

Bibliophiles:

Amateur Reviews in a Media Compact Society

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2022



LUND
UNIVERSITY

Abstract

Bourdieu once spoke of ‘autonomy’ as a cornerstone to the making of a field, an element that demands the creation of contextually tied social values and hierarchies. Within the literary field, these hierarchical structures have been embedded for a long time, ranking cultural producers and other industry-leading agents above the social and the common; the ordinary reader. But what happens when boundaries between the ‘professional’ and the ‘amateur’ become increasingly complex and blurred? In contemporary societies, it is possible to observe how ordinary readers become literary critics in various online settings. On Facebook, amateur reviewers can be spotted in different book groups; groups that the book industry use as marketing arenas and increasingly treat as a recognized agent in the field of cultural production. This indicates that the constant transformation of media and the emergence of new has an impact on the literary field.

By investigating the social dynamic within the Swedish group ‘Bibliophiles’ on Facebook, this case study aims to make sense of a ‘social media logic’ in consumer reviews on Facebook, and in extension, understand to what extent digital communities have the capability of destabilising pre-existing frames of social and cultural hierarchies. This is done through qualitative text analysis on posts within the group that discuss the Nobel prize laureate Abdulrazak Gurnah. In this way, the thesis sheds light on how ordinary people relate to ‘fine culture’ and their view on their position in the contemporary literary field.

The findings indicate that there is a collective force in amateur reviews, where a mirroring and reverberating social dynamic create a contextually tied social media logic. The reverberating behaviour is not only emotionally important for the sense of community, but it is also necessary and needed in order to challenge established and pre-existing values. The findings also demonstrate that the collective force has the capacity to create its own quality markers of literature, showcasing that the group, to a certain extent, has gained autonomy within the literary field. In all of this, social media logic is important and shows that amateur reviews online have the capacity to destabilise rooted social and cultural frameworks.

Keywords: *Literary field, Bourdieu, social media logic, user agency, Facebook groups, readers, mediatization, book industry, amateur reviews, literary critics*

Acknowledgements

Sleepless nights, scattered mind and emotional rollercoasters. The process of writing a thesis can be overwhelming sometimes. The support of my family and loved ones have been tremendously important!

To my dear Johan, my mother, my father, my three sisters and four brothers: you rock!

A huge thank you to my supervisor, Fredrik Schoug, for always encouraging me to do better.

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Bibliophiles: Framing

“I have never been a fan of fantasy, but this changed forever the day I picked up this book. From the first pages, it was clear to me that what I was holding in my hands was a true masterpiece. Not only the themes, but the unique complementary writing style that characterises Ishiguro's work, make this a powerful experience for the reader, one which will follow, for a good while at least, maybe even change his view on some important aspects of life, such as love, forgiveness, friendship, or who knows? But one thing is for sure. While reading this book, you will get absorbed by its charm, you will experience the characters' pain, happiness, sorrows, while getting thrown back in time. [...]”

(Google, The Buried Giant review)

The background to this thesis begins with a consumer generated review on Google; a review that got 5/5 stars and that ‘23 people found helpful’, according to the same site (Ibid). The review is on Kazuo Ishiguro’s novel “The Buried Giant” (2015), but the phenomenon of digital consumer ratings, as a form of consumer enlightenment, can be spotted in many online contextual settings *e.g.*, for baby strollers, vacation bookings, buying a new pair of shoes, restaurant reservations – and the list goes on.

Historically, consumer’s journalistics has a rooted position within society as a way to protect and inform consumers about quality. In the Swedish context, it was originally through the use of magazines such as ‘Råd och rön’, founded in 1958, held by the Swedish consumer agency and sold to an independent party in 2006 (Elsässer, 2012). The aim for magazines such as Råd och rön, is to inform consumers about products before buying them, and within the literary field, the literature critic holds a similar position (Bourdieu, 1996).

So what is the literary field? Authors, publishers, distributors and literature critics. The literary field consists of multiple agents who all contribute to a field of cultural production; a hierarchical sphere for the production of literary goods; books (Bourdieu, 1996). But what happens when the reader becomes the critic?

The descriptive qualities of a ‘book reader’, refers to any person who simply reads a book. The reader could be anyone with the ability to read – autonomous, independent and free from frameworks of socio-economic and cultural status, ethnicity, gender, nationality *etc.* The

word does not refer to any specific book genre as the reader could be almost anyone – preferences of taste is not embedded within the general meaning of the term. In this sense, the person reading a book could be you or me. The reader is thus the ‘ordinary’ and the ‘common’, a person traditionally ‘outside’ the field of cultural production and inside the common ‘social space’, subordinated to those with a higher amount of field-specific knowledge –cultural capital– like literature critics (Bourdieu, 1996:124). The broadness, and the absence of contextual information to the word ‘reader’, indicates a subordinate position within the literary field.

However, over a relatively short period of time, societies around the globe have undergone a tremendous digital shift. The rapid technological development brings increasingly advanced media devices –such as mobile phones, powerful laptops, reading pads *etc*– and the internet offers people to interact and socialise beyond spatio-temporal limitations. We live in a media-saturated society that transforms our cultures and realities (Hjarvard, 2013), as we shape our everyday lives around our digital routines and media practices. We use digital media to build and maintain interpersonal relationships, to be entertained, as a tool for work and for education, to read the news, to keep track of our finances and so on. The availability of digital products and easy internet access makes it possible for ordinary people to, not only, passively ‘receive’ information, like previously single-sided information streams *e.g.*, traditional mass media such as radio or television. In our new media landscape, ordinary people are instead active participants: consumers, producers and co-producers (Van dijck, 2009:41).

This indicates a form of user agency that, amongst other things, contributes to increasingly blurred boundaries between professionals and amateurs (Humphreys and Kent, 2008). The phenomenon has been academically investigated, for example, in the context of amateur journalism online, where the social position of professional news outlets are at risk of being undermined by consumer produced news (Baker, 2004:301; Paterson *et.al.*, 2013:12). With this in mind, is it possible that blurred lines between the ‘professional’ and the ‘amateur’ also contribute to a shift in power, and furthermore, jeopardise the traditional hierarchical and social structures within our cultural industries?

The question is wide, complex, and difficult. But while looking at the literary field, it is clear that consumer agency and amateur professionals can be found scattered all across the internet

in the form of –for example– book blogs (Gomez, 2005) and on sites such as Goodreads (Hajibayova, 2019). Today, we see forums and groups on social media, Facebook as another –perhaps more interactive– arena for readers to share their reviews. In the Swedish context, the group *Vi som älskar att läsa böcker* (2022) is the biggest, with over 40 000 members. In this digital sphere, group members actively share their thoughts and opinions on the books that they read, not unlike the professional literary critic but without requirements of formal education or employment by established media outlets. The reader becomes the critic, and in this sense, the rules of art (Bourdieu, 1996) are being challenged by the ‘ordinary’ and ‘common’.

Back in 2005, Gomez predicted user generated reviews on book blogs to be an important arena for book publishers and other leading agents and producers within the book industry to conduct successful marketing (Gomez, 2005:9). In the case of consumer reviews within Facebook groups in 2022, it is clear that it is not only a sheltered space for readers. Authors use these groups to connect directly with their readers (OP.22), established media outlets create their own groups (*Snacka on böcker!*, 2022) and publishing houses use some of these groups to post their press releases (*Feelgoodfredag*, 2022), treating ordinary readers as a valued part within the chain of marketing. Through this, it is clear that Facebook groups and the social dynamics within them matter, valued by the industry elite. But how can we understand these social cues, and is it possible to speak of a social media logic (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013)?

It is clear that Bourdieu’s work of explaining the hierarchies of the literary field is extensive and applicable today. However, given the tremendous digital shift in society, the blurred lines between the ‘amateur’ and the ‘professional’ through the emergence of consumer reviews online demonstrates that contemporary media perspectives on Bourdieu’s field theories are important for further knowledge – something this thesis aims to investigate.

As a way to understand and capture these processes of autonomy embedded within consumer reviews, this thesis focuses on one of the biggest Facebook groups in the Swedish context, ‘*Vi som älskar att läsa böcker* (2022). It is a group with over 40 000 members and a space for ordinary people to review books for others. The sampled posts consist of reviews and attached comments about the 2021 Nobel prize laureate Abdulrazak Gurnah, focusing on how ordinary readers talk about the absolute elite within the literary field (English, 2005). By

analysing the group's social dynamic, I hope to make sense of the concept of a 'social media logic' within these consumer reviews on Facebook, and in extension understand; to what extent digital communities have the capability of destabilising pre-existing frames of social and cultural hierarchies.

Research questions:

- 1) How is a social dynamic created and maintained within the group?
- 2) What can posts about Gurnah's books within the group tell us about the Swedish literary field?
- 3) In what ways can the posts and comments contribute to a further knowledge on the power of consumer enlightenment?

In this thesis, a literature review will be presented, as a way to sketch out the pre-existing academic understanding of the literary field and further anchor the study. Previous research will be presented in order to introduce and understand the premises of the literary field with a Bourdieusian perspective in the digital era. Here, Bourdieu's perspectives will be intertwined with a focus on digital advancements and the premises of the contemporary book industry. After the literature review, a methodological approach will be mapped out, presenting and discussing the design of this case study, the sample and course of actions – finishing with a critical reflection on research ethics. Onwards, an analysis where I will present and discuss empirical findings in relation to theoretical concepts, attempting to answer the research questions, which will be concluded in the last chapter of this thesis. In this concluding state, the thesis will be put in relation to its contribution to the media- and communication field, and our general understanding of to what extent a possible social media logic within consumer reviews online have the capability of tilting our views on cultural power positions.

Literature review

Navigating a differentiated social field in the digital era

Publishing houses, authors, book distributors, book readers, literature critics. The contemporary book industry consists of multiple participants and agents who all contribute to their cultural context – the literary field. In this field, they all contest various actions that

create social hierarchies within, and, outside the literary context, constantly battling for cultural legitimization. We see these phenomena in the publishers who fight for the attention of their target group of readers, we see the authors that, for various commercial and personal reasons write books, the readers who consume the books, the distributors who sell the books and the critics who label culture with symbolic values and qualities. This conceptual perspective on the literary field was originally introduced by cultural sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who described the field as a differentiated social field (Bourdieu, 1996) – depending on frameworks of autonomy and the battle to legitimate cultural forms (Ibid, 1996:142). According to Bourdieu, autonomy is a key element for a field to be considered to be a field.

The concept of symbolic capital and the work of Bourdieu is academically impactful, and has been an inspiration to a myriad of academic works, nevertheless in the context of the book industry in multiple societal contexts (Wright, 2005; Leving & White, 2013; Carter, 2016; Classen 2020).

The journey to academia's understanding of the modern book industry (with a Bourdieusian perspective) dates back to 2005, when Wright applied the frameworks while investigating the social relationships between UK retail book trade workers, the books they sell and customer service (Wright, 2005). Within this work, Wright discovered that the embodied cultural capital of workers produced and strengthened power hierarchies through the site of a bookshop (Ibid, 2005:310-311). The work of Wright, contributed to fortify Bourdieu's theories of the literary field, by exemplifying it within the empirical setting of bookshops in the UK. However, the article does not grasp the dynamics of readers in a digitalised society; it was published before the digitalisation boom and mainly focuses on bookshop workers.

Subsequently, the work of Carter (2016), further built on Bourdieu's perspectives by applying them to the book industry in Australia, with a comparison to the UK and the US. In the article, Carter aimed to investigate the positions of literary fiction in the Australian trade book publishing which was conducted by mapping its function, as well as, locus on national cultural capital in a transnational setting. Moreover, the article takes digitalization and the unequal distribution of power between small-, mid- and large-sized publishing houses into consideration (Carter, 2016:55-56). The work of Carter sheds light on the challenges of national literary fiction and genre in a globalised industry. However, the centre of this

particular article is put on the investigation of book's and their symbolic values within their national- and transnational contexts – rather than examining power relations outside the publishing houses within the literary field by investigating agency in the contemporary reader.

A recent view on the arena of literature was published in an article named *A Literary Reflection on the World of Publishing in the Postmodern World* (Classen, 2020). The article discusses the book industry and its tendencies to act as gatekeepers to the selection of authors getting published; ensuring a certain 'quality' in their publishing lists, while fending off the 'trivial'. This contribution to the academic understanding of the book industry provides valuable and modern insights on hierarchies within an industry impacted by digitisation and a globalised mediated society – where some authors are favoured over others. Nevertheless, this spotlights the publisher-author relationships within the field and the hierarchies between them with regards to the market demand.

In relation to cultural hierarchies within the literary field, English dissects the leading position of the Nobel prize in literature, referring to it as the 'one cultural prize' (English, 2005:54). It is clear that the Nobel prize in literature holds an influential role within the international, global economy of cultural prizes, arguing that it would be almost impossible for competing prizes to claim more than a secondary position within the space (Ibid, 2005:62). Throughout his book, English uses a Bourdieusian perspective, to try and explain what he calls a fundamentally equivocal nature to the cultural phenomenon of prizes (Ibid, 2005:7). By this, he means that there is more to these prizes than just 'calculation and dealmaking', arguing that we must see it through a perspective where emotional and celebratory aspects intertwine with marketing strategies as well as parameters of self-promotion (Ibid, 2005:8). However, as this book is an excellent layout on how cultural prizes can be viewed as a prestigious economy in a cultural sense, it does little to consider the increasing importance of the ordinary reader in our digital society.

Previous research on our understanding of the literary field with an applied Bourdieusian perspective, in a way, fortifies pre-existing knowledge on the field's hierarchical structures, where some genres are valued more than other genres, the unequal distribution of power between different sized publishing houses and the state of literature and cultural prizes in national and transnational contexts. However, none of these articles and books takes the

democratising aspects of digital media into consideration, as well as the power given to ordinary readers in a contemporary society. This emphasises a knowledge gap to the notion of the modern readers, and their position within the book industry on a general level.

Structures of the book industry

As previously presented through the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1992), the literary field is a battlefield, consisting of multiple agents. But how do we understand the up-to-date structures of the book industry?

To reach a deeper knowledge of the Swedish industry context, a broader, general and introductory view on the field is guiding for the contemporary understanding. First and foremost, the book industry is a cultural industry in the sense that it is a market that produces and sells symbolic goods. Still, with the digitalisation, so came the development of media technologies. The contemporary market was, and is increasingly impacted; in terms of the shape/form of the products produced, as well as in the ways in which the products are distributed and consumed. The early digitalisation process, the development of media technologies and digital book distribution stretching from the 1980's to the early 2010's, was investigated with a media- and communications lense back in 2012 (Thompson, 2012:312-376). In Thompson's work, the process is described by the development of digital reading products such as the market introduction of digital formats e.g., e-books, or, reading devices such as the kindle and the Ipad – but also by the symbolic conflict between the physical and digital product. Here, digital deterministic views are in conflict with the commercial interests in order to keep up with the rapid pace of social developments (ibid, 2012:314). The chronological insights provided by Thompson on the digital advancements and the book industry are valuable for this thesis, even if they may need a further anchoring to a context subsequent to the year of 2012. The issues of digital entanglement and development as well as the industry identity will be further dissected in the latter part of this literature review.

An academic tradition surrounding the structures of the book industry is the field of publishing studies. In the Swedish context, the extensive work of Steiner, describes how the book industry has developed from the 1800's to the 2000's by its organisational, societal and

technological conditions (Steiner, 2017). Steiner's book provides a good insight into the parameters that shaped the structural patterns of the Swedish book industry as we see it today, making her research an historical overview of the field, even if development has occurred over a short period of time since the year of 2000, and even 2017.

In another project –an article from 2018– Steiner describes the evolution of conglomerate productions, e-commerce solutions and platforms, micropublishing and the Swedish market within a wider, globalised market (Steiner, 2018). The work aims for an overarching understanding of the industry and its development, as well as the economic and symbolic challenges that a digitised and modern book industry face in everyday practises, imposed by rapid societal shifts. One of the main arguments presented in this work is the function of multiple gatekeepers in the understanding of how a book gains global success: a structural set of norms and values in one country may decide the outcome of a book on a national level, but they may not –solely– apply outside these cultural, linguistic and geographical borders (Steiner, 2018:129). However, the need for distribution is constant and the contemporary industry climate allows for an increasing polarisation between different organisations within the book industry depending on their size and economic state (Ibid, 2018:130). Steiner's research and the field of publishing studies gives an indication of the current state of the field, even though an interdisciplinary lense of sociology and media- and communication would be relevant in order to understand the social elements to the industry.

The content-technology dilemma

According to Bourdieu, one important element of the conditions of the literary sphere is the principle of differentiation; meaning the objective and subjective distance and balance between the economic forces of cultural industries (such as publishers, authors or intellectual institutions tied to the literary field) and the production of the 'pure' art (Bourdieu, 1992:141). In this, if yet inverted, balance, the two extremes work in harmony. However, the rapid technological advances in society brought a change even for the cultural industries with the widespread access to devices and digital formats (Thompson, 2012). This phenomenon forces publishing houses to keep up with social and societal shifts in order to maintain economic stability in the national and global arena, indicating a new balance within the literary sphere, even though the aim for the 'pure' is still deeply rooted within the industry.

Thus, tech- companies are now in the forefront of the contemporary book industry (Baverstock et. al, 2020; Murray, 2018). But what do these advances in technology mean for people's subjective relationship with books and literature in the present day?

The content-technology dilemma is an area that has been widely investigated within a plethora of scholarly contexts, in books as well as in academic papers (Laing & Royle, 2005; Hughes, 2005; Thompson, 2012; Snelling 2021). The conflict is related to an industry identity where the symbolic values, in combination with the trading of cultural and intellectual goods can be viewed as in constant battle with commercial interests of the industry; what it means for producers as well as for consumers. In a modern day context, this is a topic dissected and analysed in papers like '*The Evolving Challenges and Opportunities in Global Publishing*' (Michaels, 2015).

The work of Michaels, provides an interesting standpoint on the content-technology dilemma where he states that 'Content is king but it has a new queen. Our ability to design and build great technology solutions in a seamless way with content is now of equal importance.' (Ibid, 2015:5). According to the same author, the industry must embrace new technological advances, in order to survive in a market where books can be accessed everywhere and at any time. Furthermore, this article is rooted in, and suggests commercial strategies for the industry to remain agile with the dynamics of society and those of new technology. The open minded standpoint presented in the work of Michaels, differs from the more deterministic and cautious view previously presented by Thompson (2012:314), but neither of the authors seems to come up with a solution of the symbolic struggles within the book industry surrounding content and technology.

Instead, recent perspectives on the content-technology relationship can be read in the work of Snelling (2021), where the author investigated the audiobook format during the Covid-19 pandemic to further understand how digital- and everyday reading practises are compared to the common view on a physical books. This article, not only considers the emerging of new technology, but also the digital entanglement it impacts on users and their everyday lives and media practices, as multimedia devices become an increasingly important and integrated part of our routines. The main insight presented by this academic paper, is the belief that advancement in media technology provides elasticity to cultural changes for the publishing industry. This is something the author links to the use of audiobooks throughout the Covid-19

pandemic where consumers were –more or less– forced to turn to backlisted audiobooks and ebooks as the printing of new physical books became postponed in many scenarios.

An important take out from the concluding thoughts in Snelling’s paper is the knowledge that the cultural value of the physical book, despite its drop in sales (in relation to the growth of audiobooks) remains fixed in its symbolic worth – even if the use of digital products provide a way for the industry to remain dynamic to societal shifts (Snelling, 2021:653-654).

Contemporary perspectives on literary criticism

“The critic for *Le Figaro* never reacts simply to a show; he reacts to the reaction of the ‘intellectual’ critique which he is prepared to anticipate even before it has been formulated, since he also masters the generative opposition on the basis of which it is engendered.” (Bourdieu, 1996:163).

Bourdieu’s sophisticated description of the professional art critic and their role, holds a recognized position within contemporary societies. In the Swedish context, the literary critic might be a writer for leading papers and magazines such as *Dagens Nyheter* or *Sydsvenskan*. The relatively small group of traditional critics acts as gatekeepers to the broader notion of ‘fine literary taste’, and their judgement of it often builds upon academic degrees or similar experiences that grant them the knowledge necessary to give truthful reviews to serve the less educated public, not only the public but other participants of the book industry; authors and publishing houses. This can be exemplified in the representation of review quotes listed on the covers of commercial physical books – as a way for publishers to tell potential readers that ‘this is a good book’. However, as the world gets more digital, and cultural content moves further to the direction of the everyday book consumer – who is in power?

Previously mentioned in this literature review, topics partially touch upon the question of gatekeepers within the literary sphere (Steiner, 2018:129-130). Could it be that digitalisation challenges the boundaries of art- and literature criticism, by blurring the boundaries between the amateur and professional critic?

The question was conceptually introduced back in 2005 in an article named ‘*Thinking Outside the Blog: Navigating the Literary Blogosphere*’ (Gomez, 2005). During that time, the

book blogs were one of the first widespread digital spaces where readers could write about the books they read and interact via commentary sections. The work of Gomez, insightfully predicted the blogosphere as a potential arena for contemporary marketing campaigns, suggesting the publishing houses and authors should use it to their advantage as a way to reach new target groups of readers in a digital society (Gomez, 2005:9). However, since 2005, the blogs have evolved and the internet users have wandered and branched across multiple social platforms, growing in numbers and in their everyday media use. 17 years later, Gomez's predictions have become a reality e.g., through the visibility of elite agents using Book groups on Facebook as a way to promote books and gain knowledge about their target group readers. With this in mind, these activities impact on the power structures of the literary field are yet to be investigated.

The impacts of technological advancements and internet bound activities became increasingly popular to investigate academically, and nevertheless, the democratising element that the internet offers for ordinary people. Van Dijck further explored the topic of user agency online in an article named *'Users like you? Theorising agency in user-generated content'* (2009). In the piece, the author aimed to understand the complexities surrounding user generated content online by investigating elements of volunteer labour through co-creation on the platform Youtube, and how this benefits and impacts the economic structures on both industry- and personal levels. Van Dijcks article highlighted the ordinary user's economic meaning as a prosumer, building on to pre-existing knowledge about the complex boundaries between producer and consumer. The author contributed to our developed understanding of participatory online behaviours, and how this enhances a 'cultural citizenship' – which is presented within the article and put in relation to our previous knowledge of 1990's television culture (van Dijck, 2009:44). The expanded understanding is that contemporary user agency is more related to users' willingness to share knowledge and culture (Ibid, 2009:45). But how does this knowledge- and culture sharing take its form in 2022 – how can this be framed in an investigation on amateur reviewers online?

In 2010, Hoffert attempted to extend the understanding of the role of the internet reviewer by examining –what she calls– the 'online book conversation' via the question if every reader is a reviewer (Hoffert, 2010). However, this work was published in the *Library Journal*, an American trade publication for librarians outside the frameworks of academia. Nevertheless,

the article sheds light on the industry agenda setting, fortifying the topic and its relevance to the context of the American book industry.

From 2019 and forward, the topic was further investigated across a wide range of research areas. With a linguistics perspective, Hajibayova examined the linguistic character of 2500 reviews on the digital platform Goodreads –a website aimed for readers to post reviews of the books that they consume. The article was written in order to understand the role and value of user-generated reviews (Hajibayova, 2019:612). The main scope of the article relates to the high frequency of positive reviews as a way to both understand –on one hand– the reviewers in their intention to influence other readers and– on the other– as their unreliability (ibid).

In 2020, Stanková investigated the roles of various types of literary criticism in society; academic, journalistic and the criticism occurring on social media (Stanková, 2020). Within her arguments, social media based literary criticism lacks arguments and rests solely upon emotion. According to this article, the marketing campaigns between opinion leaders on social media and the publishing houses demonstrate a side effect of social media (Stanková, 2020:626). However, it is worth mentioning that this article had the main objective to investigate the changing features and conditions of criticism itself, not necessarily connecting it to the understanding of hierarchies of the literary field by investigating social elements of consumer reviews.

But what about the social elements of online literary criticism? Recently, a study in computer science was published in order to understand how online book reviews can be used as a tool for modelling the reception of books (Holur et.al, 2021). This is fairly interesting, as it brings a quantitative perspective on measuring social behaviours. The aim for the study was to develop a code that could deconstruct key elements out of a tremendous amount of book reviews, as a way for commercial actors to measure the reception of cultural products. There is, however, a complementary gap to qualitative knowledge surrounding these reviews.

In relation to our academic understanding of contemporary criticism online, it is clear that technological and social elements go hand-in-hand – equally important to our modern lives. Back in 2009, van Dijck, argued for the need of sociology and cultural theories as a way to better understand media and digital advancements (Ibid, 2009:54). This is where Bourdieu's frameworks of the literary field become relevant for this thesis, with an infused media

perspective for contemporary anchoring. This media perspective will be further presented in the next chapter of this literature review.

Mediatization and media logic – a ‘social’ media logic?

In what ways does this rapid media technology development impact the book industry on a hierarchical level, and how can media practices in the form of amateur reviewing online shift the power conditions of the literary field?

Back in 2013, Stig Hjarvard stated that ‘contemporary culture and societies are permeated by media’ (Hjarvard, 2013:2). Almost a decade later, this statement can be illustrated in a myriad of examples from our everyday lives as internet and media technologies are constantly around us: we use multimedia devices and internet for interactions, to buy necessities, declare taxes, entertain ourselves and so on. Hjarvard argues for ‘mediatization’, as a concept to modernise theories of media’s influence over societies, cultures, organisations and people (Ibid, 2013). At its core, the concept of mediatization is about media's way of transforming our ways of life. The phenomenon is highly present today and can *e.g.*, be seen in the way that the Covid-19 pandemic showed us that digital media has the ability to change how –and from where– we work, as the so-called remote workspace takes its way into the frameworks of what is considered to be a ‘normal’ workspace.

Furthermore, in 2020, Andreas Hepp published a comprehensive piece on our developed understanding of mediatization within contemporary societies, something he calls ‘deep mediatization’ (Hepp, 2020). Hepp critiqued the traditional view on mediatization theory as it doesn't consider ‘all’ actors that contribute to the media's transformative process, *e.g.*, companies, social movements and pioneer communities (Ibid, 2020:18). This new contemporary approach to mediatization also takes an updated perspective on a concept of ‘media logic’ into consideration.

Media logic, and the understanding of how communication shapes certain mentalities as it goes through media transmission dates back to the 1950's *e.g.*, in an article called ‘The Logic of Educational Television (Levin & Harvey, 1956). In their work, Levin and Harvey tried to make sense of the emerging complexities that surrounded social controls and social agencies

in an emerging television culture. It was a term that aimed to understand media and communication processes' relation with politics and entertainment, and in extension, these instances' impact on social life (Altheide and Snow, 1979). Media logic was a theoretical term suitable for mass media such as television and radio. However, since then the term has become increasingly vague as the media landscape constantly transforms and evolves.

It is clear that media logic is still valid as a way to understand mediated communication processes, but in today's society the concept of 'media logic', is often referred to as a 'catch-all-term' or 'metaphor' (Hepp, 2020:60) because of its vagueness in describing the constantly changing character of media and the emerging of new media forms. As previously discussed, the concept was initially an umbrella term and an overarching view on communication as it goes through the process of transmission through media; it is built on frameworks of mentalities that are conditioned by a –conceptual– logic where media, in the end, shape content (Baroutsis, 2019:545). Media logic has become a cornerstone in mediatization theory (Hepp, 2020). But with the rapid media development in contemporary society, it is perhaps more relevant to speak of 'media logics' in plural (Hepp, 2020:59-60).

An introduction to this pluralistic view on media logic was, in a way, introduced as early as 2013 in the works of van Dijck and Poell. In a contemporary perspective they suggest the idea of 'social media logic', as a foundational grid of digital and socio-cultural mechanisms (Van Dijck and Poell, 2013). In this sense, social media logic is connected to the technological affordances and furthermore the ideological and social elements that come with social media (Ibid, 2013:5). This would position the idea of media logic into a contextual setting, and separate it from the singularity in its traditional term. Furthermore, we are once again reminded that technology and social elements both play a part.

The existence of multiple media logics can be viewed in many corners of our digital reality and becomes increasingly important to consider, nevertheless in relation to our understanding of the arts- and cultural industries. Furthermore, if a 'social media logic' exists within book groups on Facebook, what consequences does it have on the literary field?

The contribution of this thesis: With new media technologies, so comes a shift in power

Navigating the academic understanding of the literary sphere is a complex and interdisciplinary task. Throughout this literature review, perspectives on the power relations within the book industry have been presented by the development of Bourdieusian perspectives on the literary field (Bourdieu, 1992; Wright, 2005; Leving & White, 2013; Carter, 2016; Classen 2020) and the journey towards the conditions of a contemporary field (Thompson, 2012). For this thesis, it is important to note a previous knowledge on the position of the Nobel prize as a leading force within a presumed ‘economy of prestige’ (English, 2005). Throughout, it is clear that academic works fortify pre-existing assumptions of the hierarchical structures surrounding the field. However, none of these works focus on the democratising elements that digital media bring to ordinary readers, emphasising the need for a complementary media perspective to Bourdieu’s theories in order to understand changing power positions.

Furthermore, the terms and developments of the book industry through analytical viewpoints on the national, global and digital society were laid out (Steiner, 2017; Steiner, 2018; Thompson, 2012). It is notable that the professional book world has undergone a tremendous shift through digitalisation and technological advancements that impacts its various roles and structures, for example, through the rise of conglomerate publishing and an increasing economic gap between publishing houses of different sizes (Steiner, 2018). The industry is also impacted by the development of new reading products such as the Kindle where the industry struggles to keep one foot in its symbolic values and one in its economy and where tech is in the forefront. Here, digital deterministic views are in conflict with the commercial interests in order to keep up with the rapid pace of social developments (Thompson, 2012:314)

This spotlights a content-technology dilemma conflict (Laing & Royle, 2005; Hughes, 2005; Thompson, 2012; Snelling 2021; Michaels, 2015), raising the question of whether or not there is a power shift in the book industry as it struggles to keep one foot in its fundamental values (selling symbolic goods) while constantly striving to keep up with digitalisation and advances in media technologies. Moreover, it indicates a struggle between the commercial

and the authentic, fueled by economic forces imposed by digital development. Then, perspectives on modern literary criticism were synthesised, relating to areas of both marketing in the ‘blogosphere’ (Gomez, 2005), linguistics (Stanková, 2020), and computer science (Holur et.al, 2021). Within our contemporary understanding, it is important to note that elements of technology and the social both play a role (van Dijck, 2009).

But how can this be framed? In the latter part of this literature review, media entanglement with our modern reality has been presented (Hjarvard, 2013; Hepp, 2019). If there was mainly one scope to pick from a myriad of academic works about the literary field, the knowledge gap would be to try and understand the field by researching a part of it that is increasingly important in our digital society: the –no longer passive– recipients, the readers. Furthermore, online reviews in book groups on Facebook provides a new site to investigate. The media- and communications approach –especially mediatization and a pluralistic view on media logics– contributes by complementing pre-existing knowledge and adds to the further understanding of amateur reviews as well as the social functions of the forums. This sheds light on how the social and digital elements may- or may not have created a shift in the fundamentals and hierarchies of the literary field.

In this sense, Bourdieu’s ideas of the literary field are extensive and useful, but in need of complementary perspectives on the impacts of media in everyday life; a perspective this thesis aims to add. To do this, perspectives on the understanding of social media logics within Facebook groups are infused within the work.

Methodological approach

Defining the case: Abdulrazak Gurnah and ‘Bibliophiles’ on Facebook

The general aim for this thesis is to gain qualitative knowledge about consumer reviews on Facebook and to what extent digital communities have the capability of destabilising pre-existing frames of cultural hierarchies within the literary field. This is done by examining

the existence of a so-called ‘social media logic’ (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013) through the group’s social patterns.

To achieve this aim, a case study was designed in order to grasp the wider dilemma. The study is focusing on the investigation of a single example –the power of that example– in order to generate in-depth, qualitative knowledge about the bigger issue of the impacting capabilities of amateur reviews on the field (Flyvbjerg, 2001:71). As a case, this thesis will focus on posts and reviews about Nobel prize winner Abdulrazak Gurnah in the Facebook group ‘Vi som älskar att läsa böcker!’ (2021). Motivation for this choice can be read in this chapter. Throughout this thesis, the group will be referred to as ‘Bibliophiles’.

The selection of the case is important as a way to grasp the overarching phenomenon. One of the misconceptions about case studies is that they presumably and commonly lack generalizability, thus, that they would be more suitable for pilot studies exclusively (Flyvbjerg, 2001:77). A way to tackle this is by a ‘strategic selection of critical cases’ (Ibid, 2001:77). One way of doing it would be to investigate a polarising issue or extreme example. As this thesis investigates hierarchies within the literary field, and the power impacts of amateur reviewers, a critical and dividing element to the case was suitable; an element that would grasp multiple agents of the literary field. A critical case (Ibid, 2001:78) was selected.

Furthermore, a cultural counterpole, the opposite of the ordinary reader and concepts of ‘literary taste’, narrowed it down to posts that discuss Nobel prize winning literature, the ‘one’ cultural prize (English, 2005:55). The Nobel prize in literature embodies the absolute elite of cultural capital within the literary field, not only on a national level, but also internationally (Ibid, 2005). Even though the prize is recognized, it also symbolises a form of cultural exclusivity in the eyes of the common, everyday reader – especially to those who usually read commercial, ‘easier’ genres of literature.

There is an interesting gap and ambiguity between the ordinary reader and the expectations tied to Nobel prize winning literature since it has a reputation of being difficult, high cultural and somewhat exclusionary. This ambiguity is notable within the Facebook group, as opinions about the prize are not entirely unison, signalling that it is a dividing subject to members; some of the richest discussions in the group is about the topic of accessibility of literature for the broader public. The reviews and discussions within the group are thus a

suitable site for investigations of a possible expression of social media logic within a community-tied context.

Concluding on a general level, the chosen case embodies the everyday, ordinary reader's own reflections of the current state of the literary field, an appropriate choice as the thesis investigates consumer reviews on Facebook and whether or not digital communities have the capability of destabilising pre-existing frames of cultural hierarchies. The reflections are tied to the group's own perception of reality.

The early stages: Sampling and organising

First and foremost, social media has become an important factor to the change to people's personal lives and the way individuals form relationships and identity (Chambers, 2013:1). Secondly, group communities on Facebook offer an emotional space for individuals and members to feel empowered, share transformations, and shape identities through their interactions (Kopacz, 2021:501). Furthermore, Facebook is one of the dominating social media in the Swedish context (Internetstiftelsen, 2021). With these parameters in mind, Facebook groups are a great source for qualitative inquiry to investigate social dynamics online. Since this thesis focuses on book groups, the group –Bibliophiles– was chosen with reference to its publicness (Kopacz, 2021) and its high number of members, over 40 000. The group is visible for everyone to see, which means that empirical material is accessible for sampling, as well as ethically suitable. The ethical argument relates to the publicness of the group and the visibility of posts for people outside the group; in contrast to private/closed groups where members actively choose to participate in a less public space.

Entering the group, discussions and reviews process a wide span of literary genres. Some members of the group review bestselling authors, some review crime, horror and thrillers, feelgood, fantasy, and so much more. The book formats also vary, as some are focusing on physical books and some review audiobooks or other digital formats. A sample of posts that encapsulated all of these topics would simply be too wide and demand a 'random sample' technique more suitable for quantitative studies, rather than the qualitative case study intended for this thesis project (Flyvbjerg, 2001:71).

Considering the aim for this thesis, to investigate to what extent digital communities have the capability of tilting pre-determined hierarchies in the literary field, a rich and dense empirical entryway that relates to power struggles *via* social interactions within the group was conducted. By sampling posts about Nobel prize winning literature, the thesis would capture the ambiguous relationship between the ordinary reader within the Facebook group and the literary elite. And by returning to the general aim, the project used a strategic sample with an importance to the general research project, well suited for critical case studies (Flyvbjerg, 2001:78). To analyse posts near in time, posts about Abdulrazak Gurnah, winner of the 2021 literature prize was chosen – anchoring the study in a contemporary context, both in relation to the reviews published and the relation to other participants of the literary field.

The sample for this thesis consists of 22 posts and book reviews, together with 411 comments. The amount of reviews and comments were decided in relation to the time frame of the thesis. The sampled posts can be found, transcribed and translated, in the appendices of this thesis.

Since it is a Swedish group, the selected posts are originally written in Swedish. Once the choice of sample was finished, the process of transferring the empirical material into documents, translated from Swedish to English was conducted. The reliability of these translations are related to the author of this thesis/translator being fluent in both Swedish and English. This was also an opportunity to get an initial and overarching reading of the material before the coding process began.

During this translation and transcription phase it was important to return to the aims, objectives and preliminary research questions as a way to organise any early memos on the material. Even though the method is to be considered open and inductive, research questions were a guiding first step of the qualitative text analysis (Kuckartz, 2014:47; Bazaley, 2013:232), which will be further presented in the following chapter.

Analytical process

In order to gain further knowledge about how people within book groups on Facebook view themselves through ‘fine culture’ and their position within the literary field, a qualitative method is a suitable choice for the thesis, as Bruhn Jensen states that:

‘Humans interpret their ordinary lives as well as the extraordinary events that they encounter, increasingly through communication technologies, as inherently meaningful. Researchers, in turn, interpret the interpretations that individuals and groups have of themselves and their communications.’
(Bruhn Jensen, 2012:266)

Circling back to the aims and research questions, a focus on human processes and interpretation of these indicated a qualitative method (Ibid, 2012). The empirical material –consisting of textual information in the form of book reviews and attached comments– indicated a text analysis. Through this entrypoint, the natural method chosen for analysing the empirical material was a so-called qualitative text analysis; using a recursive, bottom-up approach with a combination of an initial thematic coding (Kuckartz, 2014), that would allow the investigation to be flexible but systematic in its early stages (Bruhn Jensen, 2012:2) – ending with an analytical coding for theoretical depth (Bazaley, 2013:232). The process will be further presented in this chapter.

An important element to the procedure was to let the findings guide to the evolving and continuation of the codes, inspired by grounded theory to avoid pre-existing expectations on the result (Seale *et. al*, 2019:80). However, it is notable that the method was not completely permeated by grounded theory, as research questions and the sample was pre-defined beforehand. The inspirational qualities of the grounded theory tradition came primarily from the vision of sensitivity towards the empirical evidence and the data-centred approach to avoid preconceptions (Ibid, 2019).

So how was the actual coding conducted? After translating and organising the material into tables, the thematic analysis started with descriptive codes through hand coded text passages, phrase by phrase. The descriptive codes were transferred into a separate document, with examples attached to each code and sorted in different colours for visualisation of results. Throughout, the codes were re-visited and refined in relation to the research questions imposed in the beginning of the process. It is important to conduct a continuous internal

debate of reliability and validity when doing a qualitative study. Bazaley emphasises parameters of ‘dependability, trustworthiness, transferability, credibility and confirmability (Bazaley, 2013:402). For me to achieve this, it was important to have a solid methodological design beforehand; systematic, transparent and constantly cross-checking my codes through auto queries in the coding software Nvivo to achieve intercoder reliability.

Soon, parallels between the codes started merging together into themes. It was a recursive process, inspired by Kuckartz seven step guide to thematic analysis (Kuckartz, 2014:15). The relations and differences between the codes allowed for a more ‘focused coding’, meaning that they were more ‘directive, selective and conceptual’ than the initial descriptive codes that the project started with (Bazaley, 2013:237). In the end I was left with four main themes with more clear parallels to theory. The themes and subcategories were:

1. Self legitimization.

This theme entails reviewers and commentators that position themselves and the value of their opinions by backing up claims with a certain knowledge. Subcategories included Emphasising cultural capital, life experience, emotional anchoring and questioning hierarchies in relation to the ‘self’.

2. Collective reviewing.

This theme entails commentators that add to a book review/post with their own experiences of the topic discussed in the original post. Subcategories included adding to reviews, confirming and disagreeing.

3. Acknowledging hierarchies.

This theme entails comments that acknowledge certain power hierarchies within the literary field. This can e.g., be done by arguing for a certain cause by mentioning established media/literary critiques. It can also mean acknowledging certain genres or institutions as especially important. Subcategories included mentioning/arguing with the help of established media, acknowledging hierarchies between genres, acknowledging limitations in their ‘own’ cultural capital.

4. Group dynamics

This theme entails comments that display a collective social pattern. This can e.g., mean

mirroring behaviours within the commentary section or by disclaimers for so-called spoilers. Subcategories include: Mirroring opinions/arguments within threads, spoiler disclaimers, praising reviewers, confirming suggested actions.

When the four main themes were sketched out, the third and theoretical phase of the analytical process began. According to Bazaley, theoretical triangulation of the coding process rests upon a theoretical conceptualization of the empiric material, meaning that ‘theory building is based on an ‘empirical analysis that captures the substance of an object or idea’ (Bazaley, 2013: 239). It is a data-centred approach. The analytical coding allowed for the transformation of descriptive findings, and for the results to be thoroughly viewed with a deeper conceptual perspective. Below, the process of analytical coding is represented in Figure 3, where relations between empirical material contribute to synthesising theory.

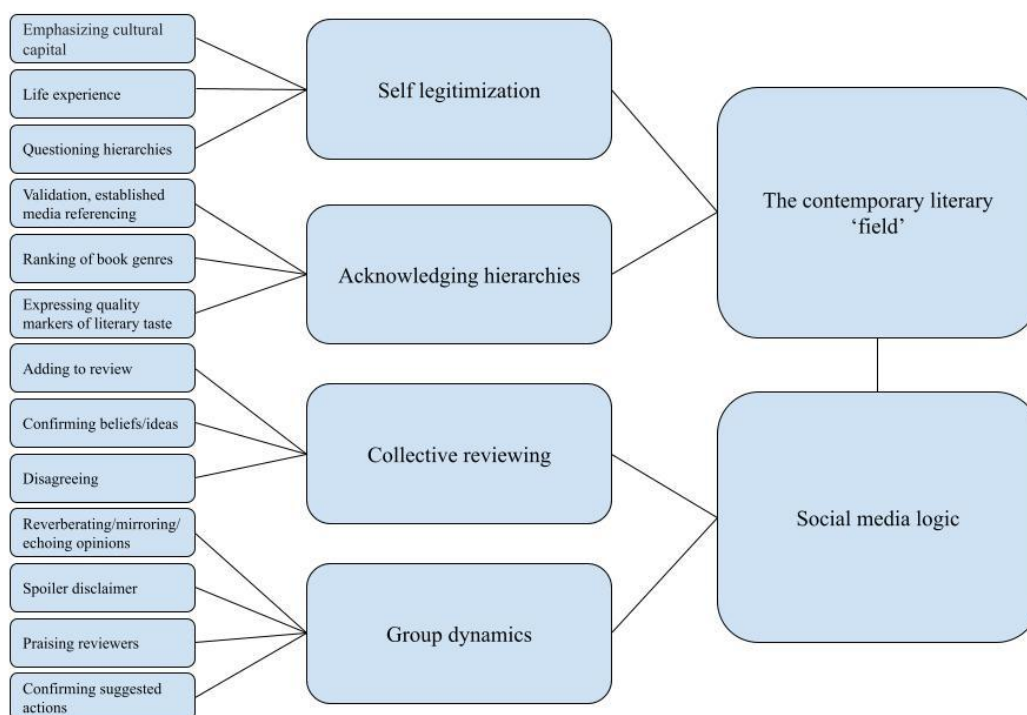


Figure 3. Analytical, data-centred coding process inspired by Bazaley (2013:242)

Ethical reflection

The first part of this ethical reflection concerns the identities of the people behind the data. When dealing with empiric material that contains sensitive information *e.g.*, personal information such as names, beliefs, and world views, it is important to protect the people behind the data, especially since no consent form was sent. So why was the decision to exclude a consent form made?

Entering ‘Bibliophiles’, the group name, total number of group members, pinned posts and rules, popular discussion topics in the form of hashtags, the latest images and the feed of posts is displayed for the visitor. The group is categorised as a so-called ‘visible public group’, which means that all information is presented for all to see without any requirements of being admitted as a member of the group (Kopacz, 2020:503). Due to the publicness of the group, the consent form was not as relevant as if it would have been a private group. Secondly, the sample from the group concerns hundreds of individual people, which means that written consent would have been difficult to collect in relation to the time frame of this thesis project. Instead, I focused on other ethical considerations.

Protective actions were aimed towards anonymizing the sample. First and foremost, every user name has been removed in the transcription process of the data (Rose, 2016:302). Because of the big number of user names, it was easier to give each reviewer and commentator a code name, following the structural pattern of defining if the sample is a so-called ‘original poster’ or commentator. In the case of an original poster, the code name starts with the letters ‘OP’, followed by the review number: for example, original poster 7 is assigned the user name ‘OP.7’. In the case of a review comment, the structure is depending on two parameters: the number of the post that the comment is attached to –letters CP and the number– as well as the chronological number of the comment within the commentary feed. In relation to this organisational method, an example of a commentator code name could be CP7.6. The sample in its entirety can be viewed in the appendices.

The user names are anonymised, but the user names would still be searchable from within the group through the texted transcripts in appendices in this thesis, since the group is visible for all people entering Facebook (Kopacz, 2020:503). How was this tackled? Since Facebook

user names are usually tied to people's real names and identities, it was important to make sure that the people behind the quotes were protected. During the transcription phase of the thesis, all of the data was translated from Swedish to English. This translation not only works as a necessity for English speakers in order to read the essay – the translation is also anonymizing in the sense that searching for the comments in their verbatim and literal state would be difficult for the common reader. In this sense, the translation is not only handy and practical, it is also a second protective action for the identities of the people behind the data.

The following chapter will start with an analysis of the material, which will be further put in relation to the aims, objectives and research questions in the final and concluding chapter of this thesis.

Analysis

Bibliophiles: Introducing structures and frameworks within the group

Throughout this thesis, the group will be referred to as 'Bibliophiles'.

To understand the amateur reviews within the feed, an introductory presentation of the rules and how they might contribute to certain social dynamics is relevant. Translated regulations for Bibliophiles are stated below:

"Title and author should be stated in every post.

Posts that lack information about title and author will be removed. This is a rule that exists so that everyone can feel included in the group. Even if you have a good quality image on the book cover, only people with good eyesight will be able to read text from a picture.

Keep a friendly tone.

Since the aim of the group is to talk about books, criticising each other is not allowed. We kindly ask for help to discover and delete posts and discussions that do not meet these requirements.

Links are not allowed.

It is not allowed to post links to blogs, forums and other places. All such posts will be deleted. If you see any of this sort, notify an administrator so that we can delete the post.

Authors may only post reviews on their own books once.

If you publish on several different occasions, the posts will be removed. If it continues you will be blocked.

Book tips.

The aim of this group is to give recommendations about books. The group is not a forum to display bookshelves, ask questions about reading habits *etcetera*.” (Vi som älskar att läsa böcker, 2022)

The rules are created and moderated by administrators, as seen in the text above. According to Malinen, Facebook groups differ from other social media contexts in its moderation policies and practices (Malinen, 2021:74) where each group is allowed to create its own set of regulatory guidelines which also shape the visibility of opinions and perspectives displayed in the feed. In the sample collected for the purpose of this thesis, this can be seen in the way that book reviews and comments share similar design traits in form and character. Full transcripts of posts and attached comments can be viewed in the appendices of this thesis. One example of this –how reviews and comments share similarities– can be emphasised in the way that posters clarify the author’s name and the book title in their book reviews, something that is often stated early in their texts. The early stated author name and book title is an element to almost every post of the group, even if a complimentary book cover as imagery is attached to the text. In one of the posts, the author’s name and title was further emphasised and written in capital letters:

I just read ABDULRAZAK GURNAH "THE LAST GIFT". An exciting story about betrayal and fear, emigrants and rootlessness. The Nobel Committee deserves all the respect by paying tribute and making an interesting and readable author visible to a larger audience. (OP.17)

The clear display may be a direct result of the group’s first rule; that author names and book titles should be stated in every post. The compliance of members demonstrates a collective effort to upkeep this particular guideline, set by the administrators of the group.

But how is this maintained? Facebook groups are equally ‘peer-created’ and ‘peer-moderated’ (Archer *et al*, 2021). In addition to the use of moderators, rules are reproduced and maintained by the members of the group. It is a mutual task and within Bibliophiles, this is visible in two main ways. The first way is by members who practise

direct compliance to rules by following them in their practices and interactions within the group. This could mean structuring their posts and comments according to rules, hence, maintaining and reproducing the norms and standards set and desired. This can be exemplified in the clear display of author names and titles in the beginning of book reviews in the group – just like OP.17. The other way is similar to what Malinen describes as volunteer gatekeeping (Malinen, 2021:75), in this case, a contextually tied social pattern is created through rule maintenance by users who actively contribute to the guarding of behaviours in the digital environment they socialise in (Ibid). The previously mentioned can be seen in comments under posts that explicitly break the guidelines, e.g., in the shape of leading questions like “Title and author?” (CP7.1), where the commentator points out that this particular and crucial information is missing from the original post.

Posts that break the rules are at a constant risk of being deleted:

“[...] All such posts will be deleted. If you see any of this sort, notify an administrator so that we can delete the post.” (Vi som älskar att läsa böcker, 2022:1).

Through this regulatory display, administrators show that they not only have a set of rules; they also have a fixed set of repercussions for the ones who break the rules. With this in mind, the process of maintaining the rules is constantly active, not only by the administrators, but also among the members as they guard and gatekeep their own behaviours, as well as other users to follow the social codes set within the group. In some cases, members take further measures as a way to follow certain guidelines. As an example to this, one reviewer made a visual interpretation of the picture he/she/they attached to the post:

“The world of literature can sometimes be small. Image: collage of the respective book cover; the brother, the engineer, the hunter Oscar Lauritzen in stylized Paradise vegetation.” (OP.4)

The visual interpretation of this post alludes to the text under the first group rule ‘Even if you have a good quality image on the book cover, only people with good eyesight will be able to read text from a picture.’ (Vi som älskar att läsa böcker, 2022). Even if the text is explanatory in relation to including book title and author name, the emphasis lies within creating an inclusive environment for all members – even the ones with impaired vision. This is something that is further considered in posts with visual interpretation.

In a way, it seems like the fear of repercussions due to rule breaking, maintains a balance within the group. The phenomenon of compliance and governing to these social rules can be viewed in relation to Foucauldian concepts of self-surveillance where an individual adheres to a web of behaviours on the basis of the uncertainty of being watched and therefore also avoids repercussions (Foucault, 2019), in this case it is the risk of getting a review deleted or even being blocked. With this in mind, individuals are monitoring themselves through collective compliance. The dynamic of self- and collective surveillance can therefore be viewed as a result of a strong sense of morality in recognition and resonance to the hierarchical structures shaped by the moderators of the group. To recognize and maintain this power balance, a sense of social morality plays a part, something that is often referred to by Foucault in relation to self-surveillance (Hall, 1996:135).

The unique way of regulatory policies and practices in Facebook groups (Malinen, 2021:74) can be viewed in contrast to other social media contexts where moderation and gatekeeping under most circumstances rely on platform vernaculars –affordances– that shape interactions and practices. Examples of such content moderation may include conditions of technological boundaries, as well as national and international law that create limitations for users as they interact on the platform, e.g., on Instagram (Leaver *et. al*, 2020:68). Within Facebook groups, founders and moderators create their own rules on top of the pre-existing platform-tied conditions. The result is a structure of social rules in addition to the technological and legal regulations – creating a dynamic to the way people communicate within the space, a sense of collectiveness – something that will be further investigated throughout this thesis.

Another element to the rules within the group, is the emphasis of the group as a space for ‘ordinary people’. This can –for example– be seen in the way that authors are only allowed to market their own books once within the feed, a rule that authors also acknowledge as seen in the post below:

“Author post. Anna Breitholtz Monsén, STRANDEN. I noticed that you get to present your own book once in the group. In June, I debuted with the book Stranden and I am overwhelmed by the response. DN called it a "dense crime debut" and thousands of people have given it positive feedback.” (OP.22).

This rule creates a space where a social dynamic in the group is designed to benefit posts by, and for, ordinary people to review and talk about books. Furthermore, the setting contributes to a defensive mechanism against industry posts, and keeps the group from becoming a marketing arena for the industry elite.

As one scrolls through the feed, guidelines set by moderators influence the social shape and form of the appearing posts. However, it is important to note that the total number of members in the group, to this date, exceeds 40 700 user accounts. With only two official moderators it is not impossible to spotlight a difficulty to monitor and assure that all rules are followed in all posts published within the feed. This is also something that is highlighted by the moderators themselves, asking for help to alert rule breaking posts; it is simply a difficult task to fully moderate a big group like the one analysed within this text. Still, the rules, guidelines and the overall compliance, creates a rather unified space.

With this contextual background, it is clear that there is a foundational social dynamic within the group that rests upon a grid of rules and guidelines. At its core, the group is a community with a shared interest in books and literature.

Abdulrazak Gurnah's books, according to Bibliophiles

So what do the members of Bibliophiles think about Abdulrazak Gurnah and his books? The opinions and discussions within the group differ from thread to thread, depending on the views and standpoints presented in the individual main post. In the first thread – OP.1– the original poster states that he/she/they loved the story and expresses an overall positive opinion on Gurnah's writing technique and authorship, as well as towards the themes presented in his book *'Paradise'*:

“I have read "Paradise" by Abdulrazak Gurnah. I loved this story and I feel that Gurnah is a very skilled storyteller that keeps a nice narrative flow. At the same time, it is also a depiction of the history of the colonisation of Africa, which in any case I have never experienced in such a nuanced way before, with the different power structures shifting. I highly recommend it” (OP.1)

In the commentary section of this particular thread, comments are overwhelmingly positive and confirm the statements presented by the original poster in different ways (Appendices,

CP1.1 – CP1.2;CP1.4; – CP1.13), echoing the core of the insights from the OP. Most of the comments are thanking the OP for the review directly or indirectly and are then confirming that they, themselves, now have the book on their ‘to-read’ list (CP1.1-CP1.2; CP1.5-CP1.10; CP1.12-CP1.13). Out of thirteen comments, only one commentator decides to post a question, asking whether or not Gurnah is worthy of the nobel prize (CP1.3), in a way, challenging the expressed collectiveness of opinion in the thread. The answer is brief: “Yes, I absolutely think so! He really adds something to the history of literature and at the same time he has an easy, accessible language and storytelling!” (CP1.4).

With this in mind, the overall collective opinion expressed through the entirety of this thread is positive toward Abdulrazak Gurnah’s book “*Paradise*” and as a review reader, the post by its own might bring an interpretation of the general receivment of the book as well-liked or appreciated by its audiences. But does this really mean that the general reader likes the book and author?

The positive tone that permeates OP.1 and the associated commentary thread is not unique. Most of the analysed threads share an overall positive opinion, which is previously noted in academic works on amateur reviews (Hajibayova, 2019:612). Hajibayova emphasises amateur reviews on the site Goodreads –a website aimed for readers to post reviews of the books that they read– as generally positive; a phenomenon that is also clear within the analysed Facebook group *e.g.*, in threads like OP.1 (Appendices). According to Hajibayova, the tendency of positive reviewing reflects reviewers' intention to influence other readers' cultural consumption, as well as an element of unreliability and issue of trustworthiness within the reviews (Ibid, 2019:612).

Even if the community within Bibliophiles share similar tendencies, the positive reviews do however raise a variety of aspects of Gurnah’s authorship as particularly favourable, meaning that positive reviewing is expressed in multiple ways, *e.g.*, some reviewers spotlights the narratives and themes brought up in Gurnah’s books as especially worth mentioning (OP.2; OP.5; OP.6), one reviewer makes a connection between Gurnah’s “*Paradise*” and Swedish author Jan Guillou’s “*Brobyggarna*” (OP.4) just as another reviewer draws parallels between Gurnah and internationally recognized and canonised authors like Charles Dickens (OP.7). Some favour the language in Gurnah’s books (OP.6), and some highlight the relevance of the

themes presented in his books in relation to real life and its societal and political issues (OP8).

These positive but different perspectives on Gurnah's books displayed through reviews in Bibliophiles, could highlight an aim for reviewers to legitimise and position their own opinions as unique and authentic in relation to 'other' reviewers and their posts in the group – which also reflects an intention to influence (Hajibayova, 2019:621). This self-positioning is often anchored in uses of 'I-words' through text passages like the one below:

“I loved this story and I feel that Gurnah is a very skilled storyteller that keeps a nice narrative flow [...]” (OP.1)

Positioning through the use of I-words is previously identified in Hajibayova's data linguistics analysis on Goodreads (Hajibayova, 2019:612). Within Bibliophiles, the phenomenon is further expressed and developed through references to the reviewers' own reading experiences and practical contact with literature written by nobel prize winners in general, as seen in posts like:

“I easily get caught up in this type of epic book and I (almost) stretched this during two dialysis sessions” (OP.2)

“I am always excited to read the year's Nobel prize winner in literature.” (OP.6)

However, Hajibayova also highlights an element of unreliability within positive amateur reviews online, shedding light on the issues of single sided reviews (2019:612). Taking part in separate reviews, the reader might be given different and sometimes contradictory expectations of Gurnah's books, as reviewers emphasise multiple, but also very subjective and personally-tied views on the books they write about. So how can a reader be certain of the trustworthiness of a review in groups on Facebook like Bibliophiles?

In all of the group threads, the commentary section either adds on to the positive review by confirming its opinions – something that can be seen by simply a praising comment, or by a commentator adding deeper perspectives of similar observations, as demonstrated in the sequence of quotes below:

“[...]Well, what about Guillou? Oscar Lauritzen, one of the brothers in Guillou’s 20th century series is older, but still at the same time as the boy Yusuf (a character from Gurnah’s book *Paradise*). They move through the same time and space, early 20th century in eastern Africa, the time before the first world war. The engineer Oscar Lauritzen plans and builds a railway that Yusuf rides to the coast on from his hometown Kawa.” (OP.4)

“What an interesting connection you made. When I started reading *Paradise*, I came to think of how Brobyggarna were just reflecting on some kind of recognition.” (CP4.1)

“What a cool connection. Now I want to read about Brobyggarna, along with the 2021 Nobel prize winner.” (CP4.3)

In these options, the commentary creates a mirroring effect. The order of quotes above starts with the original poster, making a parallel between Swedish writer Jan Guillou’s book *“Brobyggarna”* and Abdulrazak Gurnah’s book *“Paradise”*. The latter two comments from the attached commentary section enhance and fortify the content from the main review by an introductory praise and a finishing confirmation of the ideas presented. Both commentators allude to positive variations on the term ‘connection’. This behavioural pattern could be seen as a way for commentators to collectively legitimise the review itself. But does this mean that the credibility/reliability of a single and individual review is depending on the comments attached to it?

The phenomenon of reverberating, and collectively enhancing the legitimacy of a review can also be seen in a different review but on the same Gurnah book – *“Paradise”*, where the original poster introduces a negative opinion. OP.3 writes:

“I have now read 80 pages in *Paradise* by Abdulrazak Gurnah. It is not engaging to me! What do you who have read it think? Is it getting better?” (Appendices, OP.3)

The quote above is presented as a justification of the reviewer’s doubts in his/her/their perception of the book and ends with two questions for the group members. The commentary section to this post begins with several commentators who, in similarity with the behaviours displayed in other threads, simply agree with the OP’s claims and doubts in the book. In this case, commentators agree about the discussed book being unengaging – an argument that is sometimes further developed to descriptions of the book as ‘boring’. The resonance of

opinions introduced by the OP, confirms the original poster's pre-existing doubts in the entertainment value of the book. Some commentators reassure that they have read more than 80 pages and still share the same view on the book (appendices). Further down, one comment suddenly appear that brings up a new argument:

“I liked it. The bottom line for me is that it provides insight into both another culture and era than my own.“ (Appendices, CP3.27).

In this quote, the commentator partially brings up the argument of an ‘insight to other cultures’ as a reason as to why he/she/they, in contradiction to the OP, liked the book. This statement is then followed by another comment:

“It is an insight into another culture. Easy to read.” (Appendices, CP3.28)

The argument is very specific and in a big contrast to the tone of voice in prior comments. In this example, commentator CP3.28 reverberates the arguments of the comment above rather than the original post, this time, alluding to the opinion of ‘insights to another culture’. As demonstrated in the sequence, the act of mirroring other member's written remarks occurs, sometimes within a single thread; echoing the values and standpoints already communicated by others in the group.

In relation to previously presented findings, it is possible that an element of peer advice plays a role. According to Rueger *et. al.*, one of the fundamental elements of peer advice within digital health communities is to access information outside the professional context, as a way to seek emotional support and autonomy (Rueger *et. al.*, 2019:2). In similarity to digital health communities, book groups gather online, around a certain interest, niche and context. The idea of peer advice is also one of the intended aims of the Bibliophiles group and a reason why the group was created: this can be read in the group rules where the moderators state that “The aim of this group is to give recommendations about books.” (Vi som älskar att läsa böcker, 2022:1). In similarity to the findings within the article written by Rueger *et.al.*, peer advice received from ‘others’ with similar interests seems to be valued higher (Rueger *et. al.*, 2019:7), something that the Bibliophiles community demonstrates through the action of confirming and strengthening ideas presented in main posts and prior comments rather than dementing/questioning the claims to create a nuanced and diverse discussion.

Moreover, the idea of peer advice could thus be a possible explanation to why commentators exhibit a behavioural pattern of mirroring and reverberating each other's thoughts and opinions. As a way to be part of the group, similar entry points and views to subjects are reinforced and comforting to the individual while at the same time allowing a certain sense of belonging to a group or context that exists because of shared or similar interests and world views. But how can this help us understand how the reviewers see the works of Abdulrazak Gurnah? And what does it say about the power position of amateur reviews?

In summary of OP.1, OP.2, OP.5, OP.6, OP.7 and OP.8, the overall reception of Gurnah's works is positive within the group, views and standpoints that also dominate the commentary sections of each individual post. However, OP.3 has a contradictory view on Gurnah's authorship and writes a distinctively negative review, something that is also reverberated and reinforced by the attached commentary section. In the commentary section of the previously mentioned sample, the original poster even responds by letting commentators know that he/she/they received the advice and acted on it:

Thanks for all the answers, now it's on the bookshelf. (OP.3)

The comment above demonstrates that the overall and collective tone of the commentary section contributed to the original poster not finishing the book; a result that might- or might not have happened if he/she/they would have participated in the more positive commentary section of OP.1.

This spotlights a tendency, where members of the group are more appealed/drawn to commenting and participating under posts and reviews that share the same or similar views on topics and books as themselves – reverberating and rooting pre-existing perspectives and opinions. Within academic research, this type of phenomenon on social media is sometimes referred to as an 'echo-chamber' (Cinelli, M. *et al.*, 2021). Originally, the theoretical concept of an echo-chamber links to forums who share a common foundation built on controversial beliefs; *e.g.*, anti vaccination communities, flat earth forums or alt-right gatherings online – contexts and frameworks that are situated outside the morals and values of established society. The act of reinforcing and reproducing these alternative opinions also legitimise them, showing that the echo-chamber phenomenon on social media risks contributing to a

more polarised society (Boulianne, Koc-Michalska, and Bimber, 2020).

Within Bibliophiles, the polarisation is more subtle, and can be seen in relation to members seeking advice from people who already share similar opinions by participating and commenting similar opinions under reviews rather than questioning them. And this is where the element of peer advice reverberates and transcends into a digital echo chamber. It is a safe space, and it is clear that there is a comfort in the shared collectiveness.

Concluding the chain of thought, the echoing and reverberating is closely linked to a deeper understanding of the social dynamics within the group. These group-specific behavioural patterns contribute, shape and mould a kind of ‘logic’ within the group. The logic is built on similar or shared traits and elements that reoccur, reinforcing the shared morals and world views beyond their common interest in books and literature and the concept of peer advice. In this sense, it is truly a group and with a shared collectiveness.

The pattern alludes to a form of media logic. The concept of ‘media logic’, refers to the shape of communication as it goes through the process of transmission through media; the concept is built on frameworks of mentalities that are conditioned by a conceptual logic in which the media also shape content (Baroutsis, 2019:545). However, the concept of media logic is broad, and sometimes too general and vague in order to acknowledge the shifting dynamics of media as well as the emerging of new media forms. In this case, it is more suitable to speak of ‘media logics’ in plural (Hepp, 2019:59-60). In Bibliophiles, guidelines are set and moderated by two people which contributes to one aspect of this group’s logic –seen in the way users structure their posts in similar ways according to the rules– an element that was presented in the first chapter of this analysis. However the understanding of the group’s media logic further deepens, as this mirroring and echoing behaviour anchors a sense of security and safeness within their shared collectiveness. In the case of Facebook groups, it might be possible to spot a foundational setting of digital, socio-cultural mechanisms in the feed and in relation to this, a group specific ‘social media logic’ (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013) takes its form.

The quality markers of literature and the question of ‘fine taste’

As previously noted, members of Bibliophiles tend to seek emotional support, a form of peer advice (Rueger *et. al.*, 2019:7), from other members of the group; members who already share similar views on literature. The suggested aim for this, is for the group to seek a cultural sanctuary and a legitimacy in the shared collectiveness and community, creating a subtle version of the ‘echo chamber’ phenomenon (Cinelli, M. *et al.*, 2021), previously and academically displayed and investigated in research on alternative and polarising opinions online (Boulianne, Koc-Michalska, and Bimber, 2020). The recurrence of this echoing phenomenon makes one wonder if the members, through their interactions and mirroring behaviour not only seek support on a general emotional level; the collectiveness is necessary and needed as a form of validation, when discussing, reviewing and in extension, possibly challenging societally established and recognized norms –Gurnah as a nobel prize winner– and the current state of the literary field. But what does this collectiveness say about the contemporary shape of the field through the arena of Bibliophiles?

Bourdieu describes the literary field as a differentiated social field, depending on frameworks of autonomy and the battle to legitimate cultural forms (Bourdieu, 1996:142). The idea of ‘autonomy’ alludes to a group’s ability to self-determinate and decide over the parameters of what is considered valuable and preferable. Autonomy can hence be described as the ability to freely decide over the world views and morales. The battle of legitimization of their cultural forms can also be seen in Bibliophiles, even if the battle is displayed in a rather complex manner; through the members', equally own and equally collective eagerness to legitimate and advocate for their opinions on the books that they consume and review. If opinions are reverberated and validated by a number of others, it is also easier to claim a symbolic independence and freedom from the common and accepted ideals of established society; it is a conquest for autonomy (Ibid). One example of this can be seen in threads where members of the group, in a way, create their own quality markers on the concept of ‘good’ taste and parameters of ‘fine’ literature, slightly different from the established and accepted views, a result of the social reverberations and confirmations within the group:

“He really adds something to the history of literature and at the same time has an easy, accessible language and storytelling!” (CP1.3)

“I think the book provides an interesting insight into other cultures. Very easy to read” (CP3.36)

“I read it recently and I liked it! Very simple but still in a fantastic language.” (CP6.6)

“The accessible ones are read anyway. This one really got me interested.” (CP21.11)

Easy, simple and accessible. The descriptions might not be the first choice to describe common parameters of quality in books and literature and nevertheless, as a description of the Nobel prize. First of all, the Nobel prize has an international and global recognition, a symbolic, strengthening and inspirational function, not only for those who receive and consume; the prize also acts as a role model for more local prizes and agents (English, 2005). Within the group, this can be seen in relation to members mentioning how they were given one of Gurnah’s books as a gift (OP7; OP19), where the Nobel prize helps legitimise the choice of present. English states that:

“ [...] within this McWorld of awards, we can see how the outcome of one prize competition immediately registers as a factor in other, geographically remote ones—the sort of “action at a distance” that, for Anthony Giddens, characterises the era of globalisation. [...] The Swedish Academy’s choice of a new Nobel laureate is immediately celebrated as a symbolic windfall by those involved in the more local or regional prizes that the laureate can already count among his or her palmarès, since it greatly strengthens those prizes’ claims to legitimacy” (English, 2005:260)

The Nobel prize in literature is in this way, the ‘recognized’, ‘established’ and ‘elite’ – it is consecrated and leading through its history and in its position within the field; it is a global quality marker on literature. Just as it is a tool for more local prizes to validate their choices (ibid), for families and relatives to consider when choosing a ‘nice’ Christmas present, or, for members of Bibliophiles to use as a justification for their own reading choices and reviews – the prize is a quality marker in its own. But who has the cultural capital to influence the nomination process and decision of Nobel laureates?

When looking at the criteria of the ones that are considered to have enough knowledge to nominate authors for the Nobel prize in literature, the Swedish academy demands nominators to either be a part of the Swedish academy or comparable institutions, to be a professor in literature or language at a university or college, to be a previous Nobel prize laureate, to be a

leading figure of a writer's organisation that could be counted as a representative of its nation's literary production (Svenska akademien, 2022). In other words, the institution demands nominators to be a part of an absolute cultural elite of the literary field; people with a high cultural capital – a debatable opposite of words such as 'easy', 'simple' and 'accessible'.

Still, the popular and affable criteria of quality markers of literature is however more recurring in the case in *Bibliophiles*, as positive notes of Abdulrazak Gurnah's books as 'accessible', 'easy to read' *etc.* echoes in repetition in a myriad of reviews and comments within the group, when discussing his works and the Nobel prize. The question is however, if the group's own quality criteria –easy read literature– applies to other genres outside the narrow and elitist context of the Nobel prize. Where is the line drawn between 'easy' and 'trivial'? Within the commentary sections of *Bibliophiles*, and to some extent, some members of the community seem to value Gurnah, as well as the potential challenges that are tied to reading Nobel prize laureates as a common reader, *e.g.*, as seen in the quote below:

“I was very curious about this year's winner, but I feel it should be both a bit difficult to access and also a bit like the Olympics and be spread around the world. Maybe that doesn't have to be wrong. However, I get very tired of people who are supposed to say what is good and what is ugly, the ones that are popular are usually counted as the latter. Let people read what they want, whether you read what you like or what you think you should read.” (CP21.72.)

In this sense, the commentator highlights both a curiosity for Gurnah being accessible, as well as the expectations tied to the Nobel prize. In a way, quality parameters of 'easy' literature are sometimes in contradiction to the expectations of the prize within the group. On one hand, they believe that the quality and excitement of literature is determined by a lower difficulty level, but at the same time, readers want to be challenged and feel educated by what they read. This demonstrates an awareness of pre-existing and deeply rooted hierarchical structures of the literary field, in which members of the group belong to the common reader. In relation to the issue of accessibility of literature, members of the group even acknowledge, and sometimes uses the group as an arena to question the validness of hierarchies of literary genres, as seen in the sequence of quotes below:

“Accessible literature is not synonymous with good. It's good that unknown authors get attention. They may otherwise find it difficult to be seen in the mass of literature published by large publishers with

lots of PR resources.” (CP21.66.)

“@CP21.66. but accessible literature is not synonymous with bad literature either...” (CP21.67.)

“What is good literature? Who decides?” (CP21.68.)

Through groups such as Bibliophiles, we can distinctively note a competitive force to the traditional hierarchical structures set for the literary sphere. Through the assistance of media technologies that enables groups like Bibliophiles to exist, commentary sections like the one above can actively challenge the established norms of society in an organised manner; demonstrating a quest for autonomy within the group (Bourdieu, 1996). Within this particular example, the sequence starts with one member questioning the element of accessibility as a quality marker within the limited space of the Facebook group. This is a question that is, in return, objected by other members who rather question the societal accepted norms and what is considered ‘fine’ and ‘ugly’. The process creates a dialogue and in extension, an independence through an alternative set of frameworks, different from common norms of art where good quality is typically measured by parameters of higher levels of cultural capital, as seen in the criterias set by the Swedish academy (Svenska akademien, 2022:1) and within the status of the nobel prize itself (English, 2005:260).

However, the interactions between members could also be viewed as a subtle praise of the choice of Gurnah as the 2021 Nobel prize laureate, demonstrated by the positive notion of Gurnah’s books as ‘easy to read’ in relation to previous prize winners. This can be seen in discussions like:

“I think this year's Nobel prize winner is quite easy to read. I was thrilled when I heard the Swedish Academy's motivation and rushed to the library to get in line. And what luck I had. I am now reading the novel "The Last Gift" by Abdulrazak Gurnah. For those of you who find Nobel prize winners difficult, try Kristin Lavransdotter by Sigrid Undset! There are many of us who love Nobel Prize-winning literature.” (CP21.113.)

“@CP21.113. Or, Never Let Me Go by the Nobel prize winner Ishiguru. My teenager read it and liked it.” (CP21.114.)

“@CP21.113. Interesting idea. Judging by the comments from the Nobel committee, his writing is about colonialism (the white man's supremacy), which is very much the origin of today's racism and

Nazism.” (CP21.115.)

The first commentator emphasises an excitement over the choice and motivation for Gurnah as the year’s winner of the prize. Through this comment, the element of the author’s books as ‘easy to read’ is manifested in a positive manner, but spots a direct relation to the decisions made by the Swedish academy as a positive notion to the decision making processes of the ‘elite’ rather than the issue of quality of literature. The next commentator adds to the comment by stating that another winner –Kazuo Ishiguro– is appreciated, even by the commentator’s child, a teenager and thus implicating that yet another laureate keeps a lower and inclusive difficulty level in reading. The third commentator relates Svenska akademien’s choice to its relevance in global social issues.

So what does this tell us? In his work, Bourdieu explains that the hierarchies according to commercial profits –the group– coexist with an inverted structure to the notion of prestige – the nobel prize (Bourdieu, 1996:115). Within the literary field, Bibliophiles represent the commercial profits as they are the broader and common audience of books; they buy and consume the books as well as promote them online. The group exists as a sanctuary and a neutral ground for all readers of all genres. If commercial and economic capital is in opposition to the notion of the ‘pure’ art within the field –fine culture– it would also mean that elitist ideals are, in a way, subordinated to the hierarchies of the popular. In this sense, Bibliophiles could be defined as a space where established hierarchies are also challenged through its numbers and the group’s social dynamic. In this sense, Bibliophiles are a subfield.

Bourdieu states that the autonomy of a restricted cultural production field, could be measured through its capacity to create its own set of criterias, frames and values in how its products are evaluated (Bourdieu, 1984a:5). This is demonstrated through the group’s independence and power over defining what is to be considered ‘fine culture’ by, instead, granting interpretive precedence to the popular reader and in the process, also diminishing the role of the elite (Bourdieu 1984b), once again by valuing standards of ‘easy’, ‘simple’ and ‘accessible’. If these interactions would have taken place outside its digital context, it is uncertain if the opinions displayed in the group would have been visible to the elite. However, through its digital nature and the size of the group –over 40 000 members– it is possible for opinions to have a greater reach and in extension, an impact on the field. This is clear, as Facebook groups like Bibliophiles has become a platforms for publishing houses,

authors and established media to use in order to reach its target groups, *e.g.*, the format of author posts within the group (Vi som älskar att läsa böcker, 2022).

However, despite its challenging force, Bibliophiles still acknowledge societal standards by praising the Swedish academy's choice to listen to- and consider popular opinion. This makes one question whether or not there is actually a shift within the decisions made by the elite. Bourdieu points out the dualist and sometimes antagonist structure of the literary field, where subordination not only exists between various agents of the field, but also within individual genres and subfields, creating a balance and a symbolic capital tied to a narrow, niche, context (Bourdieu, 1996:121). In this way, Bibliophiles is a space where general and overarching oppositions between genres are subordinated to the oppositions within the group; the Facebook group is created as a space for the broader audience to discuss literature and where accessible literature is valued. In the end, this dualist structure and differentiation also creates a unification – a balance within the field (Bourdieu, 1996:117).

But what is the contemporary state of the literary field then, and who is in power? This chain of thoughts culminates in a central question: how do readers position themselves in the literary field through their views on literary criticism?

Bibliophiles: An autonomous subfield within the literary sphere

Throughout this thesis it has been argued that the Bibliophiles display a type of group specific social dynamic –a social media logic (van Dijck and Poell, 2013:5)– that allows them to shape their own parameters of quality markers on literature. This logic grants the collective within the group an autonomous position within the literary field, where established views on literature are being challenged by a large number of ordinary readers. Through their reviews, they can be considered literature critics – even if it is on an amateur level.

This type of amateur professionalism within the feed evokes questions on how we view roles in the literary field. But what does the group think of professional literary critics? And how do we interpret the hierarchical position of amateur reviews in the current state of the field?

“Has anyone read anything by Abdulrazak Gurnah? I'm in a queue at the library (Paradise and The Last Gift), and I am watching Babel now. Nice interview with the Nobel prize winner. Theodor

Kallifatides was not impressed, however.” (OP.12)

While looking at the posts and comments within Bibliophiles, some of the members mention the Swedish public service talkshow ‘Babel’, as an established voice for legitimization of their own posts in the group. However, while browsing the feed in general, it is not a recurring pattern for reviewers to entail information that refers to other established media – if the post is not a so-called ‘author post’ where authors commonly use a selection of quotes from professional reviewers as a way to sell their books to the members of the group (OP.22). So what does this tell us?

As stated in the introduction of this thesis, consumer’s journalistic has a historic tradition within Swedish society as a way to protect consumers (Elsässer, 2012). The aim of consumer’s journalistic is to inform consumers about market products before buying them. The literary field is no exception to this tradition as the literature critic holds a similar informative position (Bourdieu, 1996).

However, society has undergone a tremendous digital shift where almost everything in our everyday lives and our economy relates to our practices on the internet; *e.g.*, shopping, entertainment, social interactions, paying rent. We live in a media saturated society, where media is everywhere and also transforms how we view various elements of life, including our cultures (Hjarvard, 2013). Therefore, it is possible to suggest that our digital practices also impact the literary field and enable ‘ordinary’ people to become literature critics, which also reshapes our definitions of opinion leaders within the field. We see this amateur reviewing –user generated reviews– phenomenon in every corner of society, for example, on sites such as Trip advisor or the cinema site IMDB. Within the literary field, it began with book blogs, something that was early predicted as a space for marketing success for the book industry (Gomez, 2005). Today, it is notable that companies showcase consumer generated reviews as a way of their marketing strategy. Consumer reviews appear truthful and add significant economic and symbolic value to the industries (van Dijck, 2009:54). In this sense, the power given to the ordinary consumer is tremendous – with regards to our post-digital society.

It might seem strange that members of Bibliophiles rarely mention established literary critics in their reviews. On the other hand, it is clear that the book industry and the established

agents of the field pay close attention to the discussions taking place within these groups, showing that groups like Bibliophiles, in fact, hold a position within the contemporary field. For example, one of the larger book communities in the Swedish Facebook context is created and moderated by the Swedish news agency Dagens Nyheter (Snacka on böcker!, 2022). It is a group containing approximately 23 500 members, and it is similar in its function to Bibliophiles; a forum for book enthusiasts to discuss and share literature. The difference? As a traditional and established news outlet, this group is created and moderated by the critics elite. Another group on Facebook is niched towards Feelgood literature, and within the feed, it is clear that publishing houses share their newly released books as a way to generate discussions among the common reader about their products (Feelgoodfredag, 2022). Within Bibliophiles, it is a recurring element to see so-called ‘author posts’ within the feed, where authors according to guidelines within the group are allowed to showcase their works (Vi som älskar att läsa böcker, 2021), as exemplified in the quote below:

“Author post.

Anna Breitholtz Monsén, STRANDEN.

I noticed that you get to present your own book once in the group. In June, I debuted with the book Stranden and I am overwhelmed by the response. DN called it a "dense crime debut" and thousands of people have given it positive feedback.

I wanted to write a detective story that I myself would appreciate reading, with both excitement and warmth. It has both dark undertones and hope. Murder and quite a bit of blood. Even those who do not usually read detective stories can read it.

Stranden is about defected police officer Lina Lantz who travels to her grandfather in Sandinge, and is drawn into a case that leads her to another mysterious disappearance, 1988.

It is especially suitable for those of you who like headstrong characters and thrive in the company of cats. If you also grew up in the eighties, you will feel at home.

I hope Stranden can be included in your holiday reading pile! [...]” (OP22.)

Within these author posts, it is not uncommon to see references to established literary critics, as a way for authors to emphasise the quality of their works.

In relation to Abdulrazak Gurnah’s books, it is possible that members of the group consider the Nobel prize a ‘quality marker enough’. The visibility of these posts also demonstrates that authors value groups like Bibliophiles as a space to promote their books. Previously stated is

also fortified by the presence of other producers within the literary field, such as the group created by Dagens Nyheter (Snacka on böcker!, 2022) or the publishing houses posting press releases (Feelfoodfredag, 2022). With all of this in mind, the distance between producer and consumer decreases and the once clear positions within the field become increasingly unclear. Suddenly, the ‘popular reader’ becomes the ‘authentic reader’, a group of co-creators that producers need to engage with on a close distance in order to survive in our media saturated contemporary society. Boundaries become blurred.

These unclear and destabilised boundaries between producer and consumer, might be a contributing factor to the shift happening within the literary field and other cultural fields (Steiner, 2017). A previous contributor to the stability and conditions of the literary field is the principle of differentiation, which means the objective, as well as, the subjective distances between forces of economy and the cultural industries. Within the field, this could for example mean agents such as publishers, authors or other institutions tied to the literary field and the production of the ‘pure’ art (Bourdieu, 1996:141).

It all boils down to an inverted balance, but the two extremes work together as two opposite poles, and the role of the literary critic is suddenly divided in labour between reviewers of the commercial literature and the critics for the authentic art. The likings of the popular reader represents the commercial and the broad, while the Nobel prize and Abdulrazak Gurnah represents the elitist and ‘pure’. But as we see how consumers get an increasingly influential role, the hierarchies between the opposite poles gets increasingly destabilised, nevertheless seen in the lines drawn between the professional art critic and the common amateur reviewer on book blogs, Goodreads as well as in Facebook groups like Bibliophiles. It is a field where we might have to reassess what is to be considered ‘pure’ and ‘authentic’ – is it the narrowness and difficulty of the Nobel prize, or is it the truthful opinions of ordinary readers?

In conclusion to this argumentative sequence, reviewers in Bibliophiles seldom mention established media to fortify and legitimise their own opinions. Maybe they don’t feel the need to do it, as the authenticity lies within the force of the ‘truthful’ review; a review coming from a peer rather than a professional party of the field, with regards to the logic of ‘peer advice’ (Rueger, *et. al*, 2021). However, what is clear is that the book industry and its professional agents view the group as an important part of the field, demonstrated by their silent presence within these groups.

The absence of professional literary critics voices in the Bibliophiles reviews might hint that professional consumer's journalistics play a small or insignificant role to the members within the group. But does this mean that Bibliophiles automatically oppose elitist frameworks? In the case of Abdulrazak Gurnah's books, the element of the Nobel prize seems like a counterforce to the group's opposition towards the old hierarchies:

“Abdulrazak Gurnah ‘Afterlife’ 2021 Nobel prize winner. An absolutely wonderful book!” (OP.2)

“This year's Nobel prize winner in Literature, Abdulrazak Gurnah, writes about colonialism, about flight, about being born in one place, but living one's life in a different culture on another continent.” (OP.5)

“Book tip! I am always excited to read the Nobel prize laureate of the year in literature.” (OP.6)

“I can see that Abdulrazak Gurnah, the Nobel prize winner in Literature with the books he has published can be and give a real picture of the cultures that existed in the colonial empires, both before and during colonisation by, among others, EU countries!” (OP.8)

“Has anyone read anything by Abdulrazak Gurnah? I'm in a queue at the library (Paradise and The Last Gift), and I am watching Babel now. Nice interview with the Nobel prize winner.” (OP.12)

“I have looked everywhere for the Nobel prize winner Abdulrazak Gurnah's novel Paradise, but it is nowhere to be found.” (OP.13)

“Abdulrazak Gurnah received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2021. Now I have read his book ‘Afterlife’ and I highly recommend it.” (OP.15)

“Abdulrazak Gurnah: Paradise. Winner of the Nobel Prize 2021. Today I got this book and I am looking forward to wonderful hours of reading!” (OP.18)

“I just read ABDULRAZAK GURNAH "THE LAST GIFT". An exciting story about betrayal and fear, emigrants and rootlessness. The Nobel Committee deserves all the respect by paying tribute and making an interesting and readable author visible to a larger audience.” (OP.17)

This is a multifaceted and complex issue. On one hand, members are creating their own frameworks and gain autonomy from the influence of established media, but in many of the posts about Gurnah, reviewers also share the desire to, in a very clear way, mention –and

acknowledge– that it is in fact a Nobel laureate they have read and are now sharing their views on.

As Bourdieu states that “Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier” (Bourdieu, 1984:6), it is a recurring element that members mention the Nobel Prize in direct relation to Gurnah as a way to demonstrate a cultural knowledge before to expressing an opinion about the content of a book. The prize is thus perceived as an important element, even inside the group and for original posters to mention to others. As previously stated, the Nobel prize has a recognition and status within the literary field (English, 2005:260). Therefore, Gurnah as a Nobel laureate represents a cultural elite, manifesting that the prize remains impactful even within digital contexts. In all of these threads, the Nobel prize is not necessarily mentioned in an emotionally loaded manner – it is rather emphasised further as an important and natural element of the book.

Most members mention it, in a similar way that they would clarify author name and book title, as if the information about the prize is equally important for review readers to know before reading the book. One of the original posters are asking other members of the group for their opinion on the book ‘Paradise’, before reading it, but makes sure to mention both the prize itself and an interview with the author on one of the established public service talk shows ‘Babel’ as a way to highlight the relevance of him (OP.12). As previously discussed, reviewers also praise the Nobel committee for their decision of selecting Gurnah – strengthening the position of the established literary elite in a Swedish context (OP.17). However, one post stands in contrast.

The ambiguity between the commercial and the elite

On October 7th, a thread was posted shortly after Abdulrazak Gurnah was announced as the year’s Nobel prize laureate in literature:

“Is there anyone else who thinks that they always choose strange authors for the Nobel Prize??? I think that it would have been better to pay tribute to authors that are liked by many readers, who are easily accessible and increase the desire to read. I’ve never understood the concept of "fine" literature, I would rather see my children (and everyone else for that matter, adults and children) read comic books than nothing at all. No, praise those who spread the desire to read instead!!!” (OP.21)

The opinions expressed through this text are explicitly critical towards the general choice of Nobel prize winners, describing them as ‘strange’. Within the post, the OP raises the issue of availability of literature and his/hers/their suggestion of what criterias to use for the prize instead. In a way, the commentary section of OP.21 could be viewed as an arena of cultural legitimization as commentators write to legitimise their own cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1992:142). This is particularly demonstrated in the commentary section to this post as it is more polarised in its discussions, compared to the more distinct book reviews within the group. It consists of nearly 300 comments, displaying a rich discussion on the values of literature, hierarchies within the literary field and debates on the concept of the Nobel prize.

In this thread, commentators dominantly disagree with the OP and have a positive opinion on the choice of Nobel prize laureates with a reoccurring statement of discovering new authors and broadening their horizons (CP21.7; CP21.8; CP21.24; CP21.57) – subtly acknowledging and legitimising a societally established ranking of literary genres as well as the capabilities of the Swedish academy. The concept of ‘genre’ functions as a stylistic device, but it also creates a sense of reality and truth (Frow, 2015:20), a reality that some of the members of Bibliophiles also justifies and fortifies. One example of this is the ironical metaphor of McDonald’s receiving a Michelin star, a metaphor that appears more than once in the commentary section; alluding to the cultural hierarchies within the culinary field and in the process, also acknowledging that some genres and pieces naturally keep a higher quality:

“Absolutely. However, many may not mean that it should be awarded a Nobel Prize just because.It's kind of like McDonalds getting a Michelin star.” (CP21.45)

“Books that "everyone reads" can get a load of prizes. Why not respect what the Nobel Prize stands for? With that said, it's like demanding that Mcdonalds get a Michelin star” (CP21.162)

Other participants of the thread are giving book tips on ‘good’ Nobel prize winners as a way to educate the ‘uneducated’ members – the ones that do not share a similar positive position toward the choice of laureates. By being an educator, they also fortify their own cultural capital – positioning themselves through their own knowledge in relation to other ordinary readers. The educational aspect of these comments, alludes to overarching views on participatory culture online, where users often use the internet to share knowledge in search for identity and community (van Dijck, 2013:45). Furthermore, this is displayed in the

Bibliophiles community but further deepens as the knowledge sharing becomes a tool to claim a cultural position within the collectiveness of the group.

Furthermore, some are demonstrating a critical acknowledgment of hierarchies within the established cultural sphere, and are hence, positioning their own taste over established labels of what is considered 'fine' or 'popular'. This can be seen in comments like:

“Sorry, I know I'm sticking my neck out. In my teens, Margit Sandemo was the one who paved the way for more reading. I wanted to re-read the books in the library but they weren't there, she wasn't "nice enough". It doesn't seem right that literature should be classified in this way. Anything that encourages people to read books is gold!?!?” (CP21.39)

The overall ambiguity within this particular thread, demonstrates a gap between the ordinary reader and the cultural elite, as the topic of 'fine' culture divides the usually mirroring and reverberating community. Perhaps, structural settings of the 'fine' are too rooted in the field? In the discussion thread of OP.21 it becomes clear that the community rather contests each other's knowledge before contesting the overall hierarchies of the field – whenever the discussion is actually about the elite. Even though some have a critical tone, the impacts of the critique diminishes as the power of collectivism fails along with the visibility of multiple opinions.

In general, Bibliophiles value parameters of availability in literature, but still acknowledge that some genres and styles should naturally keep a higher level – not unlike the argument of granting a Michelin star to McDonald's (CP21.45; CP21.162). This demonstrates a gap between commercial forces and elitist ideals, a contradiction that is acknowledged by the community.

With this said, it is clear that the group has an impacting position within the literary field, commercially valued by the book industry and seen by the industry's presence in the forums. However, whether or not the people in the group themselves spotlights this, remains unsaid.

Concluding reflections: Amateur reviews in a media compact society

The rapid advancements in media technologies and our media practices has transformed our ways of living our everyday lives (Hjarvard, 2013). Through this, it is not impossible to see how changing media dynamics also impact the literary field.

By interpreting and analysing amateur reviews and posts within the group Bibliophiles (2022) on Facebook, the aim for this thesis was to investigate a possible occurrence and impact of a ‘social media logic’ (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013:5) to understand to what extent digital communities have the capability of destabilising pre-existing frames of inveterate cultural hierarchies. Throughout the analysis, three guiding research questions were imposed in order to achieve this rather broad aim. The questions were formulated with the purpose of investigating the elements of the group’s social dynamics, how members of the community position themselves within the field through their discussions about Nobel laureate Abdulrazak Gurnah, and, the ways in which the posts and comments might contribute and add on to a pre-existing knowledge of the power of consumer enlightenment in contemporary society.

Is there a social dynamic within the group and how is it created and maintained? In general and wide strokes, this thesis has presented the findings within Bibliophiles according to the overarching regulatory structures of the group; how moderators create guidelines and frames for interaction and posting in the feed. One example of such a rule is how people structure their posts within the group *e.g.* reviewers must state author name and book title in the beginning of each text as a way to create an inclusive space for people with visual impairment. Another example is the rule that authors are only allowed to post one promotional post on their books, anchoring Bibliophiles as a space for ordinary readers and thus guarding its social dynamic from external industry forces.

The balance to upkeep rules is guarded and maintained, not only by the group administrators, but also by the community itself through something previously described as ‘volunteer gatekeeping’ (Malinen, 2021:74 ; Archer *et al.*, 2021). In this sense, every member of the group is an active part of the shaping of the Bibliophiles community, a community with their

own views on morality and social interaction. This spotlights the occurrence and existence of a social dynamic within the group where members gather around a mutual interest in books and literature but also experience a position and moral responsibility towards the shared social space. It is thus a sheltered space for people as their posts are moulded around a mutual web of behavioural guidelines created by administrators, a social dynamic that the group maintain through compliance and volunteer gatekeeping of the rules.

The following chapter focuses on further exploring these social dynamics within reviews and commentary sections of posts about the Nobel laureate Abdulrazak Gurnah's books. The investigation showed that members seek confirmation to the opinions that they display in the community, explained as a form of peer-advice (Rueger *et. al.*, 2019:7) that in return, also confirm others who share the similar or same views. In the feed, this can be seen in the way people mostly agree with each other, creating almost unison commentary threads that fortifies the value and validity of the individual review. The phenomenon of echoing opinions, adding to reviews and, thus, validating them, was identified within multiple posts and commentary sections. In some cases, an external visitor might interpret the overall opinion of a book as positive in one commentary section, and read a collectively negative opinion about the same book in another thread (OP.1; OP.3). This raises reliability issues in amateur reviews but also emphasises that there is a power in numbers.

A mirroring and reverberating effect is thus created within the group, its posts and commentary sections, comparable to the digital echo chamber phenomenon that usually takes place in alternative online forums like flat earth communities and digital alt right gatherings (Cinelli, M. *et al.*, 2021). Even if the opinions legitimised by the collective through the echo chamber effect, is more subtle and less extreme – it still contributes to a space where established views and opinions become secondary to the ones displayed in the group. This is an element of the contextually tied social media logic (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013:5). On one hand, the logic is built on a foundation of regulatory guidelines, presented in the first chapter of the analysis. On the other hand, the understanding of the group's social media logic further deepens, as the echoing and reverberating behaviour grants an emotional sanctuary and a power to the shared community and collectivism. But does this power have the ability to destabilise the hierarchies of the literary field?

In the latter part of this thesis, focus is put on further exploration of how this collectiveness has the ability to create the group's own quality markers on literature, something that also grants them a competitive position within the literary field (Bourdieu, 1984:5). But what can the posts about Abdulrazak Gurnah tell us about the state of the contemporary literary field in Sweden?

It is argued that the echo-chamber phenomenon fills a purpose and a function in the process of granting the group a competitive position within the field. In this case, the reverberating and mirroring not only acts as an emotional support to individuals within the group, but also on a collective level. The collectiveness is thus essential, necessary and needed as a form of validation in the process of challenging cultural hierarchies; a process that takes place while the members are discussing, reviewing Gurnah as a nobel prize winner.

As an example of this: some keywords kept reappearing within the material in the shape of positive notions of Abdulrazak Gurnah's books as 'easy to read', 'simple, and 'accessible'. These quality measurements are in opposition to the common and recognized opinions of Nobel prize winning literature as an elite cultural symbol (English, 2005:260). Traditionally, the prize is arguably the opposite of 'accessible' and 'simple' which can be seen in the exclusive character of the nomination criterias set by Svenska akademien (Svenska akademien, 2022). In relation to the prize's historical reputation, it is clear that members of the group praise the 2021 winner with a notion to their own –group specific– quality measurements of accessible literature:

“I think this year's Nobel prize winner is quite easy to read. I was thrilled when I heard the Swedish Academy's motivation and rushed to the library to get in line.” (CP21.113)

The Bibliophiles' ability to re-assess recognized literary hierarchies through digital media, also grants them autonomy, their own social capital and a sense of engagement within the group – an empowering element to the labour they conduct in the field (Hajibayova, 2019:613). According to Bourdieu, the achievement of autonomy is crucial in the shaping of a field (Bourdieu, 1996; Bourdieu, 1984:5). In this sense, it is possible that Bibliophiles and similar groups could be viewed as subfields in a bigger context as they simply demonstrate the ability to create their own set of quality markers. Some even go as far as questioning

predetermined, traditional hierarchies of art, demonstrating their active role in the literary field by asking questions of ‘what is good literature?’ and ‘who decides?’ (CP21.68.)

It is however complex whether or not the group could be viewed as completely free from established norms and frames as many members acknowledge and accept pre-existing balances. In the end, it is clear that ‘taste classifies the classifier’ (Bourdieu, 1984b:6) as reviewers use the concepts of fine taste –in one way to oppose the elite and in another way to acknowledge it– as a tool to legitimise their own opinions and beliefs.

As a way to investigate the power of amateur reviews, the thesis further anchored the reviewers role in relation to other agents of the literary field by looking at how professional critics are referred to in the group. In posts about Gurnah, the absence of professional critics' voices was striking in comparison to how established media is often mentioned in so-called ‘author posts’ (OP.22). This makes one question if the role of the professional critic is subordinated to the members within the group, as amateur reviews seem ‘truthful’ and emotionally closer to the regular consumer (Manchaiah, V. *et al*, 2021) as the group was created as a space for like minded. Authors on the other hand, are not within the group to take part of this community, they are there to promote their books to their readers.

Back in 2006, Gomez predicted the growing popularity in book blogs to be a successful arena for marketing instances for the book industry (Gomez, 2005). Today, the industry’s presence and interest for internet bound book communities is a reality, something not only displayed through the use of author posts in Bibliophiles. The elite parts of the literary field also create their own communities on social media (Snacka on böcker!, 2022; Feelgoodfredag, 2022). This can be showcased by other Facebook groups such as Feelgood fredag where book publishers post press releases directly to their readers and treat them in a similar way to how literary critics at *Sydsvenskan* or *Dagens nyheter* would be treated; as a valid and impactful part of the literary field. In this sense, amateur reviewers co-exist with professional reviewers (A. Humphreys and G. Kent 2008; Cunningham, 2012), and the consumer reviews appear truthful and closer to target groups. In this sense, the power given to the ordinary consumer is tremendous – with regards to our post-digital society.

Bourdieu once wrote about the conditions of the literary field and the principle of differentiation; the objective and subjective distances between the economic forces of society

and the symbolic element of the cultural industries (Bourdieu, 1996:141). According to the same, differentiation between the two forces are crucial for the balance of the field as the opposites work in harmony. However, in the light of forums like Bibliophiles, the role of the literary critic is no longer exclusive to people with a high cultural capital as we see how the economic forces of the book industry fortifies the position of amateur reviewers through their presence within the forums. This can be linked to a digitally enabled economic structure, where formal activities in the market and informal social processes converge (Cunningham, 2012:418). The forum's own disregard to professional reviewers, also showcase that the role of the amateur is valued higher within the group.

In this sense, digital entanglement with our everyday lives provides opportunities for everyday readers to gain position within the field while reviewing and assessing what they consider to be quality markers of literature. Nowadays, the role of the critic is hence divided in its labour between the 'amateur' and the 'professional', equally treated by the industry as boundaries and distinctions are getting increasingly blurred (van Dijck, 2009:54).

If readers within Bibliophiles value accessible literature, this would symbolically mean that they value literature for the broader audiences, an industry marketing success where the amateur reviewer has an impact and is valued in its closeness to other readers and target groups. The emotional closeness of the amateur reviewer also sheds light to the availability of digital technologies that provides tools for everyday consumers to claim its space in the field on the basis of being one of the masses. In the sense of what reviewer the ordinary reader wants and consider truthful, we might also have to reassess what is to be considered 'authentic'. In this sense, the rule of differentiation, the previous balance, that Bourdieu once spoke of (Bourdieu, 1996:141), is unstable in our media compact everyday lives.

The role of amateur reviews within Bibliophiles showcase that the ordinary reader indeed has an impact on the literary field with regards to the industry's presence in the groups. In extension, there is a power in contemporary consumer enlightenment where amateur reviewers appear truthful to others, even if the validity is dependent on a high number of unison voices; a collective of amateur reviewers.

In conclusion, our academic understanding of the literary world rely on sociological foundations (Bourdieu, 1996; Carter, 2016; Classen, 2020), a industry understanding (Gomez,

2005; Thompson, 2012; Michales, 2015; Steiner, 2018), linguistics perspectives (Hajibayova, 2019; Manchaiah, V. *et al*, 2021). However, in all of this, digital media's transformative force on our everyday lives and practices gets increasingly important as a way to provide an elastic perspective on our understanding of the dynamics within the literary field and hence, the current state of it. The media perspective is something that this thesis has provided, as a contribution and complimentary view on Bourdieu's field theory.

With this reflection, our entanglement with digital media and the evolution of media technologies play a role for the literary field. About 'mediatization', Stig Hjarvard suggests a macro-social process, a theoretical perspective as a middle ground in order to understand how media impact people to a large-scale, long term structural transformation by its possibilities to enable communication processes (Hjarvard, 2013:3). Through the pluralistic use of the term 'media logic', it has become clear that Bibliophiles have their own logic; a social media logic (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013:5), demonstrating that the concept has a relevance today, even if we must tweak it to different contexts and take the changing character of media and new media forms into consideration. Lastly, the evolution of media can contribute to challenging the most elite, embedded hierarchies – hierarchies such as the literary field.

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Appendices

Coding by hand: Example sheets

The first step of the coding procedure was to process the material in a very descriptive way. The method of coding by hand was useful, where coloured pencils were used in order to visualise early tendencies. Memos were organised in the margins of the transcripts.

Attached below is an example from this part of the process:

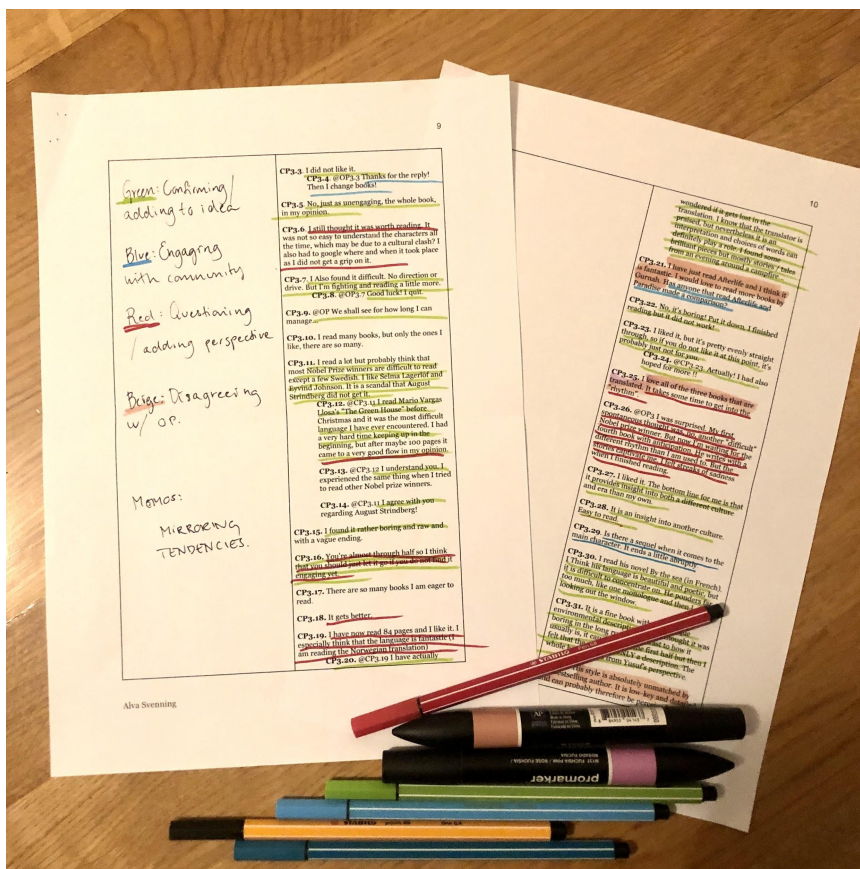


Figure 1.

Thematic coding: Descriptive and thematic codes

The next part of the process was to refine and relate the descriptive codes, as themes started to emerge. This part of the process was constantly revisited and put into relation to the guiding research questions.

Attached below is the thematic coding scheme:

Thematic coding scheme: Descriptive and thematic codes			
<p>1. Self legitimization</p> <p>This theme entails commentators that position themselves and the value of their opinions by backing up claims with a certain knowledge.</p> <p>Subcategories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emphasising cultural capital 2. Life experience 3. Questioning hierarchies 	<p>2. Collective reviewing</p> <p>This theme entails commentators that add to a book review/post with their own experiences of the topic discussed in the original post.</p> <p>Subcategories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adding to review 2. Confirming 3. Disagreeing 	<p>3. Acknowledging hierarchies</p> <p>This theme entails comments that acknowledge certain power hierarchies within the literary field. This can e.g., be done by arguing for a certain cause by mentioning established media/literary critiques. It can also mean acknowledging certain genres or institutions as especially important.</p> <p>Subcategories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mentioning/arguing with the help of established media 2. Acknowledging hierarchies between genres 	<p>4. Group dynamics</p> <p>This theme entails comments that display a social dynamic. This can e.g., mean mirroring behaviours within the commentary section or by disclaiming so-called spoilers.</p> <p>Subcategories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mirroring opinions/arguments within threads. 2. Spoiler disclaimers 3. Praising reviewers 4. Confirming suggested actions

Figure 2.

Analytical coding scheme: Conceptualising thematic codes

Thematic codes were further related and refined, letting the findings guide the theoretical conceptualization of the themes.

Attached below is the analytical coding scheme:

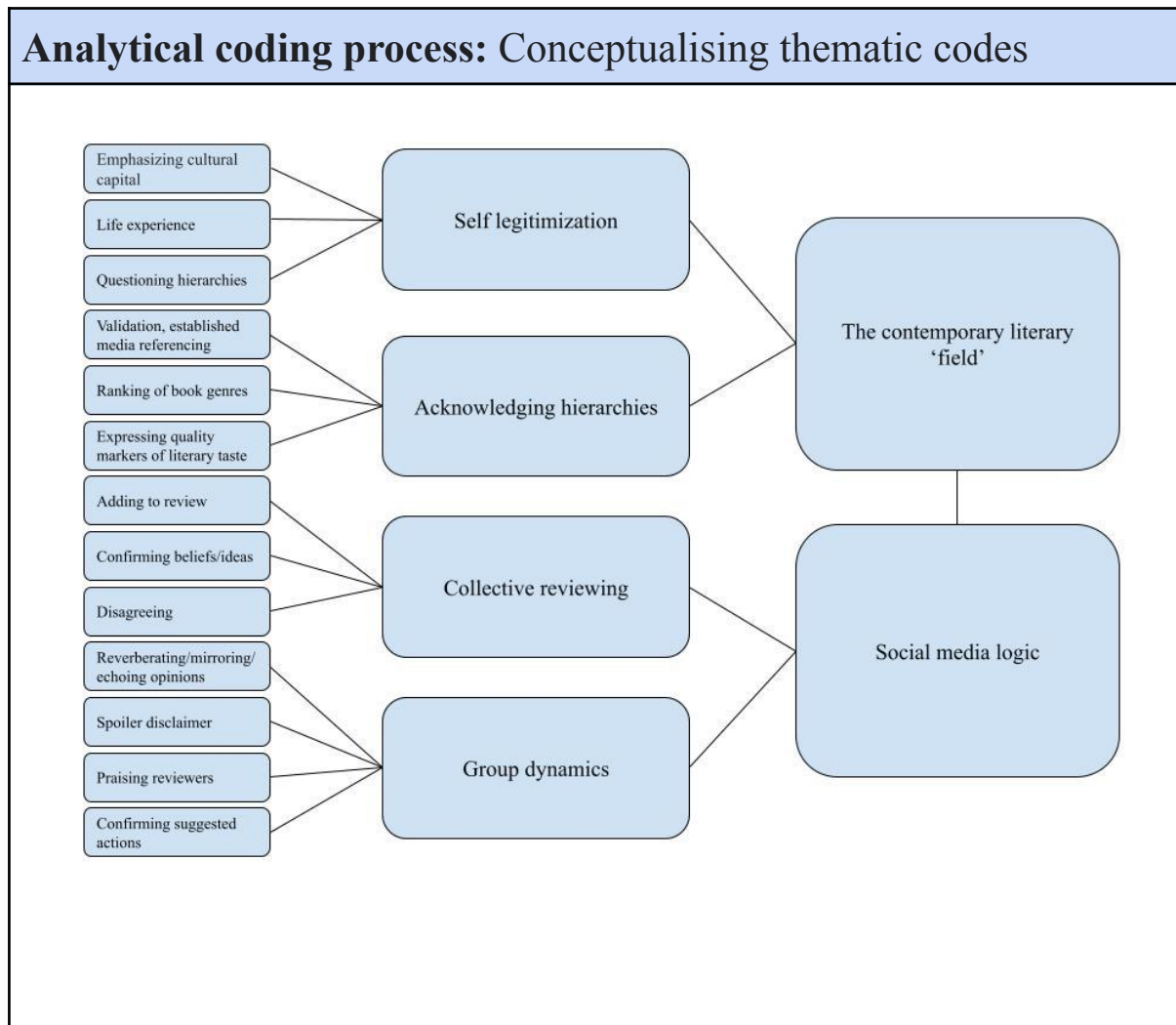


Figure 3.

Transcript

This part of the appendices contains the full transcript of sampled posts and comments from the group.

The column on the left contains the translated original comment. In the right column, commentary sections are attached to each original post. Indents indicate a reply to individual comments.

OP = Original Poster

CP = Comment Poster

Original post	Comments
<p>OP1: I have read "Paradise" by Abdulrazak Gurnah. I loved this story and I feel that Gurnah is a very skilled storyteller that keeps a nice narrative flow. At the same time, it is also a depiction of the history of the colonisation of Africa, which in any case I have never experienced in such a nuanced way before, with the different power structures that changed each other. Highly recommend it</p>	<p>CP1.1. Inspirational description. I want to read it soon.</p> <p>CP1.2. I am looking forward to reading it!</p> <p>CP1.3. Was he worth the Nobel Prize? CP1.4. Yes, I absolutely think so! He really adds something to the history of literature and at the same time has an easy, accessible language and storytelling!</p> <p>CP1.5. Should be exciting to read. I Always find it interesting to read Nobel prize winners that one has never heard of!</p> <p>CP1.6. Thanks for the great review.</p> <p>CP1.7. Thanks for the tip! Standing in line at the library to get The Last Gift.</p> <p>CP1.8. Maybe I should read it, I will write it down on my "to-read list"</p> <p>CP1.9. Now I'm curious about reading it! C10. Me too!</p> <p>CP1.10. Waiting for my copy. Can't wait!</p> <p>CP1.11. I, who am so happy with Storytel, find that they fail here. The book must bring revenue in the trade first. I probably might have to queue at the library first.</p> <p>CP1.12. I already have one of his other books lying in my "to-read" pile. Your review also bodes well for it.</p> <p>CP1.13. I'm waiting for my order from Adlibris but</p>

	they seem to have a hard time getting it. Funny that it is in demand and now I long to read it.
<p>OP2: Abdulrazak Gurnah "Afterlife" 2021 Nobel prize winner. An absolutely wonderful book! AG is a brilliant storyteller and the story weaves together the history of Africa, war, the ravages of Europeans, Muslim customs and the upbringing of a young girl. It is violent, thoughtful and very fascinating. The language (and the translation) is beautiful and very picturesque. I easily get caught up in this type of epic book and I (almost) stretched this during two dialysis sessions...</p>	<p>CP2.1. I Also posted a post yesterday about, among other things, that book. I have read it in English. I liked how the different protagonists' lives radiated together in a natural and good way. And that they were in focus and the story was like a background.</p> <p>CP2.2. Good book, worth reading.</p>
<p>OP3: I have now read 80 pages in Paradise by Abdulrazak Gurnah. It is not engaging to me! What do you who have read it think? Is it getting better?</p>	<p>CP3.1. Best in the middle, stunningly dull at the end. You do not miss much if you put it back on the shelf.</p> <p>CP3.2. No, not at all.</p> <p>CP3.3. I did not like it.</p> <p>CP3.4. @OP3.3 Thanks for the reply! Then I change books!</p> <p>CP3.5. No, just as unengaging, the whole book, in my opinion.</p> <p>CP3.6. I still thought it was worth reading. It was not so easy to understand the characters all the time, which may be due to a cultural clash? I also had to google where and when it took place as I did not get a grip on it.</p> <p>CP3.7. I Also found it difficult. No direction or drive. But I'm fighting and reading a little more.</p> <p>CP3.8. @OP3.7 Good luck! I quit.</p> <p>CP3.9. @OP We shall see for how long I can manage...</p> <p>CP3.10. I read many books, but only the ones I like, there are so many.</p> <p>CP3.11. I read a lot but probably think that most Nobel Prize winners are difficult to read except a few Swedish. I like Selma Lagerlöf and Eyvind Johnson. It is a scandal that August Strindberg did not get it.</p> <p>CP3.12. @CP3.11 I read Mario Vargas Llosa's "The Green House" before Christmas and it was the most difficult language I have ever encountered. I had a very hard time keeping up in the beginning, but after maybe 100 pages it came to a very good flow in my opinion.</p> <p>CP3.13. @CP3.12 I understand you. I experienced the same thing when I tried to read other Nobel prize winners.</p> <p>CP3.14. @CP3.11 I agree with you</p>

	<p>regarding August Strindberg!</p> <p>CP3.15. I found it rather boring and raw and with a vague ending.</p> <p>CP3.16. You're almost through half so I think that you should just let it go if you do not find it engaging yet.</p> <p>CP3.17. There are so many books I am eager to read.</p> <p>CP3.18. It gets better.</p> <p>CP3.19. I have now read 84 pages and I like it. I especially think that the language is fantastic (I am reading the Norwegian translation)</p> <p>CP3.20. @CP3.19 I have actually wondered if it gets lost in the translation. I know that the translator is praised, but nevertheless it is an interpretation and choices of words can definitely play a role. I found some brilliant pieces but mostly stories / tales from an evening around a campfire...</p> <p>CP3.21. I have just read Afterlife and I think it is fantastic. I would love to read more books by Gurnah. Has anyone that read Afterlife and Paradise made a comparison?</p> <p>CP3.22. No, it's boring! Put it down. I finished reading but it did not work!</p> <p>CP3.23. I liked it, but it's pretty evenly straight through, so if you do not like it at this point, it's probably just not for you.</p> <p>CP3.24. @CP3.23. Actually! I had also hoped for more !!</p> <p>CP3.25. I love all of the three books that are translated. It takes some time to get into the "rhythm".</p> <p>CP3.26. @OP3 I was surprised. My first spontaneous thought was, no, another "difficult" Nobel prize winner. But now I'm waiting for the fourth book with anticipation. He writes with a different rhythm than I am used to. But the stories captivate me. I felt streaks of sadness when I finished reading.</p> <p>CP3.27. I liked it. The bottom line for me is that it provides insight into both a different culture and era than my own.</p> <p>CP3.28. It is an insight into another culture. Easy to read.</p> <p>CP3.29. Is there a sequel when it comes to the main character. It ends a little abruptly.</p>
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	<p>CP3.30. I read his novel <i>By the sea</i> (in French). I think his language is beautiful and poetic, but it is difficult to concentrate on. He ponders far too much, like one monologue and then I start looking out the window.</p> <p>CP3.31. It is a fine book with picturesque environmental descriptions. But I thought it was boring in the long run. In contrast to how it usually is, it caught me in the first half but then I felt that the rest was ONLY a description. The whole book is told from Yusuf's perspective.</p> <p>CP3.32. His style is absolutely unmatched by any bestselling author. It is low-key and detailed and can probably therefore be perceived as boring if you do not like the style.</p> <p>CP3.33. I got his last book as a Christmas present, I had a really hard time with it in the beginning, events ran into each other and it was difficult to grasp names and people. Towards the end it was easier but a bit predictable. Did not get the experience of the country that I myself have been visiting.</p> <p>OP3. Thanks for all the answers, now it's on the bookshelf.</p> <p>CP3.34. I'm reading it, and I find it to be a little difficult. Maybe it is better in the original language? Still interesting to read, but not really my style.</p> <p>CP3.36. I think the book provides an interesting insight into other cultures. Very easy to read. A sequel would have been nice because I'm not really happy with the ending.</p> <p>CP3.37. @CP3.36. hihhi, the end was the best.</p> <p>CP3.38. @CP3.36. I'm curious about what happens next.</p> <p>CP3.39. @CP3.36. It can definitely be done but I think I realised the hopelessness in his life. That this was his only chance, but that it is not really a chance / choice... a bit like that.</p> <p>CP3.40. @CP3.39 You think well about the "open" but "closed" end.</p> <p>CP3.41. I came halfway. Then I could no longer bear the one-sided male perspective. There are so many books like that, I'm too old to spend time on another one.</p> <p>CP3.42. Neither could I stick with it and continue reading. It did not engage me. It felt difficult. I might try again another time.</p>
<p>OP4: Book: <i>Paradise</i>. Author Abdulrazak Gurnah.</p>	<p>CP4.1. What an interesting connection you made. When I started reading <i>Paradise</i>, I came to think of</p>

<p>Book: Brobyggarna Author: Jan Guillou</p> <p>About the narrator's perspective in Paradise. An author can choose between different narrators: The omniscient author who knows and explains what everyone thinks and does and what happens and has happened. The I-narrator who only knows what the self thinks and does and what the self itself is involved in. Gurnah chooses neither of the two extremes. But he chooses a narrator who knows what the main character Yusuf thinks but not what others think.</p> <p>The narrator largely describes only what Yusuf himself can partake of. "And anyone can see that you have your poor eyes open and do not want anything to escape them." In this way, Gurnah creates the uncertainty that exists in Yusuf. "Which led him to believe that he" knew more about him than he did." This narrative perspective is chosen so that the uncertainty will also be present in the text itself, where the reader does not get to know much more than Yusuf. "This is not a fairy tale. There's still a lot here you do not understand".</p> <p>Well, what about Guillou? Oscar Lauritzen, one of the brothers in Guillou's 20th century series is older, but still at the same time as the boy Yusuf. They move through the same time and space, early 20th century in eastern Africa, the time before the first world war. The engineer Oscar Lauritzen plans and builds a railway that Yusuf rides to the coast on from his hometown Kawa. "They moved to Kawa because the town soon expanded as the Germans used it as a storage site for the railway that they were building on the plateaus of the inner country".</p> <p>The world of literature can sometimes be small. Image: collage of the respective book cover; the brother, the engineer, the hunter Oscar Lauritzen in stylized Paradise vegetation.</p>	<p>how Brobyggarna were just reflecting on some kind of recognition.</p> <p>OP4. @CP4.1 Thank you. There are more connections but then I have to spoil both Brobyggarna and Paradiset and I did not want that.</p> <p>CP4.2. @OP4 Then maybe I will discover even more when I get further into Paradise.</p> <p>CP4.3. What a cool connection. Now I want to read about Brobyggarna, along with the 2021 Nobel prize winner.</p> <p>OP4. @CP4.3 Thank you. Suggestion: that you then "only" read Brother Oscar's chapter in Brobyggarna in parallel with Paradise. This saves you time.</p> <p>CP4.4. This might be a spoiler, so be careful if you have not read the book but intend to do so. As said. And a little padding so you do not see what I write below. If you have read the book and wonder how it went for Yusuf, he can be found in the novel Afterlives.</p> <p>CP4.5. @OP4 How fun it was to read your post about the books, and the characters in them. Threads and stories tied together.</p> <p>OP4. @CP4.5 thank you for that.</p> <p>CP4.6. Exciting reflections!</p>
<p>OP5: This year's Nobel prize winner in Literature, Abdulrazak Gurnah, writes about colonialism, about flight, about being born in one place, but living one's life in a different culture on another continent. And constantly feel that he is somewhere in between. He writes in English but adds a few words in Swahili to his texts. There are a few books translated into Swedish, I hope I can come across someone soon. Exciting with a (for me) new author, who can broaden my horizons.</p>	<p>CP5.1 I Have never heard of him. But I am curious and I will borrow some of his books.</p> <p>CP5.2. A "Must" read, of course... Just out of curiosity, I checked how many Nobel prize winners I read. It's 18. But of the 18, I have really only liked and read seven pieces with enthusiasm...</p> <p>CP5.3. Which seven?</p> <p>CP5.2. Charles Ring R. Kipling, Pearl Buck, Alice Munro, Kazuo Ishiguro, Pär Lagerkvist, Doris Lessing, T S Eliot. And John Steinbeck! It was probably 8... John</p>

	<p>Galsworthy that I had all of the volumes of the Forsyth saga. I read them a long, long time ago and thought they were</p> <p>CP5.4. Exciting! I will first read "Afterlives" which came out last year.</p> <p>CP5.5. https://www.theguardian.com/.../afterlives-by-abdulrazak...</p> <p>CP5.6. Afterlives by Abdulrazak Gurnah review - living through colonialism.</p> <p>CP5.7. Afterlives by Abdulrazak Gurnah review - living through colonialism.</p> <p>CP5.8. I've never heard of him. I must start listening to Paradise.</p> <p>CP5.9. What a handsome man!</p> <p>CP5.10. Why did Maryse Condé not receive the Nobel Prize?</p>
<p>OP6: Book tip!</p> <p>I am always excited to read the year's Nobel prize winner in literature.</p> <p>2021, Abdulrazak Gurnah, Paradise. Born in Zanzibar and now living in the UK.</p> <p>He writes in detail but it is still not elaborated. I am captivated by the language and the characters. The 12-year-old Yusuff unexpectedly gets to accompany his uncle to the coast. Only much later does he find out that his father owes his uncle money. He sends his son as a pledge, as a down payment on the debt. Yusuff becomes a work slave. In addition, he finds out that Uncle Aziz is in fact not his uncle. Yusuff gets to help in Aziz's shop and he gets food for the day and a rug to sleep on. There he meets Khalill who becomes his friend. He is also a work slave. They work together in the store. He longs for his family, cries at night but tries to adapt as best he can and time passes. Aziz is a merchant, he organises caravans that every year go on a journey that can sometimes take several months. He hires about 40 people to carry his goods. They buy and sell along the way. A journey that goes through the wilderness of Africa, across rivers. An Africa characterised by tribal enemies, superstition and disease. When Yusuff is 16, he gets to go on one of Aziz's trips, something that will be a memory for the rest of his life. Throughout the book, I get to follow Yusuff who quietly keeps his distance, watches, listens, learns to understand how the world works. Yusuff stays with Aziz for six years before his father's debt is paid.</p>	<p>CP6.1. It sounds like it's a book I have to read! Thanks for the tip.</p> <p>CP6.2. Very nice book. But still not enough for me to get completely stuck to it. But I have had difficulties with concentration when I read for a while so I probably would have liked it more under normal circumstances. For now, I have reached the first half of the book and lost interest when it became more exciting...</p> <p>CP6.3. @CP6.2. Thank you.</p> <p>CP6.4. @CP6.2. I also lost interest after half the book. For me, it was very much about the total absence of women as anything other than hysterics or rape victims. I am fully aware that it is a different time, a different culture; but it gets so alienating to me.</p> <p>CP6.5. Nice review that gives a good picture of the book.</p> <p>CP6.6. I read it recently and I liked it! Very simple but still in a fantastic language. It was strong and at the same time so... I don't really know what word I am looking for, but maybe low-key?</p> <p>CP6.7. @CP6.6. That's exactly it. The low-mindedness runs like a common thread throughout the book and with Yusuff it definitely exists, maybe that's why I came to like him..</p>

<p>A well-written book, magnificent language and remarkable characters. A page turner and a Nobel prize winner that I will read more books from. It is included in "Låna & Läs 2021/22".</p>	
<p>OP7: Got this as a birthday present a while ago: Paradise by Abdulrazak Gurnah. Has anyone read any books from this year's Nobel prize winner?</p>	<p>CP7.1. Title and author?</p> <p>CP7.2. Sounds exciting, tell when you read. OP7. @CP7.2. Of course.</p> <p>CP7.4. I ordered this and it finally arrived at the bookstore so I could pick it up today!</p> <p>CP7.5. Bought it today. Should read it with an open mind.</p> <p>CP7.6. I have another book that I am working on and two more before in the "inbox". Then I will throw myself over "Paradise".</p> <p>CP7.7. I'm reading The Last Gift Now and it's great! Recommend. I'm in line for Paradise, it's coming soon from the library. Wonderful reading.</p> <p>CP7.8. Not started yet</p> <p>CP7.9. Has started. Promising.</p> <p>CP7.10. Have read 70 pages and think it is boring so far but maybe it will be better later.</p>
<p>OP8: I can see that Abdulrazak Gurnah, the Nobel prize winner in Literature with the books he has published can be and give a real picture of the cultures that existed in the colonial empires, both before and during colonisation by, among others, EU countries! A background that shows that it is difficult in those cultures to trust someone. Where survival is an instinct and not a goal. Abdulrazak Gurnah's descriptions in the books will be able to change all integration work in Sweden. Maybe even in other countries. The newly arrived who have understood their background and seen differences in the culture of the EU countries are in fact the ones who have succeeded best in their integration. I am grateful that I have met so many who have succeeded. This year's literature prize will open many eyes among politicians and those who work with integration. Now, there is hope that it can succeed. I can not help but write this "The key to the future is in history". I have written this several times. Ever since I read geology in my youth! That's true even now!</p>	<p>CP8.1. In that case, it requires politicians who read books *, and given Ebba Busch's sad contribution to Swedish classics, I doubt it.</p> <p>CP8.2. * I will not exhaust myself, I have no desire to read what he wrote.</p> <p>CP8.3. Ebba Busch Thor answered the book quiz incorrectly.</p> <p>CP8.4. Very well written.</p>
<p>OP9: The book "Afterlife" by Abdulrazak Gurnah and the book "Brobyggarna" by Jan Guillou. "Afterlife" is an epic story that takes place in East Africa during the first part of the 20th century. We get to follow two, almost three generations. The main characters are city dwellers and middle class;</p>	<p>CP9.1. Thanks for the tip! This will be read.</p> <p>CP9.2. Good book tips.</p> <p>CP9.3. Wonderful book. The pieces you chose are the ones that I also liked. He is so genuine when he</p>

<p>merchants, clerks and craftsmen. The clerk of Khalifa, who is the hub of the story, is described by a friend as follows: in silence he cared at the same time as he hid this unexpected care with straightforward cowardice and unwavering cynicism ". When I read such an empathetic description and meet the decent people in the epic story, my associations go to Charles Dickens; books like David Copperfield and Great expectations, (not Oliver Twist) also those, epic stories with a special gallery of characters, not proletariat and not nobility. Reach. What about Guillou? Oscar Lauritzen, one of the brothers in Guillou's 20th century series, moves in the same time and space as Hamza, the time before and during the First World War in East Africa. Oscar Lauritzen participated in the war on Germany's side like Hamza. But Gurnah and Guillou have two different stories about the war. This is how Gurnah writes about the war and can perhaps at the same time be said to comment on Guillou: "Later, these events would turn into stories of absurd and carefree heroic deeds, something that was subordinate to the great tragedies in Europe, but for those who lived in it it was a time when their land was drowned in blood and sprinkled with corpses ".</p>	<p>describes people and events. It triggers my own thoughts and reflections. Read it!</p>
<p>OP10: Book "The Last Gift" by the author Abdulrazak Gurnah.</p> <p>A novel about a family in a small town in England: a father, a mother and their two adult children and what happens when the husband / father becomes ill; he who grew up in, but left Gurnah's Zanzibar as a young man.</p> <p>The novel would be an excellent book circle book, as there are several themes to talk about here. Marriage - living together. Parenting - being a father, a mother and being a daughter, a son. Illness - getting sick and caring for a sick person. Betrayal, guilt, reconciliation. Family secrets. The daughter says in one place: "What I want from them is a story that begins in an acceptable and unreserved way, and not a story that is mined with hesitation and silence." Class differences and class travel through education. Migration. The typical British in the novel. The title- The last gift. The publisher Bonnier was in a hurry and unimaginative when they designed the covers for the Nobel prize winner's book. This novel takes place largely, not in Gurnah's East Africa, but in his England. Therefore, a picture of typical English homes, about the kind of home that I imagine the family lived and lives in.</p>	<p>CP10.1. I really liked it!</p>
<p>OP11: Home service mafia by Mira Klingberg Hjort and Karl Martinsson. Christmas revue in Jonsered and other stories (short stories) by Klas Östergren. The Last Gift by Abdulrazak Gurnah. Normally, I only read one book at a time, occasionally two. Now</p>	<p>CP11.1. Mostly, I read one at a time. But I have somewhere around 850 books left to read since before! So I have to do it, you can safely say!</p> <p>CP11.2. Yes, I have one on the bedside table, one on</p>

there have been three because I could not decide, and since they belong to completely different genres, there are no problems. How do other people do it? Do you usually have several books in progress at the same time?

the TV table and one that I listen to when I drive.

CP11.3. No, one book at a time.

CP11.4. Yep, it usually works if I run on different genres

CP11.5. Normally one book at a time but sometimes I make exceptions. There is no reason to be an extremist

CP11.6. One book at a time, always, then I can concentrate properly. Though I wish I could behave like the woman I am, to have several balls (books) in the air at the same time.

CP11.7. Always an audiobook and one on the tablet. Then sometimes a regular book as well. But now it has become an e-book on the mobile as well.

CP11.8. Often two a detective story and a novel often feelgood

CP11.9. Up to 3. Then one in the evening, the other on the tram and the third during the day if the desire to read arises.

CP11.10. Usually I have two in progress.

CP11.11. If there are different genres, I can have 2-3 books in progress at the same time. Have the Home Service Mafia on my reading list after tips from a friend. What do you think about it?

CP11.12. The book is extremely interesting and describes extensive cheating among private actors in the industry. The wealth of invention when it comes to seizing welfare money is appalling and fascinating.

CP11.13. Usually one book at a time, but sometimes there can be two. Usually when I have started on one and then I get hold of a more interesting book and start on it, then the one I started on will have to wait first. So on a whim it is really one book at a time.

CP11.14. Usually two

CP11.15. It probably depends, for example, if one is a little heavier to read, it can be two and even if one is a little tough or if it is a non-fiction book. The books should be different in any case so you do not mix anything.

CP11.16. Reading one listens to one.

CP11.17. Usually 2, one easier in the evening in audiobook format and then one that I read in a completely awake state, then I alternate with reading and listening.

<p>OP12: Has anyone read anything by Abdulrazak Gurnah? I'm in a queue at the library (Paradise and The Last Gift), and I am watching Babel now. Nice interview with the Nobel prize winner. Theodor Kallifatides was not impressed, however.</p>	<p>CP12.1. I just put Paradise on my bookshelf at Legimus.....</p> <p>CP12.2. Yes, it was a really good interview on Babel.</p> <p>CP12.3. Standing in line, place 170 one hour after the appointment !!</p>
<p>OP13: I have looked everywhere for the Nobel prize winner Abdulrazak Gurnah's novel Paradise, but it is nowhere to be found. I finally found it on Legimus, read by the fantastic Anna Döbling (who also read Samlade Verk). So if anyone else in here has a diagnosis like mine that allows free listening, go hard, so far Paradise is very good!</p>	<p>CP13.1. I saw that there would be an interview with him in Babel tonight.</p> <p>CP13.2. Oh exciting! Thanks for the tip</p> <p>CP13.3. @OP13 Babel has her own fb group if you are interested.</p> <p>CP13.4. They probably haven't received the books yet.</p> <p>CP13.5. Exactly, at my nearest library, there were also over 500 people in the reservation queue.</p> <p>CP13.6. Definitely worth reading this book! I was lucky enough to get it recommended when it came out in the early 90's.</p> <p>CP13.7. Listening to it right now.</p> <p>CP13.8. Admirable!</p> <p>CP13.9. Start listening to it now.</p>
<p>OP14: Paradise by Abdulrazak Gurnah is most definitely worth reading!</p>	<p>CP14.1. I agree!</p> <p>CP14.2. One tip if you haven't read it. Read about Tanzania's history before, including language, religion, geography. Not necessarily needed. But I became interested and read afterwards.</p> <p>CP14.3. Berlin embassy Tanzania brief-history.</p> <p>CP14.4. Yes, I definitely recommend it!</p> <p>CP14.5. Thanks for the tip.</p> <p>CP14.6. A little difficult to get into.</p>
<p>OP15: Abdulrazak Gurnah received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2021. Now I have read his book "Afterlife" and I highly recommend it. Another one of his books is on sale this year.</p>	
<p>OP16: The first books of the year. Two books from each side of the African continents, Tanzania and Ghana. Afterlives by Abdulrazak Gurnah and The Missing American by Kwei Quartey. In Afterlives,</p>	<p>CP16.1. What unusual and exciting tips.</p>

<p>the reader follows 3 people whose lives converge. At the same time as we follow their lives, we follow Tanzania's development from being a German colony then a British colony to self-government. It is the 3 main characters and their everyday life you get to follow, the main lines are in the background. A low-key but nice book. The missing American is Gordon Tilson who goes to Ghana to meet the woman he thinks he has met online. Then he disappears. His son hires a private detective, Emma Djan. I liked the book partly because it was about a young female detective (not so many of them) and partly because the environment and plot was not one in a dozen. Emma Djan is looking for Gordon and what happened to him among cyber fraudsters, corrupt officials and local priests. The book was exciting and with good drive.</p>	
<p>OP17: I just read ABDULRAZAK GURNAH "THE LAST GIFT". An exciting story about betrayal and fear, emigrants and rootlessness. The Nobel Committee deserves all the respect by paying tribute and making an interesting and readable author visible to a larger audience.</p>	<p>CP17.1. It is on the reading list.</p>
<p>OP18: Abdulrazak Gurnah: Paradise. Winner of the Nobel Prize 2021. Today I got this book and I am looking forward to wonderful hours of reading! Is there anyone else who has read it, what did you think of it in that case ??</p>	
<p>OP19: I have read two of the books that I got for Christmas - Abdulrazak Gurnah's "Paradise", which did not impress. Also a wonderful book. "The art of meeting" by 3 authors, Kattis Ahlstrom, Stefan Einhorn, and Ulla Karin Nyberg. SO worth thinking about and worth reading!!</p>	
<p>OP20: * CHALLENGE *</p> <p>I am looking for at least two people who prefer to read books in paper book form, at least one person who prefers to listen to talking books / audio books and preferably someone who consumes literature in another way (reading tablet, paper book + headphones, reading aloud, etc.) We select a work which is considered good literature, reads two chapters and then discusses the "reading experience". Examples of things that can be discussed: * Sequence of events * Language --Features - Pronunciation of proper names * Format --Back texts --Readers - edition. Maybe we can choose something by Abdulrazak Gurnah?</p>	<p>CP20.1. @OP20 "the reading experience" "is subjective, and thus not measurable. Ditto the perception of language, etc. So I do not know what you have thought that your challenge will lead to...</p> <p>CP20.2. @CP20.1. This entire thread is about whether book readers read "deeper" than audio book readers. If so, book listeners should have a markedly poorer understanding of the book than physical book readers, it should be obvious who read and who just listened.</p> <p>CP20.3. (CP20.1.) Many book readers, including the authors of this article seem to argue that the formats mean that audiobooks and paper books are not two formats of the same product but different products. the inner feeling of reading, but it is absolutely possible to discuss the balance of the book and what</p>

	<p>conclusions have been drawn from the text. participates in the challenge, reads "better" literature and is interested in such things as language, structure and style, so maybe it will be smoother?</p> <p>CP20.4. @OP20 Do not think book readers generally read "deeper", who said that? The article above and thus the thread is about the audiobook boom, which disadvantaged certain literature, which does not work in that format, and benefited others, according to the authors above, especially event-driven books with a small gallery of characters. If that's true, audiobook consumers will find it easier to talk about their books. In the same way that it is easier to tell what, for example, "Pretty Woman" is about than "Seventh Seal", to draw a parallel with film. That is, the opposite of what you claim.</p> <p>CP20.5. @CP20.1. If you read through the comments, you will find claims that eye reading requires more concentration and that ear reading is something for simpler literature. This also gives you an expression when you want to compare listening to a simple audiobook with reading an advanced paper book.</p> <p>CP20.6. My opinion is that reading aloud works for all literature, but that you can choose a book according to the environment and mood. What I want to compare is the same content, different formats. What you compare is different content, different formats.</p> <p>CP20.7. My opinion is that reading aloud works for all literature, but that you can choose a book according to environment and mood. What I want to compare is the same content, different formats. What you compare is different content, different formats.</p> <p>CP20.8. For me, it would be a disaster if only feelgood novels and detective stories came out on audiobook. Then I would be limited to Legimus talking books.</p> <p>CP20.9. Someone in the thread mentioned Westö's Tritonus and I took a break from a popular science history book and started listening to it while I rearranged the cleaning cabinet, carried things down to the basement and picked up packages. I have now read 1/14. I have had to listen to it more times than usual, but if a book is well written, I think it's nice.</p> <p>CP20.10. It is my conviction that I would have understood the book worse if I had read it because I listen to an author reading in East Swedish.</p> <p>CP20.11. Since audiobooks today usually also have</p>
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	<p>the e-book format available, I have been able to use it when needed. @OP20 There are a few side tracks. But quite a few of them unfortunately seem to be rooted in the norm in this group, that people turn out to have sore toes and are often terribly easily offended / easily supported. The slightest hint that audiobooks are simpler makes some people rage and indignantly claim that they are not at all stupider than book readers. Which no one has claimed, I think. But causes the discussion to partially derail. Interesting what you tell about Westö, by the way. Different content, different formats? Yes, maybe. The books I want to read are extremely rare as an audiobook, which is probably no coincidence. This is certainly the case for many, which can contribute to audiobooks gaining a slightly worse reputation. Personally, however, I have no opinion about the format itself, people can do as they please.</p> <p>CP20.12. Give an example of a book and title. If the book you are looking for is in a Swedish edition, it can be found on Legimus. I have not seen the following books as audiobooks on Storytel but found them on Legimus in the last quarter: Dorit Rabinyan-All rivers flow towards the sea Amos Oz-Judas Marlen Haushofer-Väggen "</p>
<p>OP21: Is there anyone else who thinks that they always choose strange authors for the Nobel Prize???</p> <p>I think it would have been better to pay tribute to authors that are liked by many readers, who are easily accessible and increase the desire to read. I've never understood the concept of "fine" literature, I would rather see my children (and everyone else for that matter, adults and children) read comic books than nothing at all.</p> <p>No, praise those who spread the desire to read instead!!!</p>	<p>CP21.1. That's harsh. The prize should go to things that last and not to things that are sold in quantities. Maybe Camilla Läckberg should get it.</p> <p>CP21.2. I wouldn't compare Selma Lagerlöf to Camilla Läckberg in the first place, but that's my opinion.</p> <p>CP21.3. @CP21.2. You obviously didn't catch the irony</p> <p>CP21.4. The Nobel Prize for Donald Duck!</p> <p>CP21.5. I think the opposite actually. I think it's good to have undiscovered authors. They need the chance and the prize better than the ones everyone knows about.</p> <p>CP21.5. @CP21.5.I agree and it is not at all certain that they are undiscovered just because they are not known in Sweden.</p> <p>CP21.6. There are so many prizes that lousy but well-read authors win anyway. Just because many people read a certain You Get It doesn't mean there is any class at all in what they write. Take läckberg as an example. lousy at writing but has managed to sell herself and become popular</p> <p>CP21.7. It is precisely unknown authors that increase</p>

	<p>the desire to read There's nothing better than finding authors you don't know who write good books</p> <p>CP21.8. @CP21.7. I Agree. There is nothing better than discovering an author you haven't read before and realising that they have published other books before that are just waiting for you to read them.</p> <p>CP21.9. @CP21.8. I remember when I first read Jascha Golowanjuk and realised there was so much good to read by him. Was great for a while but now almost forgotten and it was just a coincidence that I read a book. Now I hunt all his books in antiquarian bookshops</p> <p>CP21.10. @CP21.7. I found a new (to me) amazing author the other day. Jessica Anya Blau - an author right up my alley - and with 6-7 new books for me to sink my teeth into.</p> <p>CP21.11. The accessible ones are read anyway. This one really got me interested.</p> <p>CP21.12. Tokarczuk, who won last year, brought me out of a long reading slump and made me want to read again.</p> <p>CP21.13. I still have the "James books" on my bookshelf - unread. A sort of barrier around it, even though I often read thick books. Another one by Tokarczuk I have read.</p> <p>CP21.14. CP21.12. I have not read! It was Games of Many Little Drums which I liked so much.</p> <p>CP21.15. Steer your plough over the bones of the dead, is the one I've read. Was a good read and I enjoyed it!</p> <p>CP21.16. I think it's great when new authors come along that you don't know about. Makes me very happy. And the little I have read today about and by the author is definitely tasty!</p> <p>CP21.17. @CP21.16. I Totally agree! Now I am very much looking forward to reading his books!!</p> <p>CP21.18. The funny thing about the announcement of the Nobel Prize in Literature is to read all the comments where people pretend to know who it is.</p>
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	<p>CP21.19. @CP21.18. I admit, I have no idea who it is!</p> <p>CP21.20. Me neither.</p> <p>CP21.21. @CP21.18. I haven't heard of him either...</p> <p>CP21.22. @CP21.18. I've never heard of him, but he might be good for it.</p> <p>CP21.23. Haha but has hardly anyone said that this year?</p> <p>CP21.24. That's how you get tips about authors you've never heard of. This year's choice is a very good one. Timely and fun that a small publisher in Lund has published 2 of his previous books. It benefits them greatly.</p> <p>CP21.25. @CP21.24. Yes, the publisher sounded so happy!</p> <p>CP21.26. Also, how can you say that this year's Nobel laureate doesn't make you want to read if you haven't read anything by him? Very strange view of literature.</p> <p>CP21.27. @CP21.26. Read the post again - it's not about this year's Nobel laureates but Nobel laureates in general.</p> <p>CP21.28. @CP21.27. And today the Nobel Prize was awarded. Of course it refers to him. Then it doesn't matter. It's no coincidence that she's highlighting the Nobel Prize winners today.</p> <p>CP21.29. It's there for everyone to read, that's the most important thing. To get a Nobel Prize, something extraordinary should and must be required. Personally, I would be extraordinarily furious if the author of the Seven Sisters series were to win the Nobel Prize.</p> <p>CP21.30. Me too!</p> <p>CP21.31. @CP21.29 Me too</p> <p>CP21.32. @CP21.29 Or Delia Owens with Where the Crayfish Sing.</p> <p>CP21.33. Don't give up! They choose the authors who take the art of storytelling further. Some of these new stars are "demanding", but others are fairly accessible.</p>
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	<p>CP21.34. Just because we haven't heard of an author in Sweden doesn't mean they can't be an appreciated author in other parts of the world. Imagine if we were to comment on other prize winners based on whether we had heard of them or not.</p> <p>CP21.35. @CP21.34. Several of his books have been translated into Swedish.</p> <p>CP21.36. @CP21.34.I hadn't heard of the physics winners...</p> <p>CP21.37. @OP.21 I've rarely heard of them if I even understand what they did. However, it makes me as curious to know as the literature prize makes me want to read books.</p> <p>CP21.38. @CP21.37. Let's hope so.</p> <p>CP21.39. Sorry, I know I'm sticking my neck out. In my teens, Margit Sandemo was the one who paved the way for more reading. I wanted to re-read the books in the library but they weren't there, she wasn't "nice enough". It doesn't seem right that literature should be classified in this way. Anything that encourages people to read books is gold!!??</p> <p>CP21.40.@CP21.39. For me, it was Moberg and Laxness that triggered my reading. Nothing is wrong, but the Nobel Prize has rules to follow. It is not divided into "fine and ugly" but to get the prize you have to meet certain criteria and far from everyone does...</p> <p>CP21.41. @OP.21 knows this, she has a hard time with the "fine" and "ugly" thing. The most important thing is to attract people to read..</p> <p>CP21.42. @OP.21 Does anyone know what these criteria are?</p> <p>CP21.43. @CP21.42. According to Horace Engdahl: "He should be a writer of international importance, someone who can operate outside his original environment and thus have the ability to go beyond geographical, cultural, linguistic and temporal aspects. Literature..."</p> <p>CP21.44. @CP21.43. Thanks</p> <p>CP21.45. @CP21.41. absolutely. However, many may not mean that it should be awarded a Nobel Prize just because. It's kind of like McDonalds getting a Michelin star</p>
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	<p>CP21.46. @CP21.45. No, I don't mean that either, but a gateway.</p> <p>CP21.47. @CP21.41. I understand what you mean anything that promotes a love of reading, especially among young people and teenagers, is a good thing, whether it is "fine culture" or not</p> <p>CP21.48. @CP21.41. The people who get the Nobel Prize should not be a few dozen authors. They have to develop their genre in some way. That doesn't mean that everyone who doesn't get the prize writes bad literature, or that it would be ugly to read them. However, it is good to try something challenging from time to time, in order to develop. Doesn't have to be a Nobel laureate, though.</p> <p>CP21.49. @CP21.41. That's changed now.</p> <p>CP21.50.@CP21.41. I agree. I put "The story of the Ice People" in the hands of all my friends who didn't read, and after that they read books. An excellent gateway!</p> <p>CP21.51. @CP21.41. yes, but perhaps not worthy of the Nobel Prize. Certainly many books have lured us into the world of reading. But for that reason they are not candidates. The fact that the books are loved does not mean that they are worthy winners. If you were to go by most popular, Camilla Läckberg would have won the Nobel Prize, and that's not really the way it's meant to be. Enticing people to read also means enticing them to discover new authors. Just as exciting every year. And most years there are exciting winners.</p> <p>CP21.52. @CP21.41. I Agree with you wholeheartedly. As long as literature is divided into fine and ugly, it will prevent many people from starting to read. Never mind if kids read Harlequin books or Selma Lagerlöf - the important thing is that they start reading, then find their way to other genres eventually.</p> <p>CP21.53. So, @CP21.52., do you think Harlequin books should get a Nobel Prize? I read a lot of them when I was a fool. I still read a lot of literature that is hardly eligible for the Nobel Prize. I also eat at Mcdonalds and like it, but I don't think it's the right time for them to get a Michelin</p>
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	<p>star.</p> <p>CP21.54. @CP21.53. Am I writing this?</p> <p>CP21.55. @CP21.52. I assumed so since the thread is about the Nobel Prize. My bad.</p> <p>CP21.56. @CP21.41. Margit Sandemo is now available in libraries along with much of what used to be called newsstand literature etc., e.g. crime and feelgood.</p> <p>CP21.57. I find it exciting to discover authors who are new to me.</p> <p>CP21.58. Although just because you haven't heard of an author doesn't mean they're a bad writer. Think this selection was good ^^ just like the last one.</p> <p>CP21.59. During my years in the bookstore, there has always been a rush to and high pressure on the Nobel winners, a love of reading if anything! Don't feel like you gave it a chance? Give it a try, think you'll be pleasantly surprised.</p> <p>CP21.60. @CP21.59. I always go to the bookshop when the Nobel Prize is to be announced. Unfortunately, there isn't always anything.</p> <p>CP21.61. @CP21.59. No, it's a wild guess as to what you think it might be, you'd like to have been a fly on the wall in the academy room so you could have been prepared for it all.</p> <p>CP21.62. I remember, it was the one that was most available when I was in the bookshop. Five books. Ishiguro also had some. But I guess it's hard for booksellers these days to have more than the most popular at home.</p> <p>CP21.63. Of course, you want to have everything, but you also need to sell, so you have to balance the scales.</p> <p>CP21.64. I ordered Paradise from the bookshop today and expect to receive it early next week. Just as well since I'm already reading a book right now. It's not possible to sit without a book and wait for the winner.</p> <p>CP21.65. I was very keen to read his books. It's nice that the African part of the world is being highlighted.</p>
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	<p>CP21.66. Accessible literature is not synonymous with good. It's good that unknown authors get attention. They may otherwise find it difficult to be seen in the mass of literature published by large publishers with lots of PR resources.</p> <p>CP21.67. @CP21.66. but accessible literature is not synonymous with bad literature either...</p> <p>CP21.68. What is good literature? Who decides?</p> <p>CP21.69. @CP21.68. Readers, of course. But not all authors reach them.</p> <p>CP21.70. He seems very interesting to read !!</p> <p>CP21.71. I was thrilled to soon discover an author I hadn't heard of. When I heard some excerpts of what he had written, I liked it a lot. It's nice that someone who has "worked" on gets recognition and money.</p> <p>CP21.72. I was very curious about this year's winner, but I feel it should be both a bit difficult to access and also a bit like the Olympics and spread around the world. Maybe that doesn't have to be wrong. However, I get very tired of people who are supposed to say what is good and what is ugly, the ones that are popular are usually counted as the latter. Let people read what they want, whether you read what you like or what you think you should read.</p> <p>CP21.73. If you want to keep track of good genre fiction, there are other awards to pay attention to. The Hugo Award for science fiction, the World Fantasy Award, lots of different awards for mystery writers, and so on.</p> <p>CP21.74. @CP21.73 Exactly. There's certainly no shortage of literary prizes of all kinds.</p> <p>CP21.75. @CP21.73 There are even prizes for comic strips. The Harvey Award and the Eisner Award are among the most famous. (There is one in Sweden, but of course I'm currently having a brainwave about the name.)</p> <p>CP21.76. @CP21.73 The Adamson Prize?</p> <p>CP21.77. Yes, I like reading comics. If you think that comics don't give you anything to read, it's probably because you haven't looked for the right things. Eisner's graphic novels, for example.</p> <p>CP21.78. THANK YOU! It was somewhere</p>
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	<p>in a corner of the grey mass.</p> <p>CP21.79. @CP21.77. Have read at least one or two of his graphic novels, unfortunately don't remember much. His detective hero The Spirit is no disgrace.</p> <p>CP21.80. The Spirit is, above all, wonderfully drawn.</p> <p>CP21.81. The prize is awarded on the basis of the wording of Nobel's will. It says "literature has produced the most excellent in the ideal direction". It should be literature from all over the world. And the Swedish Academy has been working on that basis. You can trust that the members still do.</p> <p>CP21.82. If you never tackle anything more difficult than comic books, or Läckberg for that matter, then it becomes difficult to keep up with our complex society and then democracy is actually threatened.</p> <p>CP21.83. Cartoons can be really complex and not always so easy to read. Even classic comics like Snobben, Kalle and Hobbe, Opus, etc. require a certain intellect on the part of the reader.</p> <p>CP21.84. Yes, I can highly recommend going to the library and asking for suggestions on comic novels.</p> <p>CP21.85. Intellect - absolutely. But it doesn't help you develop your written reading skills and rarely your vocabulary.</p> <p>CP21.86. @CP21.85. Indeed! I agree with you.</p> <p>CP21.87. I'm pretty bad at deciphering cartoons and it annoys me sometimes. But it's rare that research or policy proposals are presented that way.</p> <p>CP21.88. Just read a week ago that comics have more variety in vocabulary than most fiction, so I guess it does help with vocabulary.</p> <p>CP21.89. Then you haven't tried reading Chris Claremont, Don McGregor, Alan Moore, or Neil Gaiman.</p> <p>CP21.90. @CP21.88. Can you give a source for that? I want to read, not disbelieve.</p> <p>CP21.91. @CP21.90. http://reading.uoregon.edu/big_ideas/voc/voc_what.php</p>
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	<p>READING.UOREGON.EDU Vocabulary: Concepts and Research Vocabulary: Concepts and Research.</p> <p>CP21.92. Is there reading ability that is not written as well (besides sign language and Braille)?</p> <p>CP21.93. @CP21.88. Thank you! Will read.</p> <p>CP21.94. Yes, you "read" pictures and symbols too.</p> <p>CP21.95. And that gives me a rich vocabulary???</p> <p>CP21.96. @CP21.95. Did I say that?</p> <p>CP21.97. For the sake of clarity: I don't look down on comics in any form. I'm just a bit bad at reading and understanding them myself, partly because I'm untrained of course. What I meant from the beginning was that if you only read comics it becomes difficult...</p> <p>CP21.98. On the subject of threatened democracy, "Maus" by Art Spiegelman and "Persepolis" by Marjane Satrapi are recommended reading.</p> <p>CP21.99. Tried to read Persepolis but couldn't. Too difficult for me. It is a completely different narrative language. I'm not sure it was comics like these the thread starter was referring to either. And again, that's not how research and investigations are presented.</p> <p>CP21.100. You may want to read for pleasure, I think there are many of us who do. We get most of our information about society and politics from newspapers and news programmes.</p> <p>CP21.101. I also think that most people read fiction for pleasure. But the good thing about it is that you practice your reading skills and your vocabulary so that you can more easily absorb and understand social information. If you only read cartoons, which can be very advanced stories, you are not practising your reading skills.</p> <p>CP21.102. Real snobbery.</p> <p>CP21.103. What?</p> <p>CP21.104. I don't usually know the Nobel Prize</p>
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	<p>winner in chemistry either.</p> <p>CP21.105. It may be because you're not a chemist, but you obviously read</p> <p>CP21.106. At least they didn't give it to someone in their own company, which was a good thing.</p> <p>CP21.107. No, I disagree - not the Nobel Prize. The Nobel Prize is actually designed to give prizes to real quality literature. There are already a number of other prizes awarded to literature and, in particular, there is a lot of praise and attention paid to...</p> <p>CP21.108. What is "quality literature"? Who decides what is good and what is bad? What is wrong with dividing literature by quality?</p> <p>CP21.109. That's what you do in all other art. It's not snobbery. It's built on reading habits.</p> <p>CP21.110. The genuine reader has probably had enough of dozens of pieces of literature and demands something with more chewing power.</p> <p>CP21.111. @CP21.108. Well, the Swedish Academy decides in this case. The basis is certainly based on some of the parameters I mentioned, but more developed. Often it is common human themes that say something true and important about being human, and/or tell something about our history - as in this case. After all, the people sitting in those chairs have read thousands of books. The Nobel Prize is not simply a prize for light entertainment, there are other prizes for that.</p> <p>CP21.112. I don't agree with you at all. Many, for me, unknown prize winners have given me great reading experiences over the years. One example is Seamus Heaney. I recommend you to read Paradise of this year's laureates.</p> <p>CP21.113. I think this year's Nobel prize winner is quite easy to read. I was thrilled when I heard the Swedish Academy's motivation and rushed to the library to get in line. And what luck I had. I am now reading the novel "The Last Gift" by Abdulrazak Gurnah. For those of you who find Nobel prize winners difficult... Try Kristin Lavransdotter by Sigrid Undset ! There are many of us who love Nobel Prize-winning literature.</p> <p>CP21.114. @CP21.113. Or, Never Let Me Go by the Nobel prize winner Ishiguro. My</p>
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	<p>teenager read it and liked it.</p> <p>CP21.115. @CP21.113. Interesting idea. Judging by the comments from the Nobel committee, his writing is about colonialism (the white man's supremacy), which is very much the origin of today's racism and Nazism.</p> <p>CP21.116. Yes, thinking that it might be possible to link it to several subjects.</p> <p>CP21.117. Yes, migration and development for example</p> <p>CP21.118. Agree with you!</p> <p>CP21.119. It'll be interesting to read something by him. Personally, I think Margaret Drabble should get the Nobel Prize in Literature.</p> <p>CP21.120. If you have a genuine desire to read, you will think it's fantastic that an unknown, talented writer from a country and continent other than Europe or North America is getting attention...?</p> <p>CP21.121. Personally, I find it exciting to have the opportunity to learn about this particular (to me) completely unknown storyteller. Great that the Academy has the guts and intelligence to choose a little outside the expected!</p> <p>CP21.122. @CP21.121. I agree with you</p> <p>CP21.123. I've tried to read a few laureates' books but fall asleep at the first page of unfocus. There's no getting into it as well. I've read through the school system's canon of books and found some completely worthless things that others see as masterpieces. I partly agree with you that there should be variety in authors, known and unknown, mass-produced or single releases. There are many well-known authors who are changing and innovating the art of writing. But surely all writers do so in their own way. The Nobel Prize is not a popular prize. But neither is it the prize of newcomers/less well-known authors.</p> <p>CP21.124. Have you tried Kristin Lavransdotter by Sigrid Undset? My favourite book actually. A real brick. I first read it when I was about twenty and have to re-read it every five years or so. Other than that, there are many other book prizes to be won.</p> <p>CP21.125. @CP21.124. I have missed it...</p>
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	<p>thanks for the tip.</p> <p>CP21.126. @CP21.124. It's wonderful. Will have to read it again.</p> <p>CP21.127. @CP21.124.I have read it. Very good.</p> <p>CP21.128. This author, unknown to me, attracts me to read. Partly because he is completely new to me and partly because the bookseller described it interestingly. So I ordered Paradise and hope to find a new author to read through it.</p> <p>CP21.129. I read quite a lot, but I think that if an author who is new and unknown to me gets the prize, it could be a great gateway for me to have new and exciting reading experiences.</p> <p>CP21.130. I don't really have an opinion on who wins the Nobel Prize in Literature, but I can say that there are very few I have heard of before they are awarded...</p> <p>CP21.131. One can only assume that the Nobel Committee knows what is to be taken into account in the selection process. For my part, I am not sufficiently well-informed in this respect.</p> <p>CP21.132. I agree with you. If there is one discussion that sticks in my craw, it is the one about "fine" literature. I have read some Nobel Prize winners with great enjoyment and others I have put down because they simply did not appeal to me. The important thing is not what you read but that you read - especially when it comes to children and young people. Awaken interest in books and reading by letting everyone read what they want to read, that way you will find pathways to other genres. The fact that the Swedish Academy does not dare to nominate a children's author such as Astrid Lindgren for the Nobel Prize is a mystery to me. There is no target group more difficult to write for than children, and Astrid Lindgren's books, if any, have stood the test of time.</p> <p>CP21.133. I don't read 'fine' literature. I read everything. But I can also distinguish between good and bad literature. Books that are hastily written, books with extinguished stories, books without real content -vs books with a great language and content that stays in the mind and gives thoughts and questions.</p> <p>CP21.134. They have a difficult job, the committee. Some books they choose will disappear quite quickly, they may miss some authors who will become classics. I understand that they don't include children's books.</p>
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	<p>CP21.135. But it's the Nobel Prize... It should go to authors who have really made an effort and are educated and write about important issues for humanity. There are many other fine prizes for fiction and comic writers. And then there is the more popular August Prize. No, we don't agree on that. I am proud that the Nobel Prize stands against the dumbing down of our times and stands up for the eternal humanist ideals. If I had children, I'd rather they read <i>The Wonderful Journey of Nils Holgersson</i> and <i>The Brothers Grimm's</i> fairy tales than sit and scribble away at some pointless comic book. I would at least try to lead them down that path, I think parents owe it to their children to at least give them some education now that school has failed them.</p> <p>CP21.136. That's not the statute. I love Herge and Tintin but that doesn't equate to Nobel Prize winners.</p> <p>CP21.137. It has also been given to authors that many people read (here) even before, for example Alice Munro, Tomas Tranströmer and Doris Lessing</p> <p>CP21.138. It may be a wonderful author</p> <p>CP21.139. -</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">CP21.140. I'm talking generally about all of them through the ages, I haven't read anything by this one and never heard of him</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">CP21.141. That's kind of the point, that the more interested, maybe you and I but not always, should know more, that all continents participate, that sometimes it's the language i.e. not Country language but the meaning building prose that has part in the evaluation, which to a large extent can be found in poets' works together with topics that are touched upon, but then the translator should have the same feeling. etc, it may be how the author has been received in his part of the world that is the greatness etc.</p> <p>CP21.142. Writers who did not receive the prize include Tolstoy, Conrad, Ibsen, James Joyce, Kafka, D.H. Lawrence, Vladimir Nabokov, George Orwell, Proust, E.M. Forster, and Virginia Woolf. An important part of 20th century literature. Their biggest blunder, I think, was the prize for Dylan's poetry.</p> <p>CP21.143. Graham Birch August Strindberg, Raymond Chandler, J. R. R. Tolkien, and John le Carré, not to be forgotten.</p>
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	<p>CP21.144. Asch! I forgot Graham birch!</p> <p>CP21.145. It was between Adoni's poetry and Dylan's. But Adonis is against Islam, so Dylan was more politically correct.</p> <p>CP21.146. "Politically correct". Truly a "politically correct" statement by you. Maybe it was the stance against Islam that brought the guy down, but you know... a lot of people really think it's better to give the prize to a writer with a bit more developed thinking... who for example doesn't utter Islamophobic rubbish. Juries sometimes feel that way, for real. The criteria for an award can include such values, for real. And then it's not about political correctness. Then it's just correct, for those people. It seems to me that 'politically correct' is something that is done on the right, where people are usually cemented in independent thinking and therefore have nothing else to do but compete intensely in sports like egalitarianism, injustice, who is the best at e.g. oppression of women and Islamophobia in particular.</p> <p>CP21.147. That comment inspires a discussion that could go on indefinitely. I am a big Dylan fan myself, but I think it was overkill to give him the Nobel Prize in Literature, when he has already been awarded the Polar Prize. Adonis I know less about.</p> <p>CP21.148. @CP21.147. I was thinking more of Dylan's poetry, which is unreadable. Perhaps their motivation was to try to be "poppy."</p> <p>CP21.149. ""Politically correct"" is meaningless terminology, the committee hopefully takes into account an author's originality. That they have missed most of my favourites, Thomas Hardy, Virginia Woolf, E.M. Forster, George Orwell, James Joyce, etc. does not matter, they have survived anyway.</p> <p>CP21.150. So do I, and most of the time they are hard to read.</p> <p>CP21.151. How many Nobel Prize winners have you read?</p> <p>CP21.152. Like (Swedish media personality) Gert Fylking, I say... Finally! (Until he was banned.) Another one you've never heard of.</p>
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	<p>CP21.153. Agree 200% have tried to read the winners and stopped after a few chapters.</p> <p>CP21.154. Agree completely!!!!</p> <p>CP21.155. Wow, so many comments! ‘Fine literature’, I don't think the academy puts it that way. Surely there is no point in highlighting a dozen of novelists who are already on the bestseller lists. They probably put a lot of effort into finding the "raisin in the cake".</p> <p>CP21.156. A very strange position. Are you claiming that Nobel Prize winners don't have readers, don't inspire a desire to read, just because they don't work for you? There are a lot of other prizes and awards given to those who write different/more accessible literature. Read these winners instead.</p> <p>CP21.157. Now the Nobel Prize is not for writers who appeal to little Sweden only, we have other prizes and categories for that. Just as the other prizes are for scientists around the globe. 50 Shades of Grey was extremely popular too, but to give a Nobel Prize to rape fiction based on Twilight (which in itself is extremely popular and extremely blase) still feels like that. Then I still think it's better that the award goes to quality over quantity. Have absolutely no idea who was nominated (do they?) but don't think popularity is always a good thing. If nothing else, social media has proven it over and over again in recent years.</p> <p>CP21.159. That really was the worst example you could bring up in a thread like this. To think that OP means that a tank-snusk book that holds up to all those romantic tales of horny women finding love in bakeries or on an island in Greece or on the beach... that's comedy. Can't we assume that OP means that there are any other sensible writers with modern connections in their books that might hold up to a Nobel Prize? Then maybe you don't think so highly of people who dare to question what actually that Swedish academy actually looks for in an author and wonder why popular authors don't rate in there.</p> <p>CP21.160. @CP21.159. Then you have not understood the example. I was talking about quality versus quantity. 50SoG was immensely popular, but for that reason is nowhere near Nobel Prize material.</p> <p>CP21.161. OP mentioned that she thought a book that more people read (more popular) should win. I also wrote that I have no idea</p>
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	<p>who will get it, so I can't comment on that author. Maybe he is a flapper in my opinion, I don't know.</p> <p>The bottom line was that popularity is not necessarily better than what a lesser known author has written.</p> <p>CP21.162. Books that "everyone reads" can get a lot of prizes. Why not respect what the Nobel prize stands for? With that said, it is like demanding that McDonalds should get a Michelin star.</p> <p>CP21.163. They don't announce who has been nominated until after fifty years, but, yes authors are nominated and then the group of candidates is whittled down until one is left.</p> <p>CP21.164. @CP21.157. The book is not about rape fantasies but about BDSM, isn't it? The problem with that book is not the subject matter in the first place, or even that it is fan fiction, but the craftsmanship and the linguistic garb. It's a really lousy book.</p> <p>CP21.165. Exactly. It's supposed to be about that, but it's incredibly poorly conveyed. No, I haven't read the book myself, just seen analyses by therapists and psychologists and they all think it's terrible rubbish (with very factual arguments to back it up). I brought up fan fiction as it is a form of trash literature that has exploded online. Writing a worse version of an already bad book series (Twilight) hardly makes it better. After all, BDSM is the complete opposite of what 50 Shades showcases - it's just an ignorant fantasy glorified in book format.</p> <p>CP21.166. I have not read anything by a single Nobel laureate. Can't mention any by name either. So in the circles I move in, the laureates have not made a memorable impression.</p> <p>CP21.167. @CP21.166. I feel sorry for you, think how much readable literature you have missed out on.</p> <p>CP21.168. @CP21.166. So you and others here haven't read anything by Selma Lagerlöf either? To take one example.</p> <p>CP21.169. no.</p> <p>CP21.170. @CP21.166. it sounds as if you have made a conscious decision to avoid Nobel Prize-winning authors. Do you feel the same way about other literary prizes? "No, I can't read that book, the author has won a prize..." You're missing out on a lot, I</p>
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	<p>must say.</p> <p>CP21.171. Absolutely none of what you suggest.</p> <p>CP21.172. @CP21.166. Tell me what you're reading. I'm really curious.</p> <p>CP21.173. @CP21.166. haven't you read anything by Eiyvind Johnsson, Harry Martinsson, Selma Lagerlöf, Pär Lagerkvist, John Steinbeck and Singer (can't remember his first name) ?</p> <p>CP21.174. @CP21.173. no</p> <p>CP21.175. @CP21.173. - think his name was Isaac</p> <p>CP21.176. @CP21.166. Wow, I read them when I was in high school and college. Have re-read some in adulthood.</p> <p>CP21.177.....checked the oracle... Isaac Bashevis Singer</p> <p>CP21.178. @CP21.166. How could they not have made a memorable impression if you didn't even try to read them..? And what kind of circles do you move in? Does no one in your circle know the name of Selma Lagerlöf, Harry Martinsson or John Steinbeck? That's the lowest level of general knowledge.</p> <p>CP21.179. You can know what they have written and who they are without necessarily having read them</p> <p>CP21.180. @CP21.179. But she explicitly wrote that she did not know the name of any laureate.</p> <p>CP21.181. During some of the last years of the last academy maybe some authors I did not like but also many good very readable ones among others. Toni Morrison, Doris Lessing, Pearl S Buck to name a few.</p> <p>CP21.182. @CP21.166.I feel sorry for you</p> <p>CP21.183.@CP21.166.I recommend "The Good Earth" by Nobel Prize winner Pearl Buck. It is so accessible that it can be read by a 12 year old.</p> <p>CP21.184. I read them when I was young and I agree. It made an impression on me</p>
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	<p>even though now, like 30 years later, I don't remember the plot. But a reading experience.</p> <p>CP21.185. I have it here at home and it is one of my favourite books. I think it holds up well even though it is 90 years old.</p> <p>CP21.186. I also think that too many unknowns are awarded that prize.</p> <p>CP21.187. Absolutely, agree with you completely</p> <p>CP21.188. I agree, I never read anything by Nobel laureates!</p> <p>CP21.189. I read my favourite book for the first time about 30 years ago. Reread it every 5 years or so. Took about twenty years before I realised that the author Sigrid Undset had won the Nobel Prize. Kristin Lavransdotter has also been a great TV series or movie. Many have also read Selma Lagerlöf and Kipling (Rikki-Tikki-Tavi).</p> <p>CP21.190. @CP21.188. Not even when you were at school?</p> <p>CP21.191. @CP21.188. No, me neither.</p> <p>CP21.192. @CP21.188.It sounds like you are proud of it?</p> <p>CP21.193. @CP21.188. Yes, what are you asking? I said that it feels like you are proud of never having read any Nobel Prize winner. Which is very sad.</p> <p>CP21.194. @CP21.188.Isn't it difficult to have an opinion about something you haven't read? I usually read at least one work by each laureate, almost all of which have given me unexpected reading experiences that I would never have had without the knowledge of the Swedish Academy.</p> <p>CP21.194. I agree wholeheartedly! 'Never let me go' is still one of my greatest reading experiences. Likewise 'report from.</p> <p>CP21.195. I have tried to read that one.</p> <p>CP21.196. I agree, I can't manage to read that many pages before I give up.</p> <p>CP21.197. @CP21.188. Is Selma Lagerlöf,</p>
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	<p>for example, by any chance familiar?</p> <p>CP21.198. Yes.</p> <p>CP21.199. What about Steinbeck and Hemingway? If you haven't read them yet, you've missed two good writers. I'm not particularly fond of Pearl Buck myself, but many people also like this Nobel Prize-winning author</p> <p>CP21.200. Honestly, as long as you haven't read anything by him, you can't say whether he contributes to reading pleasure or not. He can actually be quite magical. I'm really looking forward to reading him. Preferably after I solve Olga Tokaczuk's Drive Your Plough Over the Bones of the Dead. I had a lot of preconceived notions about how difficult a Nobel laureate could be and her Drive Your Plough is one of the better ones I've read. Really left me wanting more.</p> <p>CP21.201. Agreed. Strong book.</p> <p>CP21.202. Yes, Drive your plough was not at all difficult reading!</p> <p>CP21.203. Extremely difficult to answer for me. I know too little about literature to judge whether the academy has chosen "the right" but I always try to read something by these authors to broaden my mind. A lot leave me with a "nope, not for me" but some open doors to new worlds.</p> <p>CP21.204. The two Nobel Prize winners I know I had read books before the prize and Morrison and Soyinka and this year's author I had on the reading list for the library, but they didn't get it then!!!</p> <p>CP21.205. What says this author is not worth reading? It's fun with new authors! Now we have an opportunity to broaden our horizons.</p> <p>CP21.206. I think it's exciting when authors who are unknown to us are recognised - especially if they come from other continents. It will be interesting to read his books.</p> <p>CP21.207. But it's really exciting to discover a new author, isn't it? That, if anything, increases the desire to read, doesn't it?</p> <p>CP21.208. I'm not quite sure I understand what you mean by "fine" literature, but I share your view that the most important thing is not WHAT you read, but HOW you read. I have not, so far, read very many Nobel Prize winners.</p>
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	<p>CP21.209. Yes, it is a bit strange!?</p> <p>CP21.210. How do you know it's a strange choice if you haven't read anything by the laureate? There are an infinite number of publications from all corners of the world that we never hear about but that need to be disseminated because of their readability!</p> <p>CP21.211. The more you read, the more you find out what you like and don't like. Age also plays a part. The older I get, the more I like to try new authors who write with new angles on the same or new things. It's like going on holiday on your own or with someone who knows the place. The experience is different but not always better.</p> <p>CP21.212. Astrid Lindgren should have won the prize a long time ago.</p> <p>CP21.213. Yes, absolutely. when she was alive!</p> <p>CP21.214. No, she shouldn't. The Nobel Prize in Literature is not about children's books. There are other prizes for that kind of writing.</p> <p>CP21.215. @CP21.214. You'll have to forgive an ignorant person: what is it about then?</p> <p>CP21.216. @CP21.215. I think it's clear from the Academy's choices so far over the years that it's not about children's writing. Then I don't know what criteria the Academy uses, but it is at least partly clear from the justifications they give for their choices. But I guess it's possible to find out more, if you're wondering.</p> <p>CP21.217. There is a lot of philosophy of life and psychology in Astrid's books. The books are also suitable for adults, I think. Not just nonsense!</p> <p>CP21.218. There are infinitely more book prizes in the world than the Nobel Prize for Literature. Many authors who are well known and loved have received one of them. Different prizes focus on different things I think, and if you have no interest in that, you don't need to read those authors.</p> <p>CP21.219. It's so nice to get help finding new interesting authors.</p> <p>CP21.220. A remarkable winner in my opinion was Bob Dylan.. Songwriter, yes – but writer, no. I</p>
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	<p>wonder who the candidates were that year...Plus he was grumpy and rude and didn't come to the ceremony.</p> <p>CP21.221. I agree with you!</p> <p>CP21.222. Counted well as a poet/writer of song lyrics, and received the award for ""creating new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition". Glad they broadened the award, I think. Not a Dylan fan though, but his wording is sometimes undeniably brilliant. By the way, his memoirs, mostly set in New York in the early 1960s, are clearly worth reading, not exactly a dozen books.</p> <p>CP21.223. When will Joyce Carol Oates get the prize? During her lifetime, I hope</p> <p>CP21.224. Would think that other parts of the world know the author well. Sweden is a very small country.</p> <p>CP21.225. Well, in that way of looking at it, we should be proud that we in the world of literature can have so much influence, with that tricky idea of academia as a party.</p> <p>CP21.226. You are so right.</p> <p>CP21.227. I think the Author of the Year is a good and important choice</p> <p>CP21.228. No, I don't think it's a merit to have never read a Nobel Prize winner. But it is not a necessity either. I haven't heard of this year's Nobel Prize winner, but if I get the chance I'll borrow one of his books.</p> <p>CP21.229. My Swedish teacher said it didn't matter what you read, but that you read. Better then to read what you liked than to read what is considered more cultural and get tired of reading.</p> <p>CP21.230. Doris Lessing and Nadine Gordimer are two examples, writers I like who are also good storytellers and just because you don't know the authors who get awards doesn't mean they don't deserve to get awards, it's a fun thing to read books by authors you didn't know about in the first place.</p> <p>CP21.231. I don't really understand. Isn't it the school's job to teach students to understand and appreciate literature, both Swedish and foreign ?</p> <p>CP21.232. Understanding it can be taught, but teaching disinterested young people to appreciate literature is an art few can do.</p>
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	<p>CP21.233. I agree, if it is about older pupils who are uninterested. Then the damage is already done.</p> <p>CP21.234. Not everyone has the capacity to enjoy literature, I learned the hard way, i.e., from my mother and my son. It takes concentration, empathy and imagination to allow the words to come alive enough to sustain interest, but not so much that it creates physical discomfort that affects you negatively. My mother couldn't stay awake unless the book was extremely good and preferably funny. She simply fell asleep away from the book after only a page or so. My son lives too much into both books and movies so he rarely has the energy to get through them. The emotional roller coaster becomes too intense. In both cases, it's hard to know in advance which books will work. There are probably also many other variations that make it difficult to appreciate literature.</p> <p>CP21.235. I may be wrong, but my experience is that most children, up to a certain age, have no strange ideas about or disdain for "fine" or "cultural." They can absorb literature. But then the teacher himself must be interested and enthusiastic. It's as easy as killing a subject.</p> <p>CP21.236. This is just ordinary literature</p> <p>CP21.237. I read all the Nobel Prize winners' fun things. Almost all are easy to read or almost but unknown to most Alice Munro for example is absolutely wonderful my advice try.</p> <p>CP21.238. He has written several short novels which can sometimes be easier to absorb than long novels.</p> <p>CP21. 239. It also makes you ferment something you hadn't thought of! Have read both Selma Lagerlöf and Singer and love their stories! Fine literature is what you enjoy!</p> <p>CP21.240. Well said!</p> <p>CP21.241. This year's choice was good, I think. Not at all difficult to read.</p> <p>CP21.242. Wow. I haven't read him but perceived from the presentation of the author and the books that he was indeed an "ordinary" man who told of his life of hardship. Not at all written with finer</p>
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	<p>culture in mind.</p> <p>CP21.243. I find it really exciting every year who will be the Nobel Prize winner. Every year I wonder if I will know the author. I like to read Nobel laureates because it broadens my horizons. These authors also often write about important events such as. Svetlana Aleksijvitj who wrote "The Last Witnesses" and "Chernobyl". I would recommend you to try reading some Nobel Prize winners. One that is easy to start reading is Alice Munro's short stories.</p> <p>CP21.244. Must give a shout out to Kazuo Ishiguro. Had never read him before but love his books, they are both easy to read and rewarding. Never let me go has also been made into a movie starring Keira Knightley. However, I (sorry Sara Danius) have a hard time understanding why Bob Dylan got the award, so those of you with a good reason in your pocket are welcome to share more.</p> <p>CP21.245. I feel like it was a stopgap because of the leaks. Kenyan author Ngugi wa Thiongo got the bookies in huge bets in the days before the announcement. Feels like the academy was running a game to flush out the scam that leaked</p> <p>CP21.246. Great that they are helping us broaden our horizons. Can recommend several readily available and extremely good Nobel laureates. John Steinbeck is one</p> <p>CP21.247. Ernest Hemingway and Selma Lagerlöf are not so bad either, to name two more who have written both well and accessible.</p> <p>CP21.248. Yes, I loved his books. Read them all when I was in high school. So accessible and beautifully written.</p> <p>CP21.249. I think you've got the literature prize winner you're looking for. I don't know this author - but look forward to discovering a new one. Someone that makes you want to read. You don't have to be a "remarkable writer" just because you and I don't recognize him.</p> <p>CP21.250. I also belong to the majority of Swedish people who have not yet read this year's Nobel Prize winners. But what has been said and written about him in recent days makes me curious about his books.</p> <p>CP21.251. Exactly!</p> <p>CP21.252. No one is asking anyone to understand</p>
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	<p>and assimilate the content of the other Nobel Prize winners. Of course, literature should also stand for something special; innovative language and content or something else that stands out. The fact that Nobel literature can sometimes, but far from always, offer a little resistance also makes us evolve.</p> <p>CP21.253. I think that with the possible exception of Handke and Pinter (drama is not written to be read), all the writers of the last twenty years are accessible.</p> <p>CP21. 254. I have to reserve my position on Handke, because I was on sick leave for exhaustion when I tried to read him.</p> <p>CP21.255. That's a bad combo. I managed to read Donald Duck in black and white during my fatigue.</p> <p>CP21.256. Yes, that's how it is sometimes.</p> <p>CP21.257. That's what I thought - you've read a bit more than comics.</p> <p>CP21.258. But only a little. And I learned to read with Rasmus Nalle comics.</p> <p>CP21.259. Of course a great entry. But I don't think you think they deserve the Nobel Prize in Literature either?I've also read some comics in my time and I'm searching my memory for the title of the most beautiful book I've ever seen, cartooned, completely without text, in black and white about a family on the run, but I can't think of it.</p> <p>CP21.260. I think Abdulrazak Gurnah seems super interesting. Impatiently waiting for Storytel to get it in.</p> <p>CP21.261. I think he seems intriguing</p> <p>CP21.262. I'm inspired by your discussion here. I will be looking for a couple of books by one of the Nobel laureates in the next delivery of The Book Comes. Thanks for the tips!</p> <p>CP21.263. It's always great to inspire someone to read Nobel literature. If I may make a suggestion, it will be Nadine Gordimer 1991 South Africa and Boris Pasternak 1958 Soviet Union.</p>
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	<p>CP21.264. Newsstand winners already have a wide audience. I think it's a good thing that they choose some more odd and heavier literature.</p>
<p>OP22. Author post. Anna Breitholtz Monsén, STRANDEN.</p> <p>I noticed that you get to present your own book once in the group. In June, I debuted with the book Stranden and I am overwhelmed by the response. DN called it a "dense crime debut" and thousands of people have given it positive feedback.</p> <p>I wanted to write a detective story that I myself would appreciate reading, with both excitement and warmth. It has both dark undertones and hope. Murder and quite a bit of blood. Even those who do not usually read detective stories can read it.</p> <p>Stranden is about defected police officer Lina Lantz who goes to her grandfather in Sandinge, and is drawn into a case that leads her to another mysterious disappearance, 1988.</p> <p>It is especially suitable for those of you who like headstrong characters and thrive in the company of cats. If you also grew up in the eighties, you will feel at home.</p> <p>I hope the beach can be included in your holiday reading pile! [...]</p>	