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6 Bookshelves create a cozy atmosphere

Affective and emotional materiality in bookreading practices

Anna Kajander

> After I had moved and placed all the books on the bookshelf, I just sat on the floor for a while, admiring them, enjoying their presence like a mother whose children had finally come home, all at the same time.[1]
>
> Books create a sense of safety, but they also convey a feeling of sophistication.[2]

On the one hand, books can play an important part in the process of building a cozy atmosphere in a new home. On the other hand, they can also be frustrating and annoying objects when one is packing and moving. Just recently, I visited a couple when they were just about to move to their new apartment. Their old living room was full of packed boxes, and one of them said that almost half of the boxes were full of books. She did not understand why they had to have so many of them. In her opinion, one did not need to keep books after they were read. She wanted to choose some and get rid of the rest because the bookshelf took up such a huge space in their living room. However, she also seemed to know how much the books meant to her partner and accepted the fact that the big bookshelf would also decorate their next living room. She just did not seem to quite understand the importance.

Moving with books is a good example of how books as material objects divide opinions and give meanings. Some people treasure books, as does the respondent in the quote at the beginning of this chapter. They want to own and keep books and are ready to move them from one home to another, even if it takes some extra effort. There are also readers who feel that books are for reading. Once you are finished with a book, you might as well just throw it away. The wish to collect books and place them on the bookshelves of a home raises some questions: What is it that bookshelves actually do? How do they affect those who want to keep books as a concrete, visible, and tangible part of the home? Why is it important to hold on to printed books? After all, it is true what the other partner of the moving couple said; it is not likely that you would read all your books twice, so why keep them.

I am especially interested in these questions in the context of contemporary homes and changes in reading habits, which are affected by books in digital form. On the one hand, bookshelves have been and may still be considered to be status symbols or indications of the owners' socio-economic

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background and attitudes towards reading (see Pyne 2016: 68–9; Lundblad 2015: 230–31; Petroski 1999: 5). On the other hand, bookshelves can nowadays also be considered untrendy objects, which are not necessarily needed or wanted pieces of furniture. Their status is connected to our attitudes toward printed books, which is a timely issue in the digital age. The possibilities concerning reading, owning, and keeping books have changed. The subject has already been under scrutiny, provoking many conversations as to whether we need printed books any more, and if not, how does this affect books, literature, and reading habits (see e.g. Birkerts 2013, Rodger 2019). From the perspective of readers (by which I mean people who enjoy reading books) and their regular reading habits, the issue is related to the options to choose between different book formats. If e-books and audiobooks are enough, printed books may indeed appear unwanted or even pointless objects, which really no longer have a purpose. From this perspective, books are above all literary content, not material objects. There are also readers who prefer books specifically as material objects. For them, a book is at its best when it can be read, but also touched, perhaps smelled, and placed on a bookshelf. If these readers are asked what it is about the books, which makes them worth holding on to, they might emphasize the importance of materiality and certain sensory experiences in reading.

Examples of these emphases, pictures of reading moments, bookshelves, and spaces filled with books can be found on social media sites, with hashtags such as #shelfie. These images are, as Nicole Rodger (2019) points out, celebrations that focus on the materiality and the aesthetics of printed books. Readership needs no longer be connected to printed books, but some readers wish to express their attachment to them and enjoy the material side of book culture. What the aesthetic bookshelves then do is to make books and readership visible and social, and create spaces that the readers find beautiful and inviting.

There are also other sensory aspects than aesthetics, which readers connect with books. When respondents in various reading studies have been asked about their choices between different book formats, they often mention the feel and scent of printed books (on respondent experiences in book reading see e.g. Bergström et al. 2017, Richardson & Mahmood 2012, Gibson & Gibb 2011, Kajander 2020; sensations discussed also e.g. by Baron 2015, Mangen 2016, Starre 2015, Heikkilä 2017). These sensory experiences are recognized in reading studies. They have been understood as a combination of something subjective and cognitive (Heikkilä 2017: 37), a phenomenon that is "deeply cultural" (Bergström, Höglund, Maceviciute, Nilsson, Wallin & Wilson 2017: 206) and as "evoking memories from past interactions and associations" (Rodger 2019: 477). The tendency to touch and smell books has also been analyzed as something nostalgic, an emotional aspect of reading which from a rational viewpoint does not seem to support reading (Herkman & Vainikka 2012: 89). According to Naomi S. Baron (2015), smelling books is an element, which readers mention surprisingly often. She also points out that the meanings of materiality and the

sensory experiences are combinations of many aspects, emotional, social, and cultural. Books are objects that are often more than literature, such as mementoes or pieces of art (Baron 2015: 140–45, 147). Anne Mangen (2016), who has focused on the tangible feel of books and the importance of hands in reading, has pointed out that the seemingly irrelevant aspect of touching covers and pages may be more important than has so far been realized. She has called for a multidisciplinary approach to analyze the subjective and sensory aspects of reading. The appeal of the materiality of books is a phenomenon, which is simultaneously historical, cultural, social, and personal, and therefore it should be scrutinized from various perspectives.

In this chapter, I focus on the sensory and emotional meanings readers give to printed books and ask what bookshelves (as assemblies of books) at home can "do." The context is contemporary reading habits and reading at home. Reading and collecting printed books refer here to a mundane activity, a choice and a voluntary action, and reading for pleasure (as opposed to reading for studies or work, for example). The focus is on readers who enjoy reading printed books and also articulate the meanings they attach to books and bookshelves at home. The aim is to scrutinize further the notion that the sensory aspects such as the feel and scent of books, which do not at first glance seem relevant in reading, are important for some readers.

I discuss the notion through the concept of atmosphere in its cultural sense. This can help to elucidate what materiality and the concrete presence of books can mean to readers and why. Reading from this viewpoint does not focus on the interpretation of text, but its practice is connected to the socio-cultural surroundings, previous reading experiences, and to an autobiographical materiality (see de Nardi 2016) of readers. The question of books and bookshelves "doing" something is connected with material culture studies interested in affective and sensory experiences attached to material things. These studies are often inspired by the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (e.g. Frykman & Povrzanović Frykman 2016: 21; de Nardi 2016: 118; Henare et al. 2007; see also Frykman & Gilje 2003, 40; Mangen 2016: 464–65). The emphasis is on the fact that materiality and the sensory aspects of reading and collecting printed books are connected with the non-human agency of material objects. I discuss how books can represent meaning and reflect past experiences of readers and affect present reading moments when the book/device is sensed. The form also affects reading as a practice, which includes e.g. browsing, finding, handling, and owning books.

Research material and analysis

The quotes I use in this chapter are taken from a body of research material called "Elämää lukijana" (Life as a reader), which is a collection of written narratives about reading practices in different stages of life. The material was collected and archived in 2014 by the Finnish Literature Society via an open call for contributions. The archive planned the collection in collaboration

with the Finnish Book History Society. Kirsti Salmi-Niklander (2018), who was one of the planners of the call, compiled the collection with multidisciplinary interests toward studies of reading experiences, and with the ideas of Martyn Lyons, who has emphasized the importance of combining oral history and reading studies (Salmi-Niklander 2018: 3). The aim of the "Life as a Reader" project was to compile recollections and experiences of reading as a practice in different stages of life: memories of libraries and bookstores, learning how to read, and changes in reading habits. The call was answered by 546 Finns from different backgrounds and age groups.

The Life as a Reader material is one of the many Finnish Literature Society collections resulting from an open call for contributions. These calls aim at collecting people's experiences and recollections of different and often timely topics. There are long traditions in collecting such materials; the organization has been archiving oral history and written memories since the 1830s. The collections focus on various topics, such as habits connected with traditions, experiences connected with everyday life, work or gender, and memories connected with historical events and socio-cultural changes.[3] Anyone interested in the topics is free to write to the archive. Nowadays, respondents can reply via e-mail, but some of the texts are also handwritten.

The collections are often presented with an introduction to the theme followed by questions, which give the respondents an idea of what the archive is after. At the same time, people are encouraged to write in their own words and style. The calls are not questionnaires, but instead they can be called life writing calls. They are not usually amenable to quantitative analysis or for establishing the prevalence of the themes. Instead, they are used for understanding the experiences and memories which the respondents associate with the topics. The materials consist of narratives, which differ from each other. Within the same material, some responses may be just a few sentences long, while others may cover several dozen pages. The Life as Reader collection produced over 1,000 pages of texts, which can be read at the archive. The motivation for writing to the archive is often connected to people's interest in the topic. Sometimes people also write when they are asked to do so. For instance, in the Life as a Reader material there are many contributions from schoolchildren, who have been asked to write by their teachers.

According to Anne Heimo (2016), Finland, like Estonia, Latvia, and Sweden, has long traditions in collecting life histories and themed writing. The materials are often collected for academic purposes and analyzed by academics from different disciplines (Heimo 2016: 39). Analyses have often been influenced by oral history research and narrative studies, but they have also been analyzed through different theoretical frameworks. In my own discipline, ethnology, there has been discussion on applying ethnography to the analysis of oral history and written materials (e.g. Kirveennummi 2016; Kajander 2020).

In this chapter, my aim is to focus on one of the themes I found in some of the texts of the Life as a Reader material. I analyze how the materiality of books can affect an atmosphere, which can support reading in one's free time. I draw the definition of the concept of atmosphere from the chapters

by Sarah Pink, Kerstin Leder Mackley & Roxana Morosanu (2014), and Jonas Frykman & Maja Povrzanović Frykman (2016), which I have found very inspiring. My aim is to bring together ideas about emotional and affective materiality with book studies that focus on readers' preferences and choices between book formats. The text is largely based on my doctoral dissertation (Kajander 2020). In the dissertation, I analyzed the Life as a Reader material using a combination of close reading and reflexive ethnography (see e.g. Davies 2008). The analysis supported the notion that for some readers the materiality of printed books is an important part of reading in the digital age and that the importance is connected with previous reading experiences and affective and emotional reactions which materiality together with sensing books creates. The quotes, ideas, and conclusions presented in this section are based on the analysis of the Life as a Reader material I presented in the dissertation.

What is an atmosphere?

> I dream of a big room where there are dark wooden bookshelves on every wall, from floor to ceiling. In the middle of the room there is a gorgeous red plush armchair, into which I can just disappear. A standing reading lamp surrounds the chair with warm light.[4]
>
> Our big bookshelf is the heart of the living room. We also have several armchairs with reading lights, because we are all readers.[5]

If we go to new places or situations, on the one hand, we often notice the atmosphere, or on the other hand, atmospheres can be something we live through without consciously thinking about them. We have images of different spaces and their atmospheres, but it can be difficult to say exactly what affects and makes the different atmospheres. Pink et al. (2014) define atmosphere as something that is beyond representation and difficult to pinpoint. Atmosphere can bring together "things and processes of different types and qualities (the material, the intangible, the social, the affective), which might generate a range of different feelings" (Pink et al. 2014: 353). This is always connected with people, places, and things. An atmosphere as a cultural concept also refers to something staged. There are social elements present; something that can be understood together with other people (Pink et al. 2014: 353; see also Bille 2015; Linnet 2011). A constituted (cultural/social) space is, however, experienced differently by different people, because sensing and understanding the materiality of such surroundings is connected with subjective aspects, affective reactions, previous experiences and memories, values, and meanings. In other words, our expectations and understandings affect the ways we sense and feel the atmosphere of a space. An atmosphere could be described as a feeling, which tells us if something is right or wrong, inviting, or unpleasant (Pink et al. 2014: 354). Atmospheres can therefore also affect mood and emotions, even well-being. We feel better in an atmosphere that we find pleasant.

The pleasantness of the atmosphere or the cozy feeling of home is connected to interactions with material objects. The ways we furnish or stage our homes can be viewed through the idea of spacing, which refers to placing, positioning, and organizing ourselves, the living beings/bodies, with non-human actors, material objects (Berger 2020: 3). When we organize the things at home, we also create atmosphere. Even a single object may have the power to make an impact on our affective reactions or emotions, but it is especially the assemblies of objects, combinations of many things that affect the cozy atmosphere. They create layers of meanings, which are all present at the same time (see Löfgren 2016). A bookshelf is an example of such an assembly. It is a piece of furniture, a collection of literature perhaps placed together with decorative objects such as houseplants or photographs. It gathers together material objects but also expresses literary choices and taste (see e.g. Pyne 2016). It can be both personal and social, as it expresses choices and is on display for others to see.

The respondent in the quote above, who dreams about the room with bookshelves, describes her ideal space and a desirable atmosphere for reading. The quote reminds me of an ideal of coziness, which Jeppe Linnet (2011: 21, 23) connects with romantic ideas of Scandinavian middle-class life and consumption. It aims at something private, safe and harmonious, soft and inviting. The mention of the warm light is a strong reference to an atmosphere. According to Mikkel Bille (2015), light is an important element in creating this kind of cozy atmosphere; it can create a space in a space. An idea of warm light surrounding the reader and the soft armchair can help create a feeling of privacy, to focus, and to relax (see Bille, 2015: 59–60, 62). The bookshelves in the image bring literature into the space, stage the room, and create a place specifically meant for reading.

What kinds of spaces feel comfortable and cozy, or perfect for reading, depend on the meanings given to the different elements present. A bookshelf can take up a large part of the room and be the most noticeable object (or assembly of objects) in it. For some people, this may feel pleasant but for others irrelevant or even unpleasant. This was the case with the moving couple mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. One of them did not particularly care for the books but the other did not want a living room without them. The shelves with books can make an essential impact on the feeling or the atmosphere of the room. The impact is built on several elements; the concrete, tangible materiality together with the many layers of meanings, such as expressions of literary taste. Perhaps in the digital age, they can also be expressions of the conscious choice to hold on to printed books and the traditions of silent and private reading connected with them (see Birkerts, 2013).

The bookshelves of a home may also be assemblages of books or other items, which are not consciously collected or chosen. It may just be a collection of things put onto the shelves over time and then forgotten. An interesting question is what bookshelves do if they are less consciously selected and not deliberately staged. I find it likely that they still make an

impact, which holds layers of meanings, which can be attached to reading, but also to materialized memories. Sarah de Nardi (2016) has scrutinized how materiality connects with memories. She uses the concept of autobiographical materiality to describe how material objects, senses, and memory work together in affecting us. The concept refers to how our practices and thoughts are in interaction with senses and the materiality of the everyday life, and how objects can affect us. Autobiographical materiality can lead to "persons being and becoming who they were and what they became [..]" (de Nardi 2016: 34).

The thought focuses on the fact that materiality and artefacts do not only reflect meaning, but are intertwined with daily lives, possibilities, skills, thoughts, and practices. The bookshelves of home, even if they are not consciously staged and organized, can contain elements, which have a positive effect on their owners. There may be books from different life stages, books that belong to different family members, books bought and read over the years or received as gifts. Perhaps there are also nostalgic books that have belonged to someone close or someone deceased (SKS Kra EL N1963: 1931, N1987: 627, N1989: 634; Kajander 2020: 128–29). These then contain memories and connections, something about the reader's/owner's past. Books are also objects that have been present in different forms, spaces, and situations of readers' lives since they have learned how to read and have become interested in literature. The bookish atmospheres they create may have been a repetitive and essential part of finding, choosing, and reading books. These past experiences of reading affect the ways the materiality of books and bookshelves is experienced. They may reflect or represent ideas, which readers have learned to associate with literature. They remind their owners of the emotional aspects of reading. A bookshelf in the living room can therefore be both a mess in the background and an assembly containing, for instance, literature, reading memories, taste, gifts, and nostalgia. Their aesthetics affect the atmosphere of the room but so do the layers of meanings contained on the shelves.

Enjoying the feel and scent of books

> I suppose I shall be reading rather more e-books in the future, but I will never give up real books, the feeling of paper on the fingers or the dusty scent of old books.[6]
>
> When I get my hands on a leather bound book from an antiquarian with an oldish scent, or a brand new product from a bookstore, the feeling is exhilarating.[7]

According to Anne Mangen (2016), digitization of reading has given researchers an opportunity to scrutinize reading from new perspectives, as embodied phenomena (Mangen 2016: 458). For instance, research on reading from screens has shown that a sense of touch has relevance in reading. The tactile and haptic interaction with printed books means turning

pages, navigating back and forth in the text, getting an overview, perhaps underlining or making notes. Especially with lengthy texts, touching the pages yields information which may help memorize the "locations of events in the text" (p. 466) and have cognitive and emotional meaning for the reader, which could affect the so-called deep reading and focusing on long narratives (Mangen 2016: 473). She also points out that there is a need for a better understanding of the emotional side of reading printed books and e-books, because "there is evidence that performance on objective measures (such as eye-tracking) does not necessarily correspond with subjective measures (in self-reports, for example)" (Mangen 2016: 474). It seems clear that there is something in the readers' experience, which renders the books meaningful as objects, and that something is connected with more than interpreting text.

Sensory experiences such as the tangible feeling or the certain scents of books can become anticipated and positive parts of reading moments, but their importance or pleasantness seems to be difficult to explain (see Bergström et al. 2017: 206; Kajander 2020). Difficulties in articulating the meanings of materiality are common. The ways objects or artefacts are discussed are usually not focused on senses, feelings, and emotions, and therefore the sensory and emotional aspects connected with materiality may be hard to recognize (see Ehn, Löfgren & Wilk 2016: 6–7, 23; Löfgren 2016). However, material things can be affective in ways we are not necessarily aware of. Affect refers to pre-cognitive reactions rather than verbalized emotions (see Norman 2004). Books, like other affective things, such as other artefacts, situations, sounds, or places can cause a feeling of a certain "something" (Frykman & Povrzanović Frykman 2016: 11). They create a sense of mood or atmosphere. This is connected with orientation, something potential and intense (Frykman & Povrzanović Frykman 2016: 10). Smelling and touching books can also create a feeling of that certain something, which is difficult to explain but at the same time intense.

When readers take a printed book from the shelf and start reading, they first touch the covers. They may also start leafing through the pages and smell the scent of the book, which consists of many elements such as the paper, ink, and the material of the cover. They are affected by the book's age and the space where it has been stored (see Bembibre & Strlič 2017). The scent may be pleasant just as it is, but readers tend to describe it with adjectives such as old or dusty, as in the quotes above. In any other context, these smells could refer to something unpleasant, but in the case of books they are associated with something positive. This could refer to the age of the book and therefore somehow to the past. Materiality can embody something about the past of the reader and about the past of the book itself. The scent of something old may refer to the presence of history, which may be a part of the appeal and ignite the readers' imagination. The thought of holding and reading the same book as someone else did in the past can be intriguing. There can be marks, folded pages, notes, or

stains on margins, which tell something about the history of the book or of the reading experience of those who read it (Kuusela 2013: 124–25). This can generate a sense of contact, which can be especially important if the book belonged to someone who is or was significant for the reader. Many have books on bookshelves which once belonged to grandparents or other relatives, or which they read in childhood (see Kajander 2020: 109–10). These books become unique, nostalgic, and irreplaceable objects because they are connected with past experiences. The sense of the past can also refer to previous reading experiences of the readers themselves. The sense of smell is connected with memories and odors are triggers of emotions (e.g. Bembibre & Strlič 2017: 2; Suominen 2011). A smell can help us associate and remember past situations, such as reading moments, which have provided positive literary experiences. This may influence reading as an emotional practice. The dusty or oldish scents may thus carry positive meaning because they are familiar and invoke positive associations, which readers connect with reading literature.

In studies on meanings and experiences, senses are connected with moral and cultural issues. They are also categorized into more or less important senses (see Pink 2009: 12–14). For example, in reading the sense of sight is important for obvious reasons, but the sense of smell can be seemingly irrelevant because it does not affect the interpretation of text or literature. Understanding senses in terms of categories and relevance may also affect research and lead to studying the senses in isolation from each other, focusing, for instance, solely on analyzing visual or auditory aspects of the phenomenon studied. According to Suominen, Silvast & Harviainen (2018), the sense of smell is generally an understudied aspect of material culture. This could be based on an assumption that the sense of smell is separate from rational thinking. Even in studies on senses, visual and auditory aspects tend to attract more attention than smells (Suominen et al. 2018: 313–14).

The ways odors are sensed and given meaning can be difficult to analyze. Their meaning does not necessarily originate in the actual chemical or physical basis of the scent but in the subjective associations to which they give rise. These cannot be measured. They are also difficult to describe and people tend to explain their experiences of smells by comparing the scent with other similar odors (Suominen 2011: 15), just like the readers in the quotes above, who described the scents of books as something old. However, it is worth noting that experiences, also in reading, are affected by several senses at the same time. Touching, feeling, and smelling books are something that readers, who were brought up with printed books, have repeated time after time, in various reading situations. They have learned to associate the sensory aspects with the positive experiences which reading has provided. The scents are one of the elements of printed books, which are present in reading moments and can become an expected part of it. They play a part in creating an atmosphere, an emotional state, or a mood for reading, and therefore help to focus.

Uncomfortable atmospheres

> At home, books cover one wall of my study, but they have also spread out to my bedroom. […] There is even a small selection of books in the toilet. I have a weird relationship with my books. I simply cannot throw them away. This will probably have to change at some point.[8]
>
> There are bookshelves in every room. The first thing we do when we move to a new home is that we decide their places. There are never enough shelves and therefore we have books here, there and everywhere.[9]

A home (or a part of it, such as a room) can be understood as one's own, a private place where desired atmospheres can be invoked by furnishing, decorating, and actively creating a space where one feels at home. The aim could be to create a space which feels right, safe, and comfortable. The material objects of home help create the atmosphere, the sense of how the space makes one feel. This kind of staging is active and conscious, but experiencing atmospheres is also affective and unconscious (Pink et al. 2014: 354). When a staged atmosphere of home feels cozy, there are elements, which feel familiar. The cozy atmosphere can be created with soft and warm elements, such as lights, blankets, and comfortable chairs (Bille 2015; Linnet 2011). For those who have collected and kept books, the bookshelves and certain material elements such as the paper of printed books can feel inviting and warm. Sensing the book feels right if it feels natural. The books may embody something positive and help to create a welcoming atmosphere. A calm and relaxing atmosphere can help the reader to orientate and focus on the book, and provide a positive emotional feeling, such as a feeling of respite from other, often hectic everyday life (on material objects and orientation see Vannini, Waskul & Gottchalk 2013: 6–7, 19; Norman 2004: 11–13, 20). Books and bookshelves are objects that can be a part of this atmosphere, especially if readers find their presence inspiring or comforting. Therefore, they are also objects, which can support both reading and the well-being of the reader. Yet books, like any objects in everyday life, can also become problematic, even if they have engendered emotional or cozy feelings. The presence of books and the accompanying sensations are connected to socio-cultural meanings and understandings (Frykman & Povrzanović Frykman 2016: 14; Vannini et al. 2013: 6–7, 9), which may change. The materiality of books can become a problem and create feelings or atmospheres other than positive ones, even for those who are emotionally attached to their books.

The idea of harmony, which Linnet (2011) mentioned as a part of middle-class coziness, may suffer, for instance, if the reader collects too many books. A bookshelf is a tool, which helps readers organize and categorize their books, and find the right place for them, but if the shelf space runs out, books start piling up on tables, windowsills, and floors. They start causing a mess. This could become a problem, especially if the reader finds it difficult

to throw books away, but still wants to buy new ones. Another situation where books can be a problem is moving house with books, packing, carrying, and finding space for them in a new home. People may have to move often, their apartments may be small, and their homes may not have space for bookshelves. In these cases, printed books may cease to be the inspiring elements of home, but rather troublesome objects, which do more harm than good. If the emotional attachment to books as objects is strong, the idea of disposing of them can be difficult, and feel like a waste.

Ecological consciousness may also affect the meanings given to printed books. Ecologically conscious and sustainability oriented readers may think about the paper consumption, transportation, and storage of printed books (see Kajander 2020: 160). From this perspective, the materiality of books may start feeling uncomfortable or even threatening. For example, the respondents in the study by Herkman & Vainikka (2012: 91), referred to printed books as "dead trees." In these cases, books are being assigned new meanings. Instead of being natural, comforting objects, they may start to create contradiction and become a problem, provoking more negative than positive emotions. They even may start to feel like objects, which do damage. Some of the respondents in the Life as a Reader material mentioned these aspects as reasons for their interest in e-books (SKS Kra AL N1991: 316, N?: 110). For them, e-books had started to feel like the better and a more natural way to read. On the one hand, the appeal of e-books was primarily in the quick and easy access to literature but also in the certain kind of immateriality so different from, which felt opposite to the troublesome, unsustainable materiality of printed books (see Kajander 2020: 84–6, 137). On the other hand, one respondent was more worried about the consumption of devices and the electronic waste they leave behind. For her, printed books and paper as a material felt more natural and ecological (SKS Kra EL 1984: 783). The ways to understand the ecological aspects guided the choices and meanings these respondents attached with book formats, although the issue of sustainability is in fact problematic. According to Alexander Starre (2015: 111), on the one hand, the question of carbon footprint connects with issues such as sustainable forest management and paper production, or on the other hand, the energy demand for the internet, computers, servers, and display devices. It is therefore difficult to say how or when a book format becomes a sustainable option.

What I find interesting in these different viewpoints is the respondents' urge to reach toward something, which feels right and natural. Often, when new technologies question old or traditional practices, which feel natural, they may feel very irritating (Starre 2015: 29). This irritation was present in the text of the respondent, who was thinking about electronic waste. Some other respondents made similar observations, although they did not connect this irritation directly with sustainability. One respondent wanted to hold on to printed books because screens and digital texts had already taken enough space from her life (SKS Kra EL N1955: 460), and for some others screens felt like gadgets, which were suddenly everywhere (SKS Kra

EL N?: 290, N1071: 865, N1947; 713, N1987: 629). When screens were already present at work and elsewhere in daily life, printed books felt like a break (for similar responses see Gibson & Gibb 2011, Richardson & Mahmood 2012). In these cases, the screens felt unnatural, and therefore opposite to a cozy, safe, and calming atmosphere.

The presence and feeling of screens in book reading can be associated with both the convenience of immaterial books and the plastic and unnatural feeling of their materiality. Screens can be associated with the somehow disturbing presence of the internet, such as the presence of service providers, who collect data. Reading from screens may feel less private and less calming than reading printed books (Bergström et al. 2017: 192). When the focus is on reading for pleasure, the important aspect is the ability to enjoy the reading moment. The different meanings attached to book formats, and their material feel, affect the emotional reactions to them (see also Vannini et al. 2013, Norman 2004). Similarly, printed books on the bookshelves can be both reminders and expressions of positive aspects of book culture, and feel like a stuffy, old-fashioned, and unecological assembly of unwanted objects. The viewpoint depends on the meanings, which are connected to sensory experiences, memories, values, and knowledge.

Conclusions: Materiality of books can create a mood for reading

When living our lives in our social and material surroundings, the objects around us become a part of our biographies. They embody meanings and influence our thoughts and actions. As I have discussed in this chapter, bookshelves and printed books are examples of objects, which can play practical roles in readers' lives, but at the same time they embody layers of meanings, memories, and experiences. I have analyzed what printed books and bookshelves at home can mean to readers in the digital age; what they can "do", and how they affect those wishing to retain them as a concrete, visible, and tangible part of home. I drew attention to the "certain something" of the materiality of books, which is difficult to explain, and scrutinized the question through the concept of atmosphere.

The respondents in the Life as a Reader material quoted in this chapter, treasure printed books and bookshelves, and enjoy their presence, sometimes also their scent and feel. In their texts, they did not explain exactly why this is so, but they did mention that seeing, touching, smelling, and/or just being close to printed books is pleasant, and, as I mentioned, similar responses have been reported elsewhere. Materiality of books means something, but it is difficult to explain what that something is.

As explaining feelings toward material objects is not common, we are not used to thinking what it is about them that make us feel. Atmosphere and the idea of an autobiographical materiality help to analyze these notions. The meanings given to books as objects are combinations of learned practices, connected with previous reading experiences, memories, and they also have a sensory basis. Touch can impart a feeling of something concrete and smell

can evoke pleasant memories. Books and bookshelves are able to "do" something especially when they are familiar and when we are used to responding to them. They can remind us of the reading moments in the past and the positive values we attach to literature. Sensing the materiality of books can guide attention toward the book and orientate to reading because the object "promises" something. A familiar feel or scent may therefore orientate to read and focus on literature. The "right" atmosphere, which the materiality of books creates, may also create a mood for reading. Therefore, if the scent and feel of paper or the presence of books and bookshelves helps to focus and impart positive feeling to readers, the sensory aspects and meanings, which some readers attach to printed books are not irrational or irrelevant aspects of book reading practices. Instead, they should be understood as an opportunity, something to be cherished in the reading practices of the digital age.

However, digital reading and giving up printed books is also an opportunity; atmosphere is connected with subjective experiences, and therefore bookish or any other atmospheres are not understood similarly by everyone. In the Life as a Reader material reading from screens divided opinion, partially because the screens were connected with very different understandings. Some respondents felt that screens had already taken enough time and space from their everyday lives, and printed books provided a welcome respite from them. For others, reading from screens felt more ecological, quicker, and an easier way to read. The immateriality connected with digital content was a welcome part of reading practices, although the devices used for reading have their own materiality. It is interesting how for some the plastic materiality of screens felt unwanted or even unnatural, while for others the printed books felt unsustainable and problematic. The notions of atmosphere and the different ways to understand the materiality of book formats still call for more research. The ideas of "natural" and "right" feelings may be important viewpoints for further scrutiny.

Archival Material

The Finnish Literature Society Archive (SKS Kra). Collection of folklore and contemporary culture. Elämää lukijana ("Life as a Reader")–collection 2014 (EL).

Notes

1 Kun edellisen muuton jälkeen sain kaikki kirjat hyllyyn, istuin hetken lattialla vain ihaillen niitä, ja nauttien niiden olemassaolosta, kuin äiti, jonka lapset ovat viimeinkin tulleet kotiin, kaikki samaan aikaan. SKS Kra EL N1974: 578.

2 Kirjat luovat turvallisuutta, mutta myös huokuvat sivistystä. SKS Kra EL M1989: 503.

3 The list of collections can be found here in Finnish: https://www.finlit.fi/fi/arkisto-ja-kirjastopalvelut/kokoelmat-ja-tiedonlahteet/kirjallisuuden-ja-kulttuurihistorian-2#.YdX86OexU2z and the introduction of the Society in English: https://www.finlit.fi/en/finnish-literature-society-sks/sks-nutshell#.X8nmn80zY2w.

4 Haaveilen […] suuresta huoneesta, jossa kaikki seinät ovat täynnä tummia arvopuisia kirjahyllyjä katosta lattiaan. Huoneen keskellä on upottavan ihana viininpunainen plyysikankainen nojatuoli, johon voi hävitä. Omilla jaloillaan seisova lukuvalo ympäröi nojatuolin lämpimään valopalloon. SKS Kra EL, N1966: 588.
5 Suuri kirjahyllymme on olohuoneen sydän. Nojatuoleja lukuvaloineen kodissamme on useampi, sillä lukijoita olemme kaikki. SKS Kra EL N1975: 801.
6 Luulen, että tulevaisuudessa sähköisten kirjojen lukeminen lisääntyy minulla jonkin verran, mutta en tule koskaan luopumaan noista oikeista ihanista kirjoista, paperin tunnusta sormissa ja vanhan kirjan pölyisestä tuoksusta. SKS Kra EL N1982: 693.
7 Saadessani käteeni vanhalta tuoksahtavan nahkaselkäisen hengentuotteen antikvariaatista, tai uuden uutukaisen kirjakaupan tuotteen, on tunne riemastuttava. SKS Kra EL M?: 746.
8 Kotona kirjat peittävät yhden työhuoneeni seinän, mutta ovat levittäytyneet myös makuuhuoneeseeni. […] Jopa vessassa on pieni kirjavalikoima. Minulla on kummallinen suhde kirjoihin, niitä ei yksinkertaisesti voi hävittää. Luultavasti pakon sanelemana asiaan tulee joskus muutos. SKS Kra EL N196: 569.
9 Kirjahyllyjä on paljon, joka huoneessa. Kirjahyllyjen paikka katsotaan muuttaessa ensimmäisenä. Kirjahyllyjä ei ole koskaan tarpeeksi ja siksi kirjat pursuilevat yleensä siellä täällä ja ympäriinsä. SKS Kra EL N1982: 693.

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