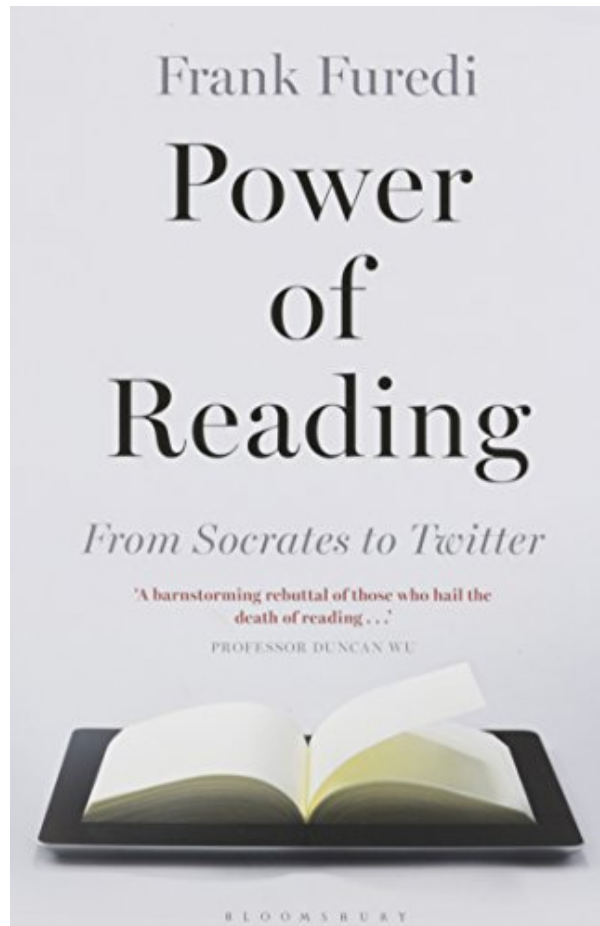
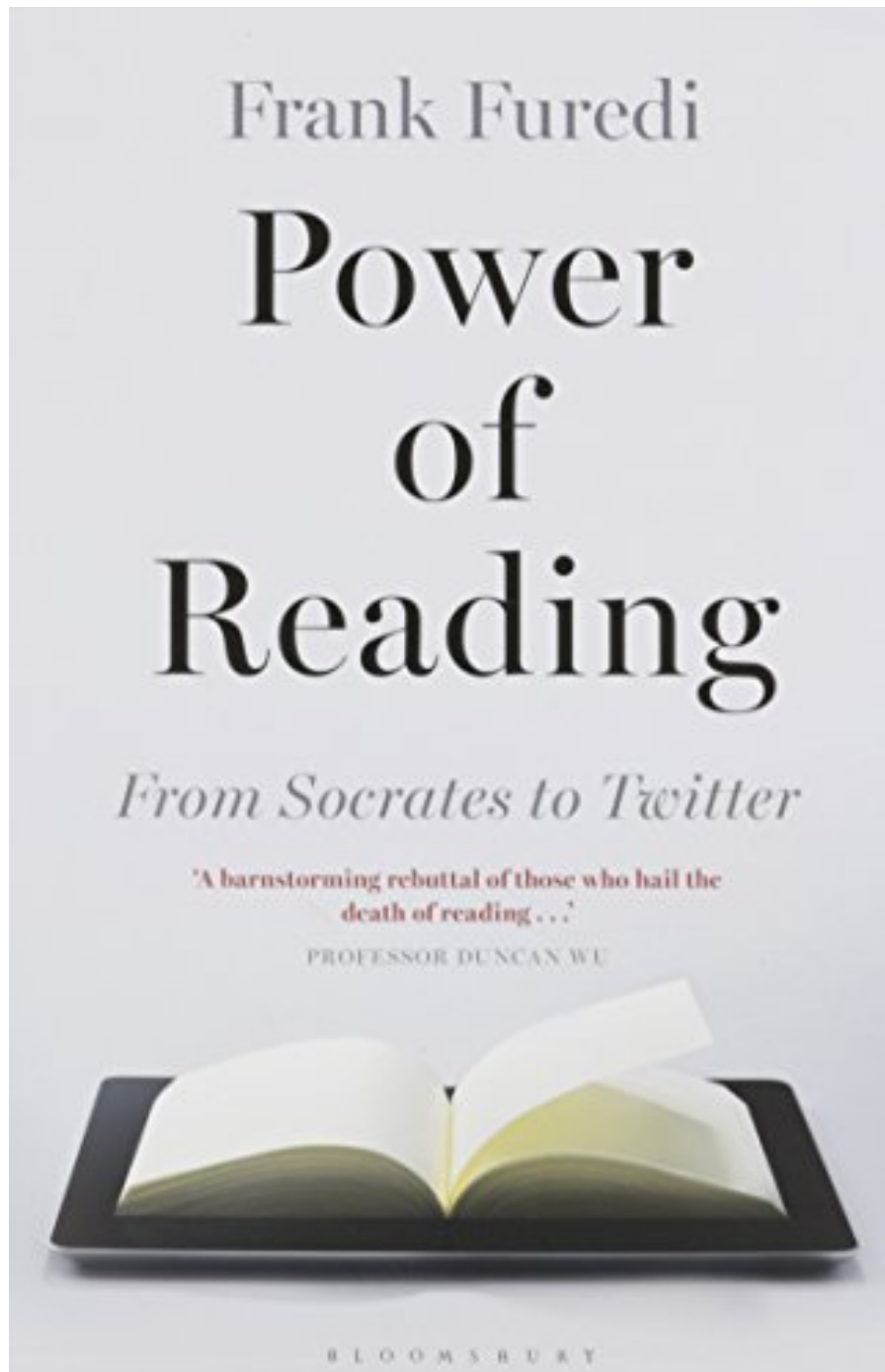


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About the Author

Frank Furedi fled to England in 1956 from Hungary. He was appointed Professor of Social Studies at the University of Kent and has been celebrated as a pundit and public intellectual throughout the English speaking world. His most celebrated books include The Culture of Fear and Where Have All the Intellectuals Gone?

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Eminent cultural and social historian Frank Furedi presents an eclectic and entirely original history of reading. The very act of reading and the choice of reading material endow individuals with an identity that possesses great symbolic significance. In ancient Rome, Cicero was busy drawing up a hierarchy of different types of readers. Since that time, people have been divided into a variety of categories--literate and illiterate, intensive and extensive readers, or vulgo and discreet readers. In the 19th century, accomplished readers were praised as "men of letters," while their moral opposites were described as "unlettered." Today, distinctions are made between cultural and instrumental readers and scorn is directed toward the infamous "tabloid reader."

Power of Reading explores the changing meanings attributed to the act of reading. Although it has a historical perspective, the book's focus is very much on the culture of reading that prevails in the 21st century. It is a fascinating insight into understanding the post-Gutenberg debates about literacy in a multimedia environment with such a strong emphasis on the absorption of information. Taking a cue from George Steiner, Furedi argues vigorously for the restoration of the art of reading--every bit as important as the art of writing.

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By Patrick Valentine

Furedi's "Power of Reading" deals with the history of reading, how we read, and especially with attitudes towards reading.

Furedi is particularly opposed to the post-modernists who disparage writing in favor of oral culture, those who belittle the importance of reading. Despite the title, he does not really engage with e-reading or Twitter.

Those interested will also like Alberto Manguel's "History of Reading", and Stanislas Dehaene's "Reading in the Brain" on its physiology.

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