

⁴⁷ Bully, *Hard Labour*, 233-234.

⁴⁸ Orwell uses this memorable phrase in an essay on the novelist George Gissing, writing that the latter's "central theme can be stated in three words – 'not enough money.'" George Orwell, "Not Enough Money: A Sketch of George Gissing," in *Two Wasted Years*, 1943, vol. 15 of *The Complete Works of George Orwell*, ed. Peter Davison (London: Secker & Warburg, 1998), 46.

⁴⁹ In his April 1921 letter to Agnes Bedford, Lewis notes the difficulties he had with his present printers: "I have had an initial trouble or hitch with my publishing: the place from which it was supposed to be published I discovered, to my extreme astonishment, was locked up, and the staff away in Egypt." See Lewis, "Letter to Agnes Bedford," 124.

THE MATERIAL TURN OF LITERARY HISTORY:
ON THE COLLECTIVE BOOK *PETIT MUSÉE D'HISTOIRE
LITTÉRAIRE*

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Is there anything more abstract than literary writing? "What (is there) to show?" Paul Valéry wonders, when Julien Cain, deputy head of the Bibliothèque Nationale (French National Library), plans to build a "Musée de la littérature" (Museum of Literature) for the 1937 International Exhibition. What do writers concretely do? Which tools do they use? Which role do objects play in their writing and in their works? Could these questions offer a fresh starting point to study literary history? Assuming they can, we undertook, a few years ago, to produce a history of European literature based on objects. It resulted in the publication of *Petit musée d'histoire littéraire*, a collective book presenting fifty years of literature through objects, following the principle of one object per year, from 1900 to 1950 (Picture 3).¹

If objects seem to be gaining more and more attention in our times of digitization,² this project also envisaged to place literature in a broader cultural history and therefore to emphasize its material aspects. More precisely, we designed this book in the wake of Louis Aragon's *Projet d'histoire littéraire contemporaine*, whose table of contents was published in the proto-surrealist journal *Littérature* in 1922, and of Roland Barthes's *Mythologies* published between 1954 and 1957.³

These questions are also rooted in the alternative histories of literature that emerged in the last two decades, pioneered by Denis Hollier and his *New History of French Literature* which follows a year-by-year model.⁴ Among these alternative histories of literature, a French collective research project on 'writers' literary history' can be singled out: it focused on the histories constructed by writers themselves, through a reflection about the

impact of editorial contexts, the notions of margins and canonization.⁵ This line of research was of great interest to us in that it challenged the external, panoramic and all-round vision of literature and put forward an internal, plural and fragmented approach.

This theoretical background also matched the central issues addressed by the Leuven-based research group MDRN, which specializes in the European cultural and literary history of the first half of the twentieth century. Considering literature in dynamic terms and contesting traditional and teleological models, MDRN lays the emphasis on the materiality of literature as opposed to the common belief that the 'Belles Lettres' would be isolated in an ivory tower, out of touch with reality, a cliché that is still particularly vivid in French culture.⁶ Objects are, in this regard, essential elements, as stated in the founding text of the group, "ABC of Literary History":

Modern literature is a cultural form in permanent evolution. While there are numerous ways to describe the basic building blocks involved in the process of literary change, we propose to view literature as constituted of *objects, discourses, practices and media*.⁷

Finding fertile ground in these research contexts, the project on a literary history considered through objects was turned into a collectively written book. Revisiting this book, published in French by Les Impressions Nouvelles in 2015, we would like, in what follows, to look back at the process of its composition while also considering it from the perspective of new research paths it has opened up since, dealing mainly with photographic portraits and cinematographic representations of writers.⁸

Petit musée d'histoire littéraire, a collective project

An evident question to arise was concerned with the choice of the objects. We aimed at a balance between working class objects (the blue overall, the assembly line) and objects reserved to the social elite (the Orient-Express, the airplane, at least for some time). Although a number of typical 'writers' objects' (the typewriter, scrap paper, the bookshelf) were included, we also dealt with everyday objects (the bicycle, tobacco, scissors) and even seemingly meaningless objects (the toilet, the pill, the handkerchief), whose presence reminds us that the heroes of our literary hall of fame were ordinary people as well. In addition, we also aimed at a combination of rather obvious objects, like the flag, the radio set, and the African mask, with some less self-evident ones such as the cinema screen, the Enigma machine, and the medal awarded to the winner of a poetry contest at the Olympic Games.

The selection was to be as varied as possible but needed to reflect a number of topics of particular interest to our research group, notably early twentieth-century means of communication and new media.

Petit musée d'histoire littéraire thus employs a wide variety of objects to present an overview of the time lapse between the fin-de-siècle atmosphere, which still prevails during the Belle Époque (the corset, the couch, the dandy's jacket, the merry-go-round or the reclining chair), and the 1940s, marked by the Second World War, absurdist philosophy and, shortly after, by the "era of suspicion"⁹ (bread, the bomb, barbed wire, the English clock). Outside the period covered by the book, questions were raised – in the 1960s, for instance, by Perec, Barthes, and Baudrillard – about the status of objects as symbols of the consumer society. While the period covered by the book – from 1900 to 1950 – was determined by the chronological boundaries employed by MDRN, sticking to the first half of the twentieth century allowed us to focus on a period caught between the massive use of objects



Picture 3: Cover of *Petit musée d'histoire littéraire*

in the realist literature of the nineteenth century and the mainly critical perception of the overwhelming presence of objects in the 1960s.

In geographical terms, finally, we made the conscious choice to 'build' a museum of *European* literature. In our view, studying objects requires a comparative approach: objects travel – they may not be used in exactly the same way in all countries, but they often raise similar issues regardless of national borders. If our objects are international, so are our bibliography and our writing team, carefully selected for this purpose. Indeed, the book was not only designed by our research group as a whole but was also written in a collective way: by 38 scholars, some of them working together on certain texts. Being both international and collective, this book was ambitious. The book's ambition thus lies in both its international orientation and in its emergence from a collective process.

Problems of literary history

The fundamental idea behind the project as a whole was audacious enough in itself: *Petit musée d'histoire littéraire* stakes the claim that non-literary objects can be considered as literary if we change the way we look at them. The following four questions highlight how the types of problems encountered while preparing a literary history revolving around objects provide opportunities to expand our conceptions of literary historiography.

1. *What (is there) to show?*

The practice of exhibiting literature raises numerous questions which curators have to face, for example when it comes to turning writers' homes into museums¹⁰ or to devoting an exhibition to a writer, which has become a widespread phenomenon.¹¹ Even the most prestigious institutions regularly do this (see for instance the exhibitions the Bibliothèque nationale de France devoted to René Char and Pascal in 2007, the one on Claude Simon at the BPI (Bibliothèque publique d'information) in 2013 or more recently on Jean Genet and Oscar Wilde), sometimes successfully, sometimes less so.¹² However, solutions to certain recurring problems have not always been the same. When they were asked to create a 'Museum of literature' in 1937, Valéry and Cain chose to display not only the expected pictures of people and places, but also manuscripts and drafts, that is to say the 'prehistory' of the book, which would later become the key material of genetic criticism.

Nowadays, as the modernists already anticipated in the 1920s, many other objects belonging to the visual culture of writers have become part of exhibitions. Indeed, images of all kinds, whose presence has dramatically increased since the middle of the nineteenth century, and even more strongly at the beginning of the twentieth, play a crucial role in the celebration of the tangible beauty of objects.

If writers have always been nourished by images from cinema, photography, painting and so on, they are also, willingly or not, immersed in an urban landscape composed of advertising posters, leaflets, postcards, movie posters and the like which they share with their contemporaries. Images enable the circulation of a material culture and increase the fetishism for objects. In turn, in the 1920s, images played an increasing role in the embodiment of the writer, with pictures being used to promote writers in weekly journals like *Les Nouvelles littéraires* and in literary journals and magazines like *Jazz* or by publishers like Grasset, pioneers in the era of what Nathalie Heinich calls the "visibility" of the writer.¹³

2. *What do we mean by the materiality of literature?*

The notion of the materiality of literature brings to mind some stereotypes linked to the image of the writer: a desk covered with all kinds of books, images and drafts, an overloaded bookshelf, as well as all the objects exhibited nowadays in writers' former homes (think of Balzac's coffee machine, Victor Hugo's lectern, Simenon's pipe, Kerouac's typewriter, and Pessoa's glasses), but literature is a material thing on many other levels. Its objects are also the ones staged by literary texts, in which they serve as social, psychological, and sometimes moral markers. In that regard, objects play a crucial role in the characterization of the characters handling them, with whom they have a strong connection, be it metonymic or metaphoric. Objects are also generic markers, notably in popular literature. If the sheriff and the Indians are undeniably part of the western's "staff,"¹⁴ so is the Colt, which immediately introduces us into highly streamlined genre fiction, whereas its cousin, the brown ing, will be associated with the underworld. In her introduction to *Usages de l'objet*, Marita Caraión also mentions indexical culture, this "ability of the object to leave a trace," to "reincarnate the past and trigger memories."¹⁵ This indexicality of the object is essential for writers who use objects to initiate a form of (self-)writing, but it is equally so for historians of literature. As traces of the era when they first emerged, objects can prove very useful in the tricky task of showcasing literature. One of our ambitions in the *Petit musée d'histoire*

littéraire was indeed to *show* literature, to stage it, even though our exhibition took place in an imaginary museum.

3. *What is a literary object?*

The term 'object' should be understood in its most material meaning, and not in the metaphorical sense of a 'research object' that could include any kind of topic, like travel, autobiography or lyricism. The objects that immediately jump to mind, as mentioned before, are the ones we can find in the texts themselves. From that point of view, it comes as no surprise that the countless objects playing a crucial role both as symbols and as narrative devices in nineteenth-century realist novels have been studied carefully by many scholars working on that period and that literary genre. According to José-Luis Díaz and François Kerlouégan, the nineteenth century is indeed "the century of things" ("le siècle des choses")¹⁶ and Julien Gracq has a pleasant way of describing this phenomenon when he evokes "the *overdressed* aspect of the Balzacian novel, which is always dressed from head to toe, fully furnished and draped, decorated like a *Belle Époque* living room,"¹⁷ or the "heavy chest of drawers cluttered with balance-sheets" of the Baudelairian "spleen,"¹⁸ or even the degenerate elegance of the interior decoration in *À rebours* by Huysmans.

In a broader sense, literary objects are also the objects that belong to writers, even if they do not appear in their works. Some writers are collectors, which provides curators with a treasure to show in writers' house museums. Think of Pierre Loti, Roland Penrose, André Breton, and Ramón Gómez de la Serna, who collected objects that can be considered fetishes. Their imaginations and their aesthetics crystallize around their objects, as suggested by Virginia Woolf when she comments on the objects that can be found in a person's room in "Street Haunting": "For there we sit surrounded by objects which perpetually express the oddity of our own temperaments and enforce the memories of our own experience."¹⁹ The series of two-minute short films called *The Object of...* broadcast by Paris Première, revolves around this question of personal imagination. It was produced by the French publishing house Actes Sud to promote its writers. It shows, for instance, Pia Petersen emptying her backpack and Paul Auster explaining the role of the cigarillo in his career.²⁰

However, *Petit musée d'histoire littéraire*, which displays an imaginary collection, tackles not just highly specific objects, but rather objects that "marked with a common seal a whole generation" and formed the "poetic mentality of an era" like dummies seen in shop-windows or the bodysuit of the actress Musidora exalted by the Surrealists.²¹ In a very different domain,

it could be the car or the illuminated sign celebrated by the modernists: they are an integral part of the mental landscape of the time. French novelist and journalist Pierre Mac Orlan was aware of the importance of some inventions in the collective imagination when he wondered: "What could Petronius [the author of the *Satyricon*] think of in a century without phonographs?"²² This was a funny way of saying that everyday objects shape the people who own or use them, much like what Walter Benjamin argued in his essays about the anthropology of modernity dating from around the same time.²³

Objects that have a special relationship with literature have also been of great interest to us, such as those used during literary events like the red vest Théophile Gautier wore for *Hernani*'s première as a rallying sign of the Romantics. As far as the twentieth century is concerned, some outfits played a similar role, like the blue overalls during the Spanish Civil War, or accessories worn by dandies. In a more implicit but equally crucial way, some objects gain prominence because they are indirectly used as symbols of literature, for instance by providing it with fertile metaphors like the camera lens for modernist literature, or the bomb as a model of efficiency for literary essays that were politically committed during the 1940s. In *Petit musée d'histoire littéraire*, all objects have something to say, and they have been selected for what Lorraine Daston calls their "loquaciousness," insofar as they are "effective generator[s] of discourse."²⁴

4. *What role for objects in literary history?*

In the field of historiography, objects play an essential part. As tangible traces left by events and past habits, they make it possible to visualize historical knowledge.²⁵ It is no surprise, then, that objects are often brought to the fore in books for a wider audience like "objects of the twentieth century," "objects of French History." The book called *A History of the World in 100 Objects*, launched in the wake of the BBC radio program, is a true bestseller.²⁶ This kind of approach, which enables a concrete understanding of the course of history, has recently also been adopted for the commemoration of the First World War, for instance in Gary Sheffield's *The First World War in 100 Objects*, and in a more unusual online article on the BBC website dealing with objects that became successful because of the War.²⁷

In the humanities, material history has been placed in the spotlight since the 'New History' of the 1970s, carried by the journal *Past and Present* in the UK.²⁸ Every object is regarded as a possible point of departure for this kind of history which has been called 'total history': a plant such as the tree (a topic

Alain Corbin chose for a recent book³⁰, an animal like the bear or the pig (both studied by the French historian Michel Pastoureau³⁰), food (tackled among others by Anthony Rowley³¹), or a manufactured and unexpected object, such as the brush (the topic of an exhibition in Forney Library in Paris in 2006³²). In France, Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora are among the most famous historians spearheading this trend: the collective work edited by the latter, *Les Lieux de mémoire* (dealing with statues, watchtowers, the calendar and so on), is a landmark in the field.³³ Objects are currently at the core of the history of material culture, exemplified, for instance, by Manuel Charpy's doctoral work called *Le Théâtre des objets*, which has been a great source of inspiration.³⁴ In literary history, however, this kind of approach is still very rare. Some works focus on objects but they often highlight their symbolic value, such as the recent book by Andrea Del Lungo about the window.³⁵

As for contemporary literature, many writers attach great importance to objects and their works show how difficult it is to stick to the object, as Francis Ponge wished to do in the 1940s in his famous collection of prose poems *Le Pari pris des choses*, which devotes poems to trivial objects like soap, bread, and the wooden crate. In contemporary examples, objects are often used to support or evoke personal thoughts and memories. Indeed, the book *Intérieur* describes all the objects in the apartment of writer Thomas Clerc (who is so fond of objects that he agreed to write the foreword of *Petit musée*).³⁶ Similarly, François Bon evokes his life through familiar objects in *Autobiographie des objets*,³⁷ while in the North-American sphere, it is worth mentioning Louise Warren, a poet from Quebec, whose book *Apparitions: Inventaire de l'atelier* consists of short meditations about everyday objects, along with pictures of them.³⁸ In those books, the object is always symptomatic of a generation and the individual object joins the collective, in the wake of Péc's *Je me souviens*, a list of 480 memories based on everyday details of his youth published in 1978, and structured by the anaphora "Je me souviens" (I remember). For example, in François Bon's book, the radio device Telefunken or the Kodak camera become literary objects through the text. The chapter devoted to the typewriter ends with the evocation of "these old Remingtons so often used, even on the Web, as the symbol of modern literary writing."³⁹ Midway between literary writing and literary criticism, we can also mention *La Lampe de Proust et autres objets de la littérature* by Serge Sanchez, which defines itself as an inventory of a second-hand shop with objects of every period.⁴⁰

Petit musée d'histoire littéraire follows this literary trend but also diverges from it in several ways. To begin with, we do not aim at following a single thread, but at encompassing many objects to obtain a better understanding

of the spirit of an age. We envisage for *Petit musée d'histoire littéraire* a readership beyond the academic world, since its playful composition principle enables an easy and fragmented reading experience. However, our book is not only meant to be a picture book of literary history for a wider public, as it uses objects to open up new perspectives on the literature of the 1900-1950 period at large, a process illustrated by the following example. This text, written by Anke Gillet, tackles gender and social issues of the beginning of the twentieth century by dealing with the corset as it figures in the literature of German-speaking world.

Excerpt: 'the corset'

During his forced exile after the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany, the Austrian writer Stefan Zweig (1881-1942) embarked on a large literary project entitled *Die Welt von Gestern. Erinnerungen eines Europäers*.⁴¹ In this work he evokes the drastic changes his generation witnessed from the fin-de-siècle over the First World War and postwar Europe until the takeover of National-Socialism. *Die Welt von Gestern* is a panoramic retrospective of the process of modernization of European culture and society in the form of concrete facts and events seen through the lens of Zweig's personal and accurate observations. Among the remarkable symptoms signaling the end of what he scornfully calls the "era of propriety" Zweig names women's clothing. Although men's fashion undeniably changed too, it was the transformation of women, who publicly showed their legs for the first time in European history, that indicated the irreversible course toward an age of openness, individuality, disobedience. The greatest liberation, Zweig argues, was the disappearance of the corset. This hard, whalebone garment strapped around the middle of their bodies turned women invariably into strange, wasp-waisted creatures that were constrained in their movements (Picture 4).

The corset materialized the social prison that held women captive in more than one way. The barrier that literally put them out of reach of physical touch was also the site of erotic projection. This most feminine of all garments indeed signified the forbidden promise of lustful delight and strongly enhanced the imagination with regard to female sexuality that obsessed the entire fin-de-siècle culture. Being an 'idol of perversity,' however, was a severe impediment to a functional participation in society, not least in the field of cultural production.⁴² Standing on a pedestal as the object of erotic worship in the minds of artists, writers and psychiatrists proved incongruous with serious artistic practice. The puzzlement about the banality and conventionality of



Picture 4: Fuchs Rosa, publicity for Federer & Pisen corset factory, Prague, 1899, Museum of Decorative Art in Prague

women's literature expressed by the cultural philosopher Georg Simmel in his essay "Female Culture" is illustrative of the almost universal skepticism about women's creative, artistic and intellectual capacities.⁴³ A tightened body was merely the mirror of a thin spirit.

As the corset was the epitome of femininity (although its use was debated in reformist discourse), it was omnipresent in the world of women: fashion magazines, household manuals, lifestyle, health and etiquette literature. As specifically female attributes with erotic connotations corsets were visualized in avant-garde art ranging from Toulouse-Lautrec's fin-de-siècle brothel and nightlife scenes unto the grotesque depictions of female sexuality by Otto Dix or George Grosz. Apart from washing instructions and eroticization, however, this fundamental piece of underwear remained decently unmentioned in mainstream arts and literature. Especially and remarkably so in the work of

women writers. Since the late eighteenth century German bourgeois culture created a distinct profile of industry and decency for itself as a mark of distinction from both the 'libertine' culture of the aristocracy and that of the surrounding nations (read: France). Propriety – underscored also by Stefan Zweig – deeply permeated the entire literary production until the arrival of naturalism (and even then...) and it did even more so in the case of women writers, whose work was without exception dominated by virtue and modesty.

Against this backdrop a volume of stories entitled *Korsetgeschichten*, published in 1907 by a woman writer with the *nom de guerre* Dolorosa, was bound to catch the eye. Dolorosa had been notorious in Berlin nightlife around the turn of the century because of her recitals of sadomasochistic poetry in the artistic cabaret Zum hungrigen Pegasus (At the hungry Pegasus). When it was closed down by the authorities, she shifted her literary activities to the writing of novels that addressed the taboos of bourgeois society. One of which was her short-story cycle on the corset.⁴⁴

The "Stories of the Corset" was an aberration in many ways, not in the least because its author provocatively added a "cheerful dedication" to a "gracious" female friend on the front page of her stories about women's underwear. Cheerful or not, the book was banned after its first publication. Yet it contains nothing other than what it announces: short, at times somewhat weird and roguish, at the same time very banal and bizarre stories about women's corsets. Let us take as an example one called "The corset on the Throne." The subject of the title is a thing of beauty: "In all its grace the corset lay spread out on a little table. It had the soft pink tone of the blossom of the oleander, and gave out a sweet, lustful scent."⁴⁵ The story starts in London, where a reckless robber terrorizes the city's female inhabitants. In spite of a certain reminiscence of Jack the Ripper, this criminal is not interested in money or lives, but instead attacks "young and beautiful ladies" in order to obtain their corsets (144). The impertinence comes to a climax when the Chief of police's daughter, Miss Mildred Wimbledon, becomes a victim. She is dragged into a coach by two men and brought to a house. Instead of being thrown into a dark cellar, she is carefully placed on a seat in a salon "full of the most precious little objects from all the world, from China and Japan, from Egypt and South-Africa, from Lapland and India" (148). Instead of a gruesome person, the robber turns out to be "the most beautiful, charming young man she has seen in her entire life" (154). He bids for her corset (leaves her discretely in the care of a maid to undress) and on his return shows her the collection he has gathered meanwhile. Women, he says, are faithless and heartless, but their corsets are soft, beautiful and loyal. On seeing her underwear, "the young man falls on both

knees, presses the corset passionately to his heart, covers it in terms of endearment and kisses it passionately" (157). Meanwhile the heroine, whose "virginal heart" (157) has been touched, hardly dares to look at the beautiful young man who "resembles the marble Apollo from the British Museum" (153), "presses her slim hands on her pounding heart" (157). He brings her back home and disappears from London, only to meet her again months later in Italy, where he turns out to be a prince, who lives in a castle, in which Mildred's corset (literally) sits on a throne. They marry and Mildred herself takes the place of her corset "on the throne of his heart" (165).

The basic plot is about a fetishist for women's underwear. The form of the narrative, which consists of an accumulation of trivialities from romantic literature as it was produced by women throughout the nineteenth century, is in such stark contrast with the pathological theme that it appears as a parody. The ludicrously sentimental language and implausible happy ending in a story about a man stealing women's garments and preferring those above real persons can only be read as a critique of the gendered literary and moral conventions of bourgeois culture. The male protagonist, extremely passionate about his beloved objects, explains to his victim that he does not understand "why poets do not dedicate their best hymns to the poetic corset. If I were one, I would praise the corset in verses beyond compare" (155). Clearly this is not the aim of the writer of the story herself. Dolorosa's "cheerful" introduction of a new literary object – the corset – defies the fixation of woman as either (symbolic) queen-of-hearts or as erotic object, but does so with a subtle literary travesty that runs the risk of not even being recognized as such and hence being thrown on the waste heap of (in Simmel's view) banal and conventional women's literature.

Hardly ten years later the women writers and artists from the avant-garde – Hannah Höch, Else Lasker-Schüler, Lotte Pritzel, Emmy Hennings – in divergent ways made the iconoclasm of bourgeois masquerade their explicit goals. But someone had to start untying the laces to allow for a deep breath.

Notes

¹ This chapter is partly inspired by a text previously written in French: "Pour une histoire matérielle de la littérature: autour du *Petit musée d'histoire littéraire*," *Fabula, Atelier de théorie littéraire*, 2015, www.fabula.org/atelier.php?Pour_une_histoire_materielle_de_la_litterature.

² Sarah Sepulchre and Sébastien Févry, eds., "Du rétro au néo," *Recherches en communication* (forthcoming).

³ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris: Seuil, 1957).

⁴ Denis Hollier, *A New History of French Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989). In the wake of Hollier, let us mention Jean-Michel Rabaté, 1913: *The Cradle*

of *Modernism* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007) and Claude Leroy and Myriam Boucharenc, eds., *L'Année 1925, L'Esprit d'une époque* (Presses universitaires de Paris-Ouest, 2012).

⁵ Vincent Debuene, Jean-Louis Jeannelle, Marielle Macé and Michel Murat, eds., *L'Histoire littéraire des écrivains* (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2013). See also Ann Jefferson's review: *French Studies* 69:1 (2015): 116–117. See also Bruno Curatolo, ed., *Les Écrivains auteurs de l'histoire littéraire* (Besançon: Presses universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2007) and "Histoires littéraires," *Acta Fabula* 13:1 (2012), <http://www.fabula.org/revue/document6760.php>.

⁶ Anglo-American academic culture seems immune to this tendency, as shown by Bill Brown's essays: *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) and *Other Things* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015). See also Juli Highfill, *Modernism and its Merchandise: The Spanish Avant-Garde and Material Culture, 1920–1930* (State College: Penn State University Press, 2014) and Fiona Candlin and Ralford Guins, eds., *The Object Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009).

⁷ MDRN, *Modern Times, Literary Change* (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 13. See also sections 4.4 and 6.1–3 in the same text.

⁸ For instance in David Martens, Jean-Pierre Montier and Anne Reverseau, eds., *L'Écrivain vu par la photographie: Formes, usages, enjeux* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2017) and Nadja Cohen, ed., *Écrivains à l'écran*, special issue of *Captures* 2:1 (2017), <http://revuecaptures.org/dossier/%C3%A9crivains-%C3%A0-1%20%80%99%C3%A9cran>.

⁹ See Nathalie Sarraute's famous essay *L'Ère du soupçon* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), originally published in 1956.

¹⁰ See Harald Hendrix, ed., *Writers' Houses and the Making of Memory* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

¹¹ On exhibitions devoted to literature, see Olivia Rosenthal & Lionel Ruffel, eds., *La Littérature exposée: Les écritures contemporaines hors du livre*, special issue of *Littérature* 160 (2010) and Marie-Clémence Régner, ed., *Ce que le musée fait à la littérature: Multilatéralité et exposition du littéraire*, special issue of *Interférences littéraires* 16 (2015), <http://www.interferenceslitteraires.be/node/472>.

¹² These last two exhibitions, *Jean Genet* (Marseille, MUCEM, 2016) & *Osar Wilde* (Paris, Petit Palais, 2016) were reviewed in the journal *L'Esportateur littéraire: carnet de visites*, <http://www.litteraturesmodesemploi.org/exposition/lexporteur-lit/%C3%A9osar-wilde-net-de-visites>.

¹³ Nathalie Heinich, *De la visibilité: Excellence et singularité en régime médiatique* (Paris: Gallimard, 2012). See also three online journal issues on the topic: Nausicaa Dewes & David Martens, eds., *Iconographies de l'écrivain*, special issue of *Interférences littéraires* 2 (2009), <http://www.interferenceslitteraires.be/mr2>; David Martens and Anne Reverseau, eds., *Figurations iconographiques de l'écrivain*, special issue of *Image & Narrative* 13:4 (2012), <http://www.imageandnarrative.be>; and Jean-Pierre Bertrand, Pascal Durand and Martine Lavaud, eds., *Le Portrait photographique d'écrivain*, special issue of *Contextes* 14 (2014), <http://contextes.revues.org/5916>.

¹⁴ See Philippe Hamon, *Le Personnel du roman: Le système des personnages dans « Les Rougon-Macquart » d'Émile Zola* (Genève: Droz, 1983).

¹⁵ Marta Caraión, "L'objet en représentation. XIX^e-XX^e siècles: une introduction," in *Usages de l'objet: littérature, histoire, arts et techniques: XIX^e-XX^e siècles* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2014), 25–26. (Our translation; the original has: "Culture indiciaire," "aptitude de l'objet à faire trace" / "réincarner le passé et [faire] travailler le souvenir").

¹⁶ See the introduction to the second issue of *Le Magasin du XIX^e siècle* on "Les choses," ed. José-Luis Diaz (Paris: Société des études romantiques et dix-neuviémistes, 2012).

¹⁷ Julien Gracq, *En lisant en écrivain* (Paris: José Corti, 1980), 50. The author mentions the "stifling density" ("densité étouffante") of interior decoration of their times and compares the relationships great realist writers of the time have with objects. In that regard, he evokes "Balzac's messy furniture, freshly unpacked, still waiting to be sorted out by Flaubert's rigorous

parisimony" ("le mobilier en vrac de Balzac, à peine extrait de ses caisses attend encore d'être trié par l'exigante parcheminie flaubertienne" (32)). The word "overdressed" is given in English in Gracq's text.

¹⁸ Baudelaire, "Spleen," *The Flowers of Evil*, trans. William Aggeler (Fresno, CA: Academy Library Guild, 1954).

¹⁹ Virginia Woolf continues: "That bowl on the mantelpiece, for instance, was bought at Mantua on a windy day." *The Essays of Virginia Woolf: Vol. IV: 1925-1928*, ed. Andrew McNeillie (New York: Harcourt, 1987), 481.

²⁰ 'L'Objet de...', <http://www.actes-sud.fr/lobjet-de>.

²¹ Louis Aragon, *Projet d'histoire littéraire contemporaine* (Paris: Digraphe, 1994 [1923]), 3, our translation.

²² Pierre Mac Orlan, "Vénus internationale," in *Poésies documentaires complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982), 19-20, our translation.

²³ Among others, see Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2002).

²⁴ Lorraine Daston, ed., *Things that Talk: Object Lessons from Art and Science* (New York: Zone books, 2007), 12, 45.

²⁵ See, for instance, Ludmilla Jordonova, *The Look of the Past: Visual and Material Evidence in Historical Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

²⁶ Neil MacGregor, *A History of the World in 100 Objects* (New York: Viking, 2011). The BBC podcast is available here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/series/ahow/all>. For similar projects, see Hermann Schäfer, *Deutsche Geschichte in 100 Objekten* (Munich: Piper, 2015) and Beppe Severgnini, *Italiani si diventa: Storia per oggetti e ricordi dell'Italia ottimista* (Milan: BUR Rizzoli, 2016).

²⁷ Gary Sheffield, *The First World War in 100 Objects* (London: Carlton Books, 2013) and Stephen Evans, "10 inventions that owe their success to World War One," 13 April 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-26935867>.

²⁸ Within the field of material history, a notable fact is that, for the past two decades, the media have been given a prominent role, as shown by the development of a research field called 'media archaeology,' initially theorized by Thomas Elsaesser, Erkki Huhtamo, Siegfried Zielinski and Wolfgang Ernst.

²⁹ Alain Corbin, *La Douceur de l'ombre: L'arbre, source d'émotions de l'Antiquité à nos jours* (Paris: Fayard, 2013).

³⁰ Michel Pastoureau, *Le Cochon: histoire d'un cousin mal aimé* (Paris: Gallimard, 2009) and *L'Ours: histoire d'un roi déchu* (Paris: Seuil, 2007).

³¹ Anthony Rowley, *Une histoire mondiale de la table* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2006). Rowley was invited several times to the radio program *Concordance des temps* to talk about, for instance, the potato.

³² See www.paris-bibliothèques.org/brosse. The Forney Library has often staged this kind of exhibition, for instance about the spoon in 2014: www.paris-bibliothèques.org/histoires-de-cuillères.

³³ Pierre Nora, ed., *Les Lieux de mémoire*, 3 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1984, 1986 and 1992).

³⁴ Manuel Charpy, *Le Théâtre des objets: Espaces privés, culture matérielle. Paris, 1830-1914* (PhD thesis, 2010) and "L'Ordre des choses: Sur quelques traits de la culture matérielle bourgeoise parisienne, 1830-1914," *Revue d'histoire du XIX^e siècle* 34 (2007): 105-128.

³⁵ Andrea Del Lungo, *La Fenêtre: Sémiologie et histoire de la représentation littéraire* (Paris: Seuil, 2014).

³⁶ Thomas Clerc, *Intérieur* (Paris: Gallimard, 2013).

³⁷ François Bon, *Autobiographie des objets* (Paris: Seuil, 2012).

³⁸ Louise Warren, *Appartitions: Inventaire de l'atelier* (Québec: Nota bene, 2012).

³⁹ Bon, *Autobiographie*, 47. See also the slightly different online version: <http://www.tierslivre.net/spip/spip.php?article2783>.

⁴⁰ Serge Sanchez, *La Lampe de Proust et autres objets de la littérature* (Paris: Payot 'Essais,' 2013). See also the autobiographical book by Annie Ernaux called *Les Années*, whose chapters are based on pictures taken during the course of her life (Paris: Gallimard, 2008).

⁴¹ Stefan Zweig, *Die Welt von Gestern: Erinnerungen eines Europäers* (Stockholm: Fischer Verlag, 1962).

⁴² Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁴³ Georg Simmel, "Weibliche Kultur," in *Aufsätze und Abhandlungen 1901-1908*, vol. 1, ed. Rüdiger Kramma, Angela Rammstedt, and Orthein Rammstedt (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1995), 64-83.

⁴⁴ For more about Dolorosa, see Lisbeth Exner, "Dolorosa alias Dolle Rosa: Schriftstellerein des Masochismus und der erotischen Kolportage," *Phantom Schmerz: Quellentexte zur Begriffsgeschichte des Masochismus*, ed. Michael Farin (Graz: Bellville/Neue Galerie, 2003), 150-163; and Anke Gilleir, "Galateas gebrochene Nase: Künstlertum und Weiblichkeit im Werk Dolorosas," in *Lust. Schmerz: Künstlerinnen und Autorinnen der deutschen Avantgarde*, ed. Lorella Bosco and Anke Gilleir (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2015).

⁴⁵ Dolorosa, "Das Mieder auf dem Throne," *Korsetzgeschichten* (Leipzig: Leipziger Verlag, s.d.), 143-165, our translation.