

WHAT DO I MEAN BY "SLOW READING?"

--from Lance Fletcher's Home of Slow Reading.

The phrase, "slow reading," is taken from *Daybreak*, a book by Frederick Nietzsche, a German philosopher-philologist. In the preface to *Daybreak* he writes:

"A book like this, a problem like this, is in no hurry; we both, I just as much as my book, are friends of *lento* [in music, a slow passage or movement]. It is not for nothing that I have been a philologist [literally, a lover of words, technically a student of the Classics] perhaps I am a philologist still, that is to say, a teacher of slow reading.

In the end I also write slowly. Nowadays it is not only my habit, it is also to my taste - a malicious taste, perhaps? - no longer to write anything which does not reduce to despair every sort of man who is 'in a hurry'. For philology is that venerable art which demands of its votaries one thing above all: to go aside, to take time, to become still, to become slow. It is a goldsmith's art and connoisseurship of the WORD which has nothing but delicate, cautious work to do and achieves nothing if it does not achieve it *lento*.

But precisely for this reason it is more necessary than ever today; by precisely this means does it entice and enchant us the most, in the midst of an age of 'work', that is to say, of hurry, of indecent and perspiring haste, which wants to 'get everything done' at once, including every old or new book:- this art does not so easily get anything done, it teaches to read WELL, that is to say, to read slowly, deeply, looking cautiously, before and aft, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers...My patient friends, this book desires for itself only perfect readers and philologists: LEARN to read me well!"