical literature was also expanding. [...] Sales of newspapers in England surged. England’s first daily paper, the *Daily Courant*, appeared in 1702. Estimated sales in 1704 were 43,000 copies per week. By 1753, these numbers rose to 23,673 copies per day. [...] newspaper production and readership soared. Even authors complained, as when Charles Lamb wrote in 1825 (in “Readers Against the Grain”), “No reading can keep pace with the writing of this age.” ” (Naomi S. Baron i http://www.american.edu/ctrl/upload/Does_Mobile_Matter.pdf; lesedato 27.04.16)

“By 1800 men were reading “extensively”. They read all kinds of material, especially periodicals and newspapers, and read it only once, then raced on to the next item. David Hall suggests a similar transition occurred in America. Even if you were going to read extensively – reading many things but only once – you still needed strategies for sorting through the mountain of material. One tack was to read less of each work. This solution could be accomplished by reading either an abridgment of the original or an anthologized selection. Early novels were ideal for abridgment. Not surprisingly, [Samuel] Richardson’s second novel, *Clarissa* (which contained close to a million words), appeared in abridged form soon after the original was published in 1748. Abridgement (or condensation, which often entails some rewriting of the original) continues to this day, in forms ranging from Reader’s Digest to SparkNotes. The latter decades of the eighteenth century saw a proliferation of anthologies.” (Naomi S. Baron i http://www.american.edu/ctrl/upload/Does_Mobile_Matter.pdf; lesedato 24.08.16)

“By the eighteenth century we have a well-studied case in point with Samuel Johnson who, in addition to reporting that he “read like a Turk by tearing the heart out of a book,” when lying sleepless in bed, also used distinct terms to refer to at least four different ways of reading: “hard study” (which included taking notes), “perusal” (punctual consultation), “curious reading” (engrossed in a novel) and “mere reading” (browsing, as in journals). [...] one finds similar and quite explicit distinctions made by Francis Bacon in his *Essay* “Of Studies” (1612): “Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested;

that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention.” ” (Blair 2003)

Ekstensiv lesing dominerer i det 21. århundre, og er spesielt vanlig med digitale tekster som skimleses eller leses kun raskt én gang. “Several digital trends do suggest that digital screens encourage one-off reading. Start with power browsing. Digital devices are commonly used for surfing the web – moving from site to site without lingering to read entire pages. It’s hardly surprising that readers adopt similar patterns when confronted with extended prose. [...] A third instance of digital media encouraging one-off reading is one-off reading by default, since many web pages don’t permit copying or printing. [...] We also need to ask whether digital devices themselves – especially mobile ones – are associated with one-off reading because digital platforms are well-suited to text you don’t intend to return to. If you plan to read a book more than once, buy a physical copy. If once is enough, a virtual copy will do.” (Naomi S. Baron i http://www.american.edu/ctrl/upload/Does_Mobile_Matter.pdf; lesedato 24.08.16)

“The sources of one-off reading in contemporary culture are many. The trend away from intensive (multiple) reading to extensive (one-off) reading traces back several centuries. Economic factors are also relevant. If goods are inexpensive (like paperbacks or eBooks), we might purchase more than we end up reading (much as a lot of us don’t use all the other products we buy). When students rent or sell back textbooks, reading necessarily becomes one-off. Reading patterns – and pedagogical directions – also evolve. In the late-nineteenth century, western Europe and North American were awash in large readerships consuming hefty tomes. Today, in-depth reading has waned, and educational emphasis is shifting from knowing to knowing how to locate information. Mobile technology is tailor-made for the contemporary reading milieu. While mobile devices are hardly the root of one-off reading, their very portability encourages it. Storing multiple volumes – and downloading or connecting to new text – is easy. So is reading snippets at a time.” (Naomi S. Baron i http://www.american.edu/ctrl/upload/Does_Mobile_Matter.pdf; lesedato 07.06.16)

Begrepet “ekstensiv lesing” brukes også om hurtiglesing og trening i rask lesing i pedagogisk sammenheng. “In everyday life, to read extensively means to read widely and in quantity. In the early part of this century [1900-tallet], extensive reading took on a special meaning in the context of teaching modern languages. Pioneers such as Harold Palmer in Britain and Michael West in India worked out the theory and practice of extensive reading as an approach to foreign language teaching in general, and to the teaching of foreign language reading in particular. Palmer chose the term extensive reading to distinguish it from intensive reading (1968, p. 137; 1964, p. 113). The dichotomy is still a useful one. [...] Extensive reading, in contrast, is generally associated with reading large amounts with the aim of getting an overall understanding of the material. Readers are more concerned with the meaning of the text than the meaning of individual words or

sentences. Palmer, incidentally, saw the pedagogic value of both types of reading. [...] In general terms, reading is no different from other learned human abilities such as driving, cooking, playing golf, or riding a bicycle: the more you do it, the more fluent and skillful you become.” (Julian Bamford og Richard R. Day i http://jalt-publications.org/old_tlt/files/97/may/extensive.html; lesedato 24.05.16)

“Extensive reading is reading as much as possible, for your own pleasure, at a difficulty level at which you can read smoothly and quickly without looking up words or translating to English as you go. In other words, instead of spending a half hour decoding a tiny part of one book (also known as intensive reading), you read many simpler books that are at or slightly below the level at which you read fluently. [...]

Start with stories that are well below your fluent reading level, and while reading, follow these principles:

1. Don't look up words in the dictionary.
2. Skip over parts you don't understand.
3. If you aren't enjoying one book, toss it aside and get another.

[...] Stopping to look up a word, even if it doesn't take you very long, breaks your concentration, but if you read many basic books without a dictionary, you gain the ability to figure out words from context almost instantly and read quickly.” (<http://joechip.net/extensivereading/what-is-extensive-reading/>; lesedato 23.05.16)

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