

Ways of Reading

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The process of reading any configurative or "ergodic" form of literature invites the reader to first explore the ludic challenges and pleasures of operating and traversing the text in a hyperattentive and experimental fashion before reading more deeply. The reader of Julio Cortazar's *Hopscotch* must decide which of the two recommended reading orders to pursue, and whether or not to consider the chapters which the author labels "expendable." The reader of Milorad Pavic's *Dictionary of the Khazars* must devise a strategy for moving through the cross-referenced web of encyclopedic fragments. The reader of David Markson's *Wittgenstein's Mistress* or *Reader's Block* must straddle between competing desires to attend to the nuggets of trivia of which those two books are largely composed or to concentrate on the leitmotifs which weave them into a tapestry of coherent psychological narrative. **In each of these print novels, the reader must first puzzle over the rules of operation of the text itself, negotiate the formal "novelty" of the novel, play with the various pieces, and fiddle with the switches, before arriving at an impression of how the jigsaw puzzle might together, how the text-machine may run. Only after this exploratory stage is the type of contemplative or interpretive reading we associate with deep attention possible.** (§13 – emphasis added)

Rettberg, Scott. "Communitizing Electronic Literature." *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 3:2 (Spring 2009).

<<http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/3/2/000046.html>>