



Reading as a Philosophical Practice

By Robert Piercey

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Why reading matters so much to so many people because reading is a philosophical activity

Reading as a Philosophical Practice asks why reading—everyday reading for pleasure—matters so profoundly to so many people. Its answer is that reading is an implicitly philosophical activity. To passionate readers, it is a way of working through, and taking a stand on, certain fundamental questions about who and what we are, how we should live, and how we relate to other things. The book examines the lessons that the activity of reading seems to teach about selfhood, morality and ontology, and it tries to clarify the sometimes paradoxical claims that serious readers have made about it. To do so, it proposes an original theoretical framework based on Virginia Woolf's notion of the common reader and Alasdair MacIntyre's conception of practice. It also asks whether reading can continue to play this role as paper is replaced by electronic screens.

Readership

The primary audience consists of scholars who study reading in disciplines as diverse as philosophy, English literature, comparative literature, education, media studies, and cultural studies. A secondary audience might consist of non-academics who read books about books, find reading deeply meaningful, and would like to reflect on why.

Contents

Acknowledgements; 1. Philosophizing about Reading: The Very Idea; 2. The Reading Self; 3. The Reading Life; 4. Ethics from Reading?; 5. Ethics of Reading?; 6. Reading Things; 7. The Future of the Common Reader; Notes; Bibliography; Index.

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Robert Piercey is Professor of Philosophy at Champion College, University of Regina, Canada. He is the author of *The Uses of the Past From Heidegger to Rorty* and *The Crisis in Continental Philosophy*, and editor of *Philosophy in Review*.

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