June 2017

Keepers: Marking the Value of the Books on my Shelves

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I am told that my reading is escapist.
It is light.
It is trash.
It is disposable fiction.

I guess someone forgot to send me that memo to throw out my books.

These are my keeper shelves:
The weight of my paperbacks are making my shelves bow.

My shelves are keepers in their own right.
I bought them from a second-hand romance book exchange store. It closed down when the ebook world burst onto the scene.
Digital files are not stored on these shelves.

I mourn for the ebooks I have read that don’t have a physical manifestation to signal that I have read them.

I have a digital record of my reading online. It barely puts any pressure on these laden shelves.

I was sorting through my shelves to find my favourites books. It is a given that they are all keeper books that I will never dispose.

Though I own many books with aesthetically pleasing covers, the ones I choose to photograph are the ones whose stories have touched me the most.
Post-it notes mark my books. I in turn mark my post-it notes

I prefer markers to marginalia. They are the visual representation of the moment I was thrown out of the story. They are the exosomatic indications of a thought that needed attention.

They mark the moment I paused to note.
They mark my need to speak to the author.
They mark my caught breath as the author speaks to me.

Assumptions can be misleading. Consider this:

An unmarked book is unremarkable in its inability to elicit a marked up marker from me.

An unmarked book is remarkable for its ability to transcend me beyond its pages, allowing me to forget to mark my markers.

I guess someone forgot to tell me that romance is not a critically engaging fiction.
I am an "Intellectual wastrel laz ing in the backwaters of quality literature" — Rudolph Bold, 1980

"After all, they’re all bad books, not like people are reading romances for their literary quality." — Annoyed Librarian 2012

"The trouble is that we have a bad habit, encouraged by pedants and sophisticates, of considering happiness as something rather stupid. Only pain is intellectual, only evil interesting." — Ursula K. Le Guin, 1973

"Alas, disdain for popular romance fiction remains a way to demonstrate one’s intelligence, political bona fides and demanding aesthetic sensibility..." — Eric Selinger, 2007

"The fundamental job of the imagination in ordinary life, then, is to produce, out of the society we have to live in, a vision of the society we want to live in." — Northrop Frye, 1963

My bookshelves show the the vision of the society I want to live in. One where romance and happiness is valued. One where mutual respect and consent is core to community values.

Published by IdeaExchange@UAkron, 2017