Ways of Reading

Radial Reading

The activity of reading regularly transcends its own ocular physical bases, which means that readers leave the book in order to acquire more information about the book (i.e., look up word in dictionary or footnote in back). This allows the reader to interact with the book, text, story, etc., through this acquisition of knowledge. The reader makes and re-makes the knowledge produced by the text through this continual knowledge acquisition, yet the reader never actually leaves the text. It stays with her even while consulting other knowledge. This creates a plasticity to the text that is unique according to each reader. [This theory is an early precursor to Hypertextual and Digital Studies because it sounds like a print version of hyperlinking.]

Paraphrased from:
McGann, Jerome. "How to Read a Book." *The Textual Condition*. Princeton: Princeton
   UP, 1991. 119.

Ergodic Reading

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>