

# New Forms of Literariness in Electronic Literature: An Approach to Rhetorical Enunciation and Temporality

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TESI DOCTORAL UPF / 2017

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*To my parents with love and gratitude  
To my husband who loves volcanoes*



## Acknowledgements

I owe many people my heartfelt gratitude for their support, friendship, and time.

I am profoundly grateful to Clara Ubaldina Lorda Mur who saw this project from its earliest thought to its eventual end. Her kind-hearted guidance, artistic insights, and endless patience have undoubtedly orchestrated the voices of these pages with theoretical sensibility.

I am equally thankful to Giovanna Di Rosario who kindly accepted to join this project on its early days. Her consistent support, valuable comments, and creative generosity have shaped these pages into poetical insights and future trajectories.

I want to express my gratitude to the Department of Translation and Language Sciences for providing me a space to write this thesis, as well as for granting me the opportunity to visit *Le Laboratoire d'excellence Arts-H2H-Université de Paris VIII* in September 2015.

I would like to thank Serge Bouchardon, David Clark, and Alexandra Saemmer who took the time to meet me and generously shared their knowledge, research, and expertise with me.

As libraries are charged with history and fertile thoughts, I would like to trace here those places where I found inspiration: Universitat Pompeu Fabra Central Library *Dipòsit de les Aigües*, *Bibliothèque royale de Belgique*, *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, and lastly, University of Miami Weeks Music Library.

Most especially, I would like to thank my French and Mexican family, my dear friends, and all the great people I met along the way, who despite their geographic distance have always shared with me their sustained encouragement, advice, and support.

It is impossible to imagine this thesis without the help of my husband Fabien, who has been an attentive research partner for this project. Thank you so much for providing adventurous eyes to edit and read moving letters.

Above all, I heartily thank my parents Nohelia and Ulises for always letting me pursue my dreams even before I knew what those dreams would be. Thank you both for your infinite trust, friendship, and love.

## ABSTRACT

One of the major challenges in electronic literature is the search for literariness in the works. This topic is still largely debated among scholars due to the diverse representations that the literary can acquire and the unestablished methods for its analysis. This thesis explores how new forms of literariness are depicted in two works of electronic literature by developing a transdisciplinary research methodology featuring theories from Discourse Analysis, Literary Theory, and Electronic Literature. The main objective is to evaluate how the intersection between these fields benefits the paratextual, enunciative, rhetorical, and temporal analysis of digital works. Two contemporary works of electronic literature comprise the corpus: *88 Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)* (2008) by David Clark and *Déprise* (2010) by Serge Bouchardon and Vincent Volckaert. The analyses show that the materiality and performativity of literariness can be explored through the intermingling of three distinct approaches: (1) enunciative variations, (2) tropological potential of couplings between text, movement and manipulation, and (3) temporal reorganizations within the works' complex narrative practices. The results of the analyses have enabled the creation of a transdisciplinary methodological contribution called "An Approach to Rhetorical enunciation and Temporality" (AReT), as well as the proposition of new hybrid terminology (e.g. interfacial anamnesis; interfacial randomization flashbacks; gestural impressionism). Both propositions can be used to study the emergence of new literary forms and the artistic exchanges between EL and different fine arts.

**Keywords:** Discourse Analysis, Electronic Literature, Literariness, Enunciation, Digital Rhetoric, Temporality.





## RESUM

Un dels grans reptes en el camp de la literatura electrònica és l'estudi de la dimensió literària de les obres, objecte d'amplis debats entre els especialistes, a causa de la diversitat que hi adopta el component literari i la manca d'una metodologia d'anàlisi satisfactòria. En aquesta tesi s'investiga com es presenten aquestes noves formes literàries en dues obres de literatura electrònica, tot desenvolupant una metodologia de recerca transdisciplinària, fonamentada alhora en l'Anàlisi del Discurs, la Teoria Literària i la Literatura Electrònica. El principal objectiu és avaluar els avantatges de la intersecció entre aquests camps per a l'anàlisi paratextual, enunciativa, retòrica i temporal de les obres digitals. El corpus està constituït per dues obres de literatura electrònica: : 88 *Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)* (2008) de David Clark i *Déprise* (2010) de Serge Bouchardon and Vincent Volckaert. Les anàlisis posen de manifest que es pot explorar la materialitat i la performativitat del component literari entrelaçant tres aproximacions diferents: (1) les variacions enunciatives, (2) el potencial tropològic de les associacions entre text, moviment i manipulació, i (3) les reorganitzacions temporals en les complexes pràctiques narratives de les obres. Els resultats de les anàlisis han permès l'elaboració d'una contribució metodològica anomenada "Una Aproximació a l'enunciació Retòrica i a la Temporalitat (AeRT), així com d'una proposta de nova terminologia híbrida (per exemple, anamnesis interfacial, flashbacks d'aleatorització interfacial; impressionisme gestual). Ambdues propostes permeten estudiar com emergeixen noves formes literàries i com es produeixen intercanvis artístics entre la LE i diverses belles arts.

**Paraules clau:** Anàlisi del Discurs, Literatura Electrònica, Literarietat, Enunciació, Retòrica Digital, Temporalitat.



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## INTRODUCTION

As I type these words, it is most likely that a new work of Electronic Literature (EL) sketches in someone's mind, a new article on the subject continuously changes form, or a new conversation on the topic reformulates in more than one language at a time. Seen as a young and rapidly growing field, EL stands as a literary and social practice, whose roots and branches constantly develop new research questions, as they swiftly traverse the vines of the digital environment.

I crossed the words: electronic literature in a printed scenario as a Master student at the University of Iceland in 2012, where I used EL as a practical tool to teach Spanish as a Second Language. At the beginning, I encountered the incomprehensible, I was left in mere contemplation of the intersemiotic relations that composed the works, and at times, I simply abandoned my reading. As I erased with my cursor what I wanted to read, I was challenged by the evocative power that words could acquire in such new dimensions of writing. I wondered if these new expressions of thought were animated by analogous passions already found in different fine arts; and if so, how these artistic passions were reinvented and recreated in a digital landscape.

The more I explored the field, the more I became convinced that the idea I had about EL was an introductory one. It was not as simple as underlining the difference between *digitized* literature and *digitally born* artefacts written for and thanks to digital media, but a matter of understanding the complex relationship of such experimental forms of literary practice; in which the digital device not only expanded the possibilities of creative expression but also transformed them.

Likewise, I asked myself about the longevity of the works, from the moment of their creation beyond the screen until my first click or scroll on the screenic surface. Considering the rapid pace of technological change in the digital environment, I questioned myself about the challenges of their future accessibility and possible archiving, preservation, and classification. Following this stream of

thought and imagination, I began to inquire about the processes involved in making possible these new ways of aesthetic and literary communication, as well as the value that interaction and manipulation had in the construction of meaning of the works.

The feeling of viewing texts and reading images whose materiality, ephemerality, substance, colour, shape, and voice were affected spatially and temporally, truly encouraged me to problematize the meaning of the literary in the digital environment, as well as to explore its multiple modes of signification. I realized that to examine the different senses the literary could acquire in such experimental creations was a difficult and artistic endeavour. Therefore, the effect of this rain of questions was a highlighting process that conducted the initial course of my investigation towards studying: what do we understand by EL? And how can it be approached?

According to the Electronic Literature Organization (ELO), EL is defined as “works with important literary aspects that take advantage of the capabilities and contexts provided by the stand-alone or networked computer” (ELO, 1999) (my emphasis). Since the publication of this definition, the search for literariness in electronic literary works has been a crucial topic that is still largely debated among scholars due to the diverse representations that the literary can acquire and the unestablished methods for its analysis.

For their part, scholars from diverse academic backgrounds have expressed their opinions in a variety of ways: “The definition is also slightly tautological, in that it assumes pre-existing knowledge of what constitutes an ‘important literary aspect’” (Hayles, 2007); “Can we discover a new quality of literariness? (Schäfer & Gendolla, 2010b); “Literariness in the sense of twenty-first-century verbal art opens itself to an ever-changing array of interactive and multimodal practices” (Ensslin, 2014b); “We still do not know how to think about the literariness of media. What is literature and how is it possible?” (Baldwin, 2015).

As a student coming from a literary background, who studies Electronic Literature through Discourse Analysis in a Department of Translation and Language Sciences, by reading these questions and statements, I was encouraged to construct my own

understanding of what constitutes the literary in a work of EL, as well as to study what aesthetic experiences does it involve. For this reason, through my investigation, I aim at studying, on the one hand, how new forms of literariness are depicted in electronic literary works; and, on the other hand, how a research methodology that crosses roads with different disciplines can be developed to study them.

Though I am aware that this is a complex and on-going research subject that is studied from different perspectives, this thesis aims to collaborate in answering the abovementioned research questions. To study the representation of new forms of literariness in electronic literary works, I use specific theories developed inside and outside the field of EL. On the one hand, I centre on the rhetoric of digital texts (rhetoric of manipulation and rhetoric of reception) (Bouchardon, 2005, 2011, 2014b, Saemmer, 2008b, 2010a, 2013, 2015); and on the other hand, I examine issues of temporality within the complex narrative practices of the texts (temporal possibilities in programmed texts and temporal levels for cybertexts with narrative content) (Eskelinen, 2012; Eskelinen & Koskimaa, 2001; Koskimaa, 2010a). To my knowledge, there are currently no studies in which these two theoretical approaches are combined in the examination of electronic literary works.

Furthermore, I find that adding theories coming from outside the field of EL to my methodology of interpretation would improve the understanding of the complexity of the works. For this reason, I have decided to apply semio-discursive and enunciative-discursive theories coming from Discourse Analysis (DA) (Charaudeau, 1983, 1992, 2006; Ducrot, 1984; Maingueneau, 2014a, 2014b), as well as theoretical approaches on paratextuality, intertextuality, and polyphony taken from Literary Theory (LT) (Bakhtin, 1981; Genette, 1980, 1988, 1997b, 1997a; Kristeva, 1980). The central idea is to evaluate how the outcome of such dialogue between the fields of EL, DA and LT benefits the paratextual, enunciative, rhetorical, and temporal analysis of the selected corpus.

Two contemporary works of EL comprise the corpus: 88 *Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)* (2008) by David Clark, and *Déprise (Loss of Grasp)* (EN) (2010) by Serge Bouchardon and Vincent Volckaert. I have selected the

corpus based on the following criteria: a) the works needed to belong to different digital compilations in order to compare their paratextual presentations: *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two*, 2011; *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature*, 2012; b) the works needed to be contemporary due to the exponentially growth of EL creations and the rapid pace of technological change; c) the works needed to show variability of the text composition to increase the chance of finding new forms of literariness; d) the works needed to require different levels of interaction and manipulation so as to assess the viability of the proposed methodology.

The present thesis is organized in seven Chapters. Chapter one: *State of the Art: Towards a Definition of Electronic Literature*, presents EL as a part of the equally young and evolving field of Digital Humanities (DH) by providing a brief historical background of both fields (definitions, disciplines, practices, tools, theoretical approaches, and communities). Likewise, it suggests that the connection between DH and EL is attained by the similarity between the suggested digital humanities' values that derived from an analysis of the rhetoric of the field: openness, collaboration, collegiality and connectedness, diversity, and experimentation (Spiro, 2012); and the general goal and characteristics of EL proposed by the ELO (1999), "to foster and promote the reading, writing, teaching, and understanding of literature as it develops and persists in a changing digital environment".

Chapter two: *Research Problem, Corpus, Objectives, Methodology and Hypotheses*, presents the research problem in detail by mentioning the three main observations from which it developed: (1) the complexity of finding new forms of literariness in electronic literary works due to their digital-born nature and diverse textuality; (2) the need for transdisciplinary research to enhance our understanding of the works; (3) the challenge of coupling current theoretical approaches to analyse electronic literary works. Lastly, the corpus presentation, the objectives, the methodology, and the hypotheses are also included in this Chapter.

Chapter three: *Theoretical Framework* is divided in two main sections: *Discourse Analysis* and *Theoretical Approaches on Electronic Literature*. In the former section, I present DA as a



discipline that constantly opens the boundaries of the study of language by examining new practices of communication, such as works of EL; I offer a brief historical background of the discipline and a general summary of the notion of DA. Thereafter, I aim at creating a dialog between semio-discursive and enunciative-discursive oriented theories, specific theoretical approaches on polyphony and transtextuality, and the contemporary studies on discourse, multimodality, multimediality, and intermediality. In the second section, I continue to discuss the theoretical apparatus on EL that I have introduced in Chapter I (*State of the Art*). I centre specifically on describing the composition of the electronic text, the essentials of cybertext theory, and the theoretical approaches concerning time in cybertextual narratology. Lastly, I offer a specific view of digital rhetoric as a tool for the analysis of EL focusing specifically on the study of the lability of digital works, figures of animation and figures of manipulation.

In Chapter four, I present the analysis of the first work of EL, *88 Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)* (2008) (88C) by David Clark. The analysis covers four topics: paratextuality, enunciation, rhetoric, and temporality; and centres on three specific constellations: Cassiopeia (CAS), Ursa Minor (UMI), and Hydra (HYA). The first part of the analysis describes the paratextual elements (peritext and epitext) of two interrelated settings: the online presentation of the *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two* (2011) (ELC2); and the presentation of 88C within the ELC2. The second part focuses on examining the enunciative and textual variability of the constellations; as well as on the exploration of tropological potential of couplings between text, movement, and manipulation within their discourse space. The aim is to find examples of figures of animation and figures of manipulation through the layers of the work. Finally, the third part is centred on studying the appearance of new aspects and dimensions of time within the distinct and complex narrative practices of each constellation.

In Chapter five, I present the analysis of the second work of EL, *Déprise (DP) (Loss of Grasp)* (EN) (2010) by Serge Bouchardon and Vincent Volckaert. Like 88C, the analysis of DP covers four topics: paratextuality, enunciation, rhetoric, and temporality. The first part describes the paratextual elements (peritext and epitext) of

two interrelated settings: the online presentation of the *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature* (2012) (*AEEL*); and the presentation of *DP* within the *AEEL*. The second part examines scene by scene how the enunciative and textual variability of the work is mainly unveiled through the gestural manipulation of the reader. Through a detailed analysis of SUMs (Semiotic Units of Manipulation) I study the tropological potential of couplings between text, movement and manipulation. Likewise, I aim to find examples of figures of animation and figures of manipulation as I traverse the work. Lastly, the third part is centred on studying specific examples of temporal dynamics and temporal manipulation within the complex narrative practices of each scene.

In Chapter six: *Methodological Contribution and Hybrid Terminology to the Field of Electronic Literature*; as a fruitful result of the analyses, I propose a methodology of interpretation that I have decided to call: “An Approach to Rhetorical enunciation and Temporality” (AReT) in works of EL. Likewise, I present hybrid terminology associated to AReT which can be used to examine the ways in which literariness materializes and performs in other digital works. Lastly, Chapter seven presents the *General Conclusions and Future Research Trajectories* of the present thesis.

As every emerging field in the Humanities, EL requires classification, methods, and terminology to fully understand the potential message and ways of expression of its experimental works. This thesis aims to contribute to the study and interpretation of electronic literary works, and consequently, to the critical discussion and appliance of ever-changing methods for their investigation.

# CHAPTER I. STATE OF THE ART: TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF ELECTRONIC LITERATURE

## 1. ELECTRONIC LITERATURE AS A PART OF DIGITAL HUMANITIES

### 1.1 What is Digital Humanities?

On an introductory level, the easiest way to define the emerging field of Digital Humanities (DH) is to say that the term stands for the interchange between computing and the disciplines of the humanities. Certainly, DH is a field in constant growth and expansion that demands further explanation and research. This reveals the limitations of freely using the term without being aware of the diversity of disciplines involved and the variety of academic perspectives constantly building under its core.

For the purpose of the present thesis, I consider that it is important to become familiar with its meaning and furthermore, to underline the implications of being a digital humanist. For I think this action will help me to create my own definition and perspective of the field, and consequently, to conceive and comprehend why I think EL can be studied as a part of DH.

Digital Humanities is not a unified field but *an array of convergent practices* that explore a universe in which: a) print is no longer the exclusive or the normative medium in which knowledge is produced and/or disseminated; instead, print finds itself absorbed into new, multimedia configurations; and b) digital tools, techniques, and media have altered the production and dissemination of knowledge in the arts, human and social sciences (Presner, Schnapp, & Lunenfeld, 2009) (original emphasis in italics).

In this sense, “Digital humanities is by its nature a hybrid domain, crossing disciplinary boundaries and also traditional barriers

between theory and practice, technological implementation and scholarly reflection” (Flanders, Piez, & Terras, 2007). Therefore, a good starting point might be to address the following questions: (1) What kind of disciplines does this universe of practices include? (2) Can EL be found among this “array of convergent practices”? As stated by Fitzpatrick (2012, p. 13), “The field is broadly humanities based and includes scholars in history, musicology, performance studies, media studies, and other fields that can benefit from bringing computing technologies to bear on traditional humanities materials” (3) Can we consider EL as a product of computing technologies bearing on traditional humanities material?

On the same subject, Svensson (2013, p. 160) notes, “an important aspect of this ongoing transformation of the humanities is humanities scholars’ increasing use and exploration of information technology as both a scholastic tool and a cultural object in need of analysis”. This means that technology becomes not only humanities’ digital ink and creative strength, but also its own setting of emerging research subjects. Additionally, Fitzpatrick (2012, p. 13) notes, “I wrote that digital humanities could be understood as ‘a nexus of fields within which scholars use computing technologies to investigate the kinds of questions that are traditional to the humanities, or, as is more true of my own work, ask traditional kinds of humanities-oriented questions about computing technologies’”.

Taking these statements into account, it is important to inquire, what sort of works can result from the free crossing between these disciplinary and aesthetic boundaries? And consequently, what sort of scholarly reflection will be required to study them? I consider that to get a broader idea about the subject, it is helpful to have a careful reading at some *distant paratextual memories* belonging to the field. For instance, the call for papers (CFP) of the 2011 DH conference: “Big Tent Digital Humanities”, which is an annual conference hosted by The Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations (ADHO).

Proposals might, for example, relate to the following aspects of digital humanities: research issues, including data mining, information design and modelling, software studies, and humanities research enabled through the digital medium;

computer-based research and computer applications in literary, linguistic, cultural and historical studies, including electronic literature, public humanities, and interdisciplinary aspects of modern scholarship. Some examples might be text analysis, corpora, corpus linguistics, language processing, language learning, and endangered languages; the digital arts, architecture, music, film, theatre, new media, and related areas; the creation and curation of humanities digital resources; the role of digital humanities in academic curricula (“Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations. Digital Humanities, 2011. Call for Papers.” n.d.) (my emphasis).

As it can be seen EL is included in the category of “computer-based research and computer applications in literary studies”. It is important to bear in mind that such fields as the “digital arts” and “new media” are also incorporated. I stress this fact given that both fields are directly and indirectly associated to EL, as I shall suggest later. Hereafter, it can be said that EL is part of the array of practices that converge in DH. On the one hand, because it is an example of new ways to experiment with literary expression in digitally born artifacts, and on the other hand, because it is a good example of categorization, archiving and preservation of digitally born literature (nowadays).

Electronic literature is an important evolving field of artistic practice and literary study. It is a sector of digital humanities focused specifically on born-digital literary artifacts, rather than on using the computer and the network to redistribute, analyze, or recontextualize artifacts of print culture (Rettberg, 2009, p. 1) (my emphasis).

Electronic literature is an umbrella term used to describe various forms of literary practice that take advantage of the computational, multimedia, and networked properties of the contemporary computer in the production of born-digital experiences and works of narrative or poetic nature that are specific to this context (Rettberg, 2016, pp. 127–128) (my emphasis).

Therefore, based on Rettberg's statement, it can be stressed that the connection between DH and EL is attained by the following facts: a) the controversial literary content of EL experimental creations, which refers to the required literary features that co-habit their digital imaginary; b) the way EL is archived and accessed, which stands for the ways these new creations are envisioned to be preserved; c) the similarity between the suggested digital humanities' values (Spiro, 2012) and the electronic literature' characteristics proposed by the Electronic Literature Organization (1999), which aims to show that the elements and motives behind the scenes of both fields have strings that intersect at one point or the other. These propositions will be exemplified in the following sections to attest the implied association.

## 1.2 The Literary in Digital Humanities

Within a literary frame, in his much-quoted essay, "What is Digital Humanities and What is it doing in English Departments?", Kirschenbaum (2012, p. 8) points out that there are "half a dozen reasons why English departments have historically been hospitable settings for this kind of work". It seems to me that this fact additionally strengthens the connection with the field of EL since, on the one hand, it highlights the importance that the intersection DH-English Departments has for the development of the field; and on the other hand, it emphasises the need to find the interdisciplinary seeds of each corresponding field.

Thus, Kirschenbaum points out: a) "after numeric input, text is the most traceable type of data for computers to manipulate"; b) "there is a long association between computers and composition, almost as long and just as rich in its lineage"; c) "the convergence between the intense conversations around editorial theory and method in the 1980's and the widespread means to implement electronic archives and editions very soon after"; d) "there is a modest but much-promoted belle-lettristic project around hypertext and other forms of electronic literature that continues to this day and is increasingly vibrant and diverse"; e) "the openness of English departments to cultural studies, where computers and other objects of digital

material culture become the centerpiece of analysis” (Kirschenbaum, 2012, pp. 8–9) (my emphasis).

This has interesting consequences since we must seek to better understand the way in which these elements are taking up the challenge of setting the field for the already rooted EL seeds in the DH. Still it should be added that the main issue is how to approach the creative outcome produced by these new techniques of humanistic literary dissemination.

Possibly, as suggested by Tabbi (2007) in his quote of Don DeLillo’s *Underworld* (DeLillo, 1997, p. 540) at the opening of his essay “Toward a Semantic Literary Web”, the problem relies in the impossibility to see the information because the tools and the names are not familiar to us, “You didn’t see the thing because you didn’t know how to look. And you don’t know how to look because you don’t know the names”; or moreover, as Baldwin (2013, pt. 1) has recently noted in regards to approaching digital works, “My problem is: should I read or should I look? I look at the screen, which one? This one, every one?” Either way, the task implies exploration, courage, and strategy.

It is a fact that day to day we confront cubist representations in which the art of computers, text, composition, editorial theory, electronic archives, electronic editions, “belle-lettristic” projects of EL, dynamism and diversity, cultural studies and digital materials, set the stage for promising academic transdisciplinary research. For instance, the recently proposed topic for the compiled essays of Volume 7, Number 1 of the *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, 2013 stands as a great example of the vibrant quest for concepts and definitions in the field.

This special issue seeks to show how the digital humanities can and should be understood as including and supporting literary interpretation. The digital humanities is not just a means of acquiring and accessing data about literary genres, literary history, and the reading and writing practices enabled by them. As the essays in this issue demonstrate, the conjunction of the literary and the digital humanities produce a rich set of provocations: What kind of scholarly

endeavors are possible when we think of the digital humanities as not just supplying the archives and data-sets for literary interpretation but also as promoting literary practices with an emphasis on aesthetics, on intertextuality, and writerly processes? What kind of scholarly practices and products might emerge from a decisively literary perspective and practice in the digital humanities? (Pressman & Swanstrom, 2013) (my emphasis).

I consider such “rich set of provocations” is also present in the academic literature of EL. This fact could be considered as a bridge in between the disciplines where the couplings, liaisons, free-crossings, and polyphonic dialogues between these fields, calls for further investigation.

### **1.3 Digital Humanities’ Community**

Before we discuss the suggested digital humanities’ values (Spiro, 2012) and their relationship to the EL’ characteristics ELO (1999); there are two more points that I want to bring to the reader’s attention. On the one hand, the fact that DH is also considered as a high collaborative field, “a social undertaking” in the sense that “it harbors networks of people working together, sharing research, arguing, competing, and collaborating for many years” (Kirschenbaum, 2012, p. 5); and, on the other hand, the significant, open, but still debatable implications of being a digital humanist.

As stated by Stephen Ramsay, being a digital humanist mainly implies to be able to build things, “Personally, I think Digital Humanities is a about building things...If you are not making anything, you are not...a digital humanist”: “Who’s In and Who’s Out” (Ramsay, 2011); the critic continues to say, “It involves moving from reading and critiquing to building and making”: “On Building” (Ramsay, 2014). However, wouldn’t after you build and make, the need to read and critique specially (what you have just built and made) would emerge again, again, and again? Or to put it differently, wouldn’t a critical reading experience be the first step to creation? Moreover, on the subject of being a digital humanist, we can take into account Jerome McGann’s point of view; “Digital



Humanists have seen themselves within the longer tradition of the humanities, suggesting that the main value of their work resides in the creation, migration, or preservation of cultural materials” (quoted in McGann, 2012, p. 85).

Therefore, bearing in mind the “social undertaking” of the field, it is important to address the following questions: (1) What defines a digital humanist? (2) What does it imply to be a digital humanist? (3) What sort of job does a digital humanist perform? I think that it does not matter whether you chose to call yourself a digital humanist or not, the important action lies on what you are bringing to your departure discipline, to the field of DH and to your own self (human condition). Being a digital humanist implies to meet the challenges of your research, not necessarily in a digital environment, but in the Humanities in general, and most importantly to share it with others.

Today in the active field of DH, there are conferences, colloquia, symposia, workshops, journals, and scholarly societies behind this “Big Tent”. On the subject the importance (role) of paratexts when facing the definition of a new discipline must be underlined. In 2001, after a debate on how to entitle a volume on humanities computing (the options being, *Companion to Humanities Computing*, *Companion to Digitized Humanities*); Blackwell’s finally entitled the volume: *Companion to Digital Humanities*, which was published in 2005. That same year and considering the terminology debate among: Humanities Computing, Digitized Humanities, and Digital Humanities, the Alliance for Digital Humanities Organizations (ADHO) was established, which resulted from the share interests of the Association for Computers and the Humanities (ACH) and the Association for Literary and Linguistic Computing (ALLC).

Furthermore, it is important to stress the launch in 2006 of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as well as the forthcoming of the *Digital Humanities Quarterly* digital journal, I want to point out that the journal has been a good academic reference for the present research. Additionally, there is the Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations that hosts an annual international conference called “Digital Humanities”, which was developed from a series of conferences that were hosted by the

Humanities and the Association for Literary and Linguistic Computing since 1989. In this same line, the University of Victoria (Canada) hosts the annual Digital Humanities Summer Institute that as proposed by the organizing committee trains new scholars about “new computing technologies and how they are influencing teaching, research, dissemination, creation, and preservation in different disciplines” (DHSI). Likewise, a team at the University of Alberta (Canada) organizes the Day of the Digital Humanities every year. As it can be observed, DH is a field of constant growth and expansion with which EL shares many characteristics.

Lastly, it is important to mention that there are always noteworthy panels at the Modern Language Association (MLA) annual convention. In fact, a remarkable anecdote happened at the Philadelphia MLA Convention in 2009, when William Pannacker pointed out that “Amid all the doom and gloom of the 2009 MLA Convention, one field seems to be alive and well: the digital humanities. More than that: among all the contending subfields, the digital humanities seem like the first ‘next big thing’ in a long time.” (Kirschenbaum, 2012, p. 6) (my emphasis). Though the words of Pannacker speak of a present-future I think DH similarly to EL is just in its first phase.

## **1.4 Potential Characteristics of Digital Humanities**

At the same time the field of DH rapidly expands and seeks to be regarded as a “discipline of its own right” (Schreibman, Siemens, & Unsworth, 2016), the field calls for the creation of its own features, structure and identity. On the subject, Spiro (2012, pp. 23–24) notes:

Drawing from manifestos, model statements of value, and my own analysis of the rhetoric of the digital humanities, I propose the following initial list of digital humanities values. My intent is not to speak presumptuously for the community and decide on my own what it values but rather to open up the conversation” (my emphasis).

The “values” proposed by Spiro (2012, pp. 23–30), which I prefer to address as “potential characteristics” of the DH’ community may share similarities with the general goal and characteristics found in the equally growing field of EL, “to foster and promote the reading, writing, teaching, and understanding of literature as it develops and persists in a changing digital environment” (ELO, 1999). These values are: a) openness (open-source software tools, freely accessible digital collections, open-access journals, books, educational resources, course evaluations, *transdisciplinarity*, collaboration, democratization of knowledge); b) collaboration (free-flow of information, collective creative potential, diverse expertise, new approaches); c) collegiality and connectedness (welcoming contributions, offering help, bringing together digital humanists, advocating for the digital humanities, creating paths of connection, expanding the community further; d) diversity (richness, multiple perspectives, disparate voices and media objects, professional roles, nationalities, age, disciplines, gender, ethnicity, skills, races, sexuality, culture, discipline, areas of interest); e) experimentation (risk taking, entrepreneurship, pursuit of innovation, exploring methods, experimental collaborative nature, experimentation in the classroom, research and publishing, curiosity, play, exploration, do-it-yourself activity) (Spiro, 2012, pp. 23–30) (my emphasis).

Certainly, the discussion about the sharing similarities involves various situations. For example, a) openness is depicted by literary criticism, research papers, dissertations, and examples of EL that are freely accessible through online opened databases: *Electronic Literature Collection Volume One* (2006); *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two* (2011); *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Three* (2016); the *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature* (2012), the *ELMCIP Electronic Literature Knowledge Base* (2007-2014); the *Electronic Literature Directory* (ELD) (2000-2009) b) collaboration is exemplified by different scholars, art critics, students, researchers, writers and programmers that contribute to the development of the above-mentioned databases and naturally to the creation of works of EL; c) collegiality and connectedness are showed by the EL community, *Electronic Literature Organization* (ELO), the *ELMCIP Electronic Literature as a Model of Creativity and Innovation in Practice*, *Le Laboratoire de recherche sur les oeuvres hypermédiatiques* (NT2),

the *Red de Literatura Electrónica Latinoamericana*, (to name but a few), who publish, share, and upload their work with the fixed intention of supporting cultural, academic and artistic dissemination; d) diversity is illustrated by the multiple nationalities and diverse disciplines that build-up these research communities, as well as by the varied cultural and linguistic examples of EL and the possibility of having multilingual texts; and finally, e) experimentation I believe is represented by *electronic literature's* own *raison d'être*.

## 2. ON THE SUBJECT OF ELECTRONIC LITERATURE

### 2.1 What is Electronic Literature?

Electronic Literature (EL) is defined by the Electronic Literature Organization (ELO), as “works with important literary aspects that take advantage of the capabilities and contexts provided by the stand-alone or networked computer” (ELO, 1999) (my emphasis). However, due to the plurality of the digital works the definition has sprung up different opinions and views among international scholars and the general public. What does it mean to have “important literary aspects”? Regarding the ELO’s definition, Hayles (2007, pt. 1) writes:

The definition is also slightly tautological, in that it assumes pre-existing knowledge of what constitutes, an ‘important literary aspect’ [...] Readers come to digital works with expectations formed by print, including extensive and deep tacit knowledge of letter forms, print conventions, and print literary modes. Of necessity, electronic literature must build on these expectations even as it modifies and transforms them” (my emphasis).

On expectations and forms, Schäfer & Gendolla (2010a, p. 11) note:

Literature in computer-based media, as well as every literary text, activates expectations that then are broken and continued in imaginary form. Here attributions of meaning have to be conceived of as interactive processes between man and machine” (my emphasis).

Though I shall properly present the aims of my research study in Chapter II (cf. II.3), I would like to underline at this point, my interest on the idea of activating and breaking the horizon of expectation of the reader (Jauss, 2010) [1978], as well as the idea that these expectations can be stored in imaginaries shaped by different narrative and poetic forms.

On narrative and poetic forms, Bootz (2006) points out, “*Nous désignerons par « littérature numérique » toute forme narrative ou poétique qui utilise le dispositif informatique comme médium et met en œuvre une ou plusieurs propriétés spécifiques à ce médium*” (my emphasis). On further reviewing the subject, Rettberg (2014, p. 169) points out, “What is really meant by “electronic literature” is that the computer (or the network context) is in some way *essential* to the performance or carrying-out of the literary activity in question” (*italics* original emphasis) (underlining my emphasis). As it can be observed, Bootz (2006) and Rettberg (2014) put emphasis on the digital medium (enunciative device) (cf. III.1.5) As well as, on the importance of being “digital-born”.

From reading all these theoretical points for the first time (several times), I learned that to comprehend and begin to build my own definition about EL. Firstly, I needed to be able to identify the “important literary aspects” stored in narrative and poetic forms that define the piece of work as *literature*. Secondly, I needed to understand that digital media is the materiality and textuality of the act of communication which underlines the importance of the enunciative device (cf. III.1.5); and lastly, I needed to learn that even though it is stated that those literary aspects “take advantage” of computational sources for their creation. As recently pointed out by Bouchardon (2014b, p. 75) the interaction of these two entities (computational sources and literary aspects) should be better seen and studied as a “*tension créatrice entre exploitation du support numérique et composante littéraire*”. This idea will be further explained in a different section (cf. I.2.6).

Now, as stated by the Electronic Literature Organization, within the broad category of EL there are several “forms and threads of practice”. The following list provided by the Electronic Literature Organization in 1999 shows examples of the new arising forms of literature:

1. Hypertext fiction and poetry, on and off the Web.
2. Kinetic poetry presented in Flash and using other platforms.
3. Computer art installations which ask viewers to read them or otherwise have literary aspects.

4. Conversational characters, also known as chatterbots<sup>1</sup>.
5. Interactive fiction.
6. Novels that take the form of emails, SMS messages, or blogs.
7. Poems and stories that are generated by computers, either interactively or based on parameters given at the beginning.
8. Collaborative writing projects that allow readers to contribute to the text of a work.
9. Literary performances online that develop new ways of writing (“Electronic Literature Organization,” 1999).

As it can be seen, the list is small in regards to the number of computer-based and networked media artefacts that can be created (*nowadays*). The fact is that these sorts of works undergo considerable changes as I *type* these words. Therefore, the act of examining, editing, selecting, archiving, and understanding this sort of experimental literature requires not only time but also the development of theories, methodologies, typologies, and practices based on recent EL corpus. This will enable critics to analyse, compare, and categorize these innovative digitally born literary creations, as well as to open further research invitations concerning the field. As *recently* suggested by Rettberg (2014, p. 172):

This list was intended not to be exclusive or constraining but to serve as a leaping-off point for further extensions, and that has certainly been the case as one surveys the works that have been published by the ELO in two collections and exhibited by the organization at its conferences in the years since.

The extension of this list of “forms and threads of practice” of EL is conditioned to the exponentially growth of creations that at times overflows the field.

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<sup>1</sup> Another term for chatbot. A computer program designed to simulate conversation with human users, especially over the Internet. Oxford Dictionaries online: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/chatbot>

## 2.2 Literary Precedents and Experimental Writing

Many poets have experimented with the visual potentiality of writing throughout time; “known to the Greeks as *technopaigneia* and to the Romans as *carmina figurata*, visual poetry possesses a lengthily and fascinating history” (Bohn, 2011, p. 13). The Greek poet and grammarian Simmias of Rhodes (ca. 300 BCE) is often credited with having created the earliest examples of this form in several poetic texts in which “the shape of the poem makes reference to the textual content” (Ross, 2014, p. 101). These examples are shaped in the form of “an egg”, “a pair of wings”, and “an axe”.

The antiquity of these creations reveals that the inner desire for the creation of pleasing (poetic) forms has always been part of our humanity. The careful architecture of signs (emotions) and the association between verbal elements and visual elements have created expectation in narrative and poetic forms ever since. However, throughout the centuries this inner desire has had different visual levels and purposes, especially when it comes to exploiting forms that create, destroy or challenge meaning.

As before noted, there is a long tradition of Greek, Latin, and Medieval poets, among which, we must mention the following: Theocritus of Syracuse’s pastoral intertextuality in *Pan Flute* (300 BCE-260 BCE); Laevius’ phoenix-shaped *Pterigion Phoenicis* (first century); the Anonymous poet’s *Sator Enigma* presentation of a horizontal, vertical and backwards similar reading piece (second century); Publilius Optatianus Porphyrius’ 24 *carmina quadrata* (ca. 325 CE); Venantius Fortunatus’ *carmina cancellate* (ca. 530-600 CE), as wells as *De Sancta Cruce* (ca. 560 CE); Hrabanus Maurus’ well-known *De Laudibus Sanctae Crucis* (815 CE) (*carmina figurata*); and diverse Medieval manuscripts (*carmina figurata*) by different remarkable authors.

As stated by Bohn (2011, p. 13), “during the Renaissance the genre experienced a widespread revival but it was largely neglected thereafter until the beginning of the twentieth century, when it experienced a dramatic rebirth”. In 1422 Cristoforo Buondelmonti found the famous *Hieroglyphics of Horapollo* in the island of



Andros. To my interest, in the first pages of the *Hieroglyphics*, the representation of the universe “is delineated by a serpent bespeckled with variegated scales, devouring its own tail; by the scales intimating the *stars* in the universe” (Cory, 1840, p. 7) (my emphasis) (cf. IV.6).

In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries authors continued to express the sense of their work in a widespread and widely poetic manner, “writers, however, did not simply experiment poetry in the visual form, they also used its literary sense” (Di Rosario, 2011, p. 39) (my emphasis). For instance, Panard (1763) entitled *Ce que dit la bouteille* a poetic bottle that stores memories and emotions within each word that delineates it. It symbolizes a *bouteille souvenir*. It must be noted that Panard was a relevant figure in visual poetry during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we find the poetic codes of Stéphane Mallarmé’s *Un coup de dés jamais n’abolira le hasard* (Mallarmé, 1914)<sup>2</sup>, whose dynamics of space and new syntax allow a *constellation* of seven stars in the Northern sky to occupy the space of the word itself (cf. IV.4; IV.5) Just like the performative dimension found in Mallarmé’s *Un coup de dés*, from 1914 to 1917 Guillaume Apollinaire “composed some one hundred *calligrammes* utilizing a wide variety of pictorial shapes” (Bohn, 1993, p. 15). For instance, the memories of a singing fountain in “*La colombe poignardée et le jet d’eau*” (Apollinaire, 1918a) representing poetic jets of water full of melancholy and sadness; or the geometry of his lyricism depicting Mexican imaginaries in his first visual poem, “*Lettre-Océan*” (Apollinaire, 1918b).

Furthermore, during the twentieth century, there were countless remarkable schools and movements before a computer generated the first visual poems. Among these schools and movements, we must mention the following: Cubism (France, 1907-1914), Futurism (Italy-Russia, the manifesto appeared in January 1909 and it was produced by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti); Cubo-Futurism (Russia, the manifesto appeared in 1912); Dadaism (Switzerland, World War I); Surrealism (Europe, the manifesto appeared in 1924 and it was

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<sup>2</sup> The work was first published in the international magazine “Cosmopolis” in May 1897.

produced by André Breton); Lettrism (Paris, mid-1940's), Fluxus (1950's, intermedia movement coined by Dick Higgins, 1966).

In 1959, the French engineer, Jean-François le Lyonnais, convinced Raymond Queneau to found the “*Séminaire de Littérature Expérimentale*” that in 1961 would be transformed into the famous group the OULIPO (*Ouvroir de la Littérature Potentielle*). In fact, the mathematician Jean-François le Lyonnais created the OULIPO group in 1961 in order to help Queneau to finish his famous work *Cent mille milliards de poèmes* (A hundred thousand billion poems) (Queneau, 1961)<sup>3</sup>. As noted by Bootz (2012), “It was not at all a question at this time of an unspecified computing version of the work, but the completion of printed version”. A set of 10 sonnets consisting of 10 groups of 14 lines of poetry each; so that the 14 lines will make a sonnet and the combination of the sonnet will be  $10^{14}$  different sonnets possibilities.

In 1985 the first poems “generated” by a computer were presented by the ALAMO group (*Atelier de Littérature Assistée par la Mathématique et les Ordinateurs*) at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. The ALAMO carried on the experimentations started by the OULIPO, and in 1981 was created by two of its members Paul Braffort (who later programmed Queneau’s *Cent mille milliards de poèmes*) and Jaques Roubaud. As pointed out by Bootz (2007, p. 213), the ALAMO was “a group made up of writers and computer scientists brought together around the project of using, in all possible ways, and without preliminary bar, the computer in the service of literature” (my emphasis).

## 2.3 The Early Days of Electronic Literature

This section seeks to provide the reader with essential facts on the origins and first usage of the term “electronic literature”; as well as, to provide her/him information of important and regularly quoted pioneered works within the field. The intention is to affirm that given the novelty of the subject it is impossible to talk about

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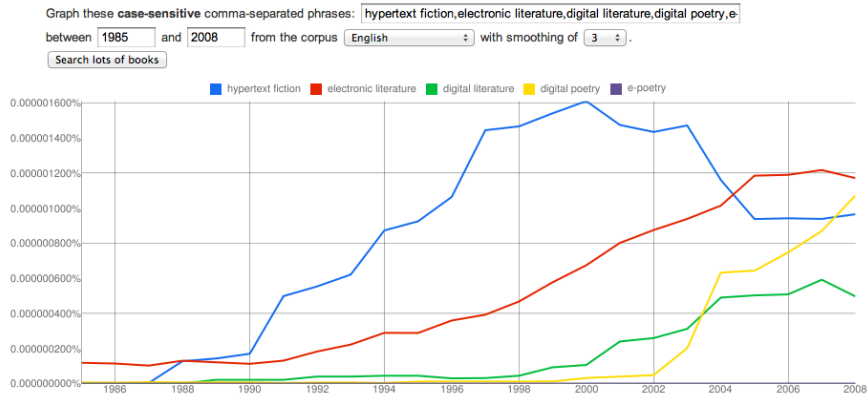
<sup>3</sup> The work was first published in *Les Soirées de Paris* on June 15, 1914.

“literary periods”, that is, as of now; notwithstanding there are certain significant facts and authors that need to be emphasised.

On the subject, Walker (2012) points out that in order to answer the question, “where did electronic literature begin?”, it is fundamental to be aware of the fact that the response “depends upon what, exactly, this field of practice includes”. As we can see, similarly to DH the origins and location of its birth and history are ongoing endeavour actions (cf. I.1.1). As before noted, even though the Electronic Literature Organization (ELO, 1999) has provided a list of “forms and threads of practice” to illustrate the highlands of the field; the major characteristics of EL are in fact its constant growth, diversity, and unpredictable metamorphosis.

Therefore, I consider that it is interesting to know if the “term” *per se* has always been used to refer to what nowadays is considered “to be” EL. As a part of her research, “Electronic Literature Seen from a Distance. The Beginnings of a Field”, Walker (2012) measured the frequency of the following terms: hypertext fiction, electronic literature, digital literature, digital poetry and e-poetry, in books published in English from 1985 to 2008; the study was accomplished by using the graphing tool Google’s Ngram viewer. As a way to study the panorama on the evolution and usage of the term; it is of great help to pay close attention to the results found in the study of Walker (2012):

As expected, hypertext fiction (the blue line) was the more popular term in the 1990s, but it also retained its dominance for several years into the 2000s. This could show that the new term “electronic literature” took time to gain general acceptance, or it could also simply be a by-product of the slow pace of scholarship and book publishing. By 2008, the term “electronic literature” is still not as popular as “hypertext fiction” was at its peak, although the combined use of all these terms is growing steadily. It is interesting to see how high the use of “hypertext fiction” remains, even after the dominance of “electronic literature”. The rapid rise of “digital poetry” is also particularly striking (my emphasis).



**Figure 1. Google’s Ngram-viewer showing the frequency of the terms: hypertext fiction, electronic literature, digital literature, digital poetry, and e-poetry used in books published between 1985 and 2008 (reproduction from Walker (2012)).**

Figure 1 shows that the term “hypertext fiction” was dominant all the way from the 1990’s to 2004; in the same period the use of the term “electronic literature” increase firmly until it overpassed “hypertext fiction” at the beginning of 2004. On the other hand, in 2002 “digital literature” and “digital poetry” increased, but the graph shows that the increasing trend of “digital poetry” was faster. Since Google Ngram-viewer only allows plotting the data until the year 2008 we can only forecast that the term “electronic literature” and “digital poetry” might keep its increasing trend in the following years, whereas for the terms “digital literature” and “hypertext fiction” is not so easy to tell. As suggested by Walker (2012), the paratextual impact also plays an important role since, “the slow pace of scholarship and book publishing” may affect the collected data provided by Google Ngram-viewer.

Furthermore, the author stresses that the only exceptions, prior to the creation of the ELO (1999), in which the term has been used in the current sense, can be summarized as follows: an article by Jay David Bolter titled “The Idea of Literature in the Electronic Medium” (Bolter, 1985); Bolter uses the phrase again in *Writing Space* (Bolter, 1991); the appearance (twice) of the exact phrase “electronic literature” in Ted Nelson’s book *Literary Machines* (T.

H. Nelson, 1981); an article in *The Print Collector's Newsletter* which mentions that Eastgate<sup>4</sup> publishes electronic literature (1992); and finally, an article by Robert Kendall titled "Writing for the New Millennium: The Birth of Electronic Literature" (Kendall, 1995). Once again the power of the *distant paratextual memories* of the field should be emphasised given that in a way they can be considered as the literary traces (*prior paratexts*) of the controversial "literary aspects" inside the works.

As such, there are additional names that need to be brought to the reader's attention when it comes to unquestioned readings of EL; that is to say, the well-known and most quoted works of Michael Joyce's, *Afternoon: a Story* (Joyce, 1990); Shelley Jackson's, *Patchwork Girl* (Jackson, 1995) and Stuart Moulthrop's *Victory Garden* (Moulthrop, 1991)<sup>5</sup>. Not forgetting to mention, by no means, that Strachey (1952) created "M.U.C. Love Letter Generator", and that Théo Lutz created the first computer-generated poem in 1959, which is entitled "Stochastische Texte", and which has been available since 1990's by Eastgate Systems (Lutz, 1959).

As suggested by Hayles (2005, pp. 99–100) when commenting on the comparison between print-based and electronic literature, perhaps the early days of EL are what we live and experience *now*.

It is obviously in appropriate to compare a literary medium that has been in existence for fifteen years with print forms that have developed over half a millennium [...] I believe that anyone familiar with both canons would be forced to agree it is by no means obvious that the print canon demonstrates conclusively the superiority of print as a medium for literary creation and expression. Given five hundred years in which to develop -if we can possibly stretch our imagination this far- electronic literature may indeed prove itself equal or superior to print.

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<sup>4</sup> Eastgate creates new hypertext technologies and publish serious hypertext, fiction and non-fiction along with serious, interactive writing (<http://www.eastgate.com/>).

<sup>5</sup> These works are written in Storyspace, the hypertext-authoring program first created by Michael Joyce, Jay David Bolter, and John B. Smith and then licensed to Mark Bernstein of Eastgate Systems, who has improved, extended, and maintained it (Hayles, 2007, pt. 2).

## 2.4 Research Communities on Electronic Literature: ELO, ELMCIP, and NT2

Based on the production of works and artistic proposals, the Electronic Literature Organization (ELO) has edited three multilingual volumes of EL since its creation in 1999. The artistic creations of the editions were selected after a “strict call for works” made by the Organization whose main concern was “to make literary quality a chief criterion for the selection of works” (Borràs, 2011) (my emphasis)<sup>6</sup>.

As an example of collegiality, openness, and connectedness, Spiro’s (2012, pp. 23–30) suggested values for DH now applied to EL; the three *Collections* have been possible with the support of a great number of Institutions, Universities, Research Grants and artist’s donations. (1) *Electronic Literature Collection Volume One*, (2006); The Centre for Programs in Contemporary Writing at the University of Pennsylvania; (ELINOR) Electronic Literature in the Nordic Countries; (MITH) Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities at the University of Maryland; The Division of Arts and Humanities, The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey; The School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Minnesota; College of Letters and Science English Department, The University of California, Los Angeles. (2) *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two*, (2011); University of Bergen, University of Brown, University of Dundee, University of Duke, Pomona College, MITH Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities at the University of Maryland; Net Poetic; The Centre for Programs and Contemporary Writing, Literary Studies and Digital Technologies (Hermeneia Research Group), Massachusetts Institute of Technology and *Le Laboratoire de Recherche Sur Les Oeuvres Hypermédiatiques* (NT2). (3) *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Three*, (2016); The College of Arts and Sciences, University of Puerto Rico: Mayagüez Campus; Jason Nelson, Interactive Media, Queensland College of Art, Griffith University; Global Startup Labs, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Comparative Media Studies/Writing, Massachusetts

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<sup>6</sup> Jyvaskyla Seminar on Publishing E-Lit, University of Jyvaskyla, Finland, 28-29 March, 2011. <http://vimeo.com/40148171>

Institute of Technology; Penn Sound, University of Pennsylvania; The Creative Media & Digital Culture Program at Washington State University: Vancouver; Bergen Electronic Literature Research Group, University of Bergen, Norway; Digital Studies Center and Center for the Arts, Rutgers University: Camden.

Specifically, *Le Laboratoire de Recherche Sur Les Oeuvres Hypermédiatiques* (NT2) supported by Université du Québec à Montréal is another important point of reference when it comes to ways of encouraging research, preservation, archiving and dissemination of EL. Since its creation in 2005, the “NT2’s mandate has been to promote the study, the creation and the archiving of new forms of text and hypermedia art”; with the fixed goal to pursue three research objectives: a) to develop original research strategies in art and literature; b) to bear witness to the manifestations of a screen culture (the Hypermedia Art and Literature Directory offers a collection of more than 3900 documented works); c) to host research activities from the *Figura* researcher community, the Research Centre for Text and Imaginary<sup>7</sup> (NT2, 2005).

As it can be seen, there is an international public interested in discussing this phenomenon. *The ELMCIP Electronic Literature as a Model of Creativity and Innovation in Practice* (2007-2013) is a collaborative research project funded by Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) JRP for Creativity and Innovation, which mainly focuses on the EL community in Europe. Furthermore, “ELMCIP is intended both to study the formation and interactions of that community and to further electronic literature research and practice in Europe” (ELMCIP, 2007).

Moreover, in the project’s website there are two important research tools. On the one hand, there is the *ELMCIP Electronic Literature Knowledge Base*, which “provides cross-referenced, contextualized information about authors, creative works, critical writing, and practices” (ELMCIP, 2007). On the other hand, there is the *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature*, which is a production from the ELMCIP researchers based at Blekinge Institute of Technology in Sweden, and as stated on the website, it

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<sup>7</sup> Figura. *Le Centre de recherche sur le texte et l’imaginaire*, <http://figura.uqam.ca/>

aims “to provide educators, students and the general public with a free curricular resource of electronic literary works produced in Europe” (ELMCIP, 2007).

Lastly but not of least importance, it must be mentioned that there are two main events leading the EL research field; that is, the annual Electronic Literature Organization conference (currently the 9<sup>th</sup> edition since its creation in 2002, which is supported by the ELO and previously mentioned sponsors), and the biannual E-Poetry festival (currently the 8<sup>th</sup> edition since its creation in 2001, which was established by poet and critic Loss Pequeño Glazier, and supported by the Electronic Poetry Center, University at Buffalo, and The State University of New York). The former is described as “through our conference series, we provide a way for artists, writers, and scholars to productively discuss existing works and to further develop the field” (ELO, 2002). And the latter is described as “our emphasis is on the multiple literary and artistic ramifications of digital media writing and its critical reception through extending modes and practices that transcend limits of genre or specific technologies” (E-poetry, 2013).

## **2.5 Recent Theoretical Apparatus on Electronic Literature**

As before mentioned, the definitions about EL can become unclear and ambiguous to the reader given the diversity and plurality of these experimental literary creations. Therefore, in this section, I decided to mention different ongoing studies that underline the international academic notice upon the subject. This indicates that it is necessary to review or at least acknowledge basic influential theories to contextualize a critical appreciation of the phenomena. It is important to stress that the selection of books and theories that I present here are mostly centred on the research interests of the present work.

On the subject, Schäfer & Gendolla (2010b, p. 83) suggest the following methodological approaches as a point of departure: “hypertext” and “hyperficiton” (Bolter, 1991; Landow, 1997; Suter & Böhler, 1999), “E-Poetry” (Glazier, 2001), “cybertext” and



“ergodic literature” (Aarseth, 1997), “interfictions” (Simanowski, 2002), “literature in electronic space” (Heibach, 2003), “electronic literature” (Hayles, 2008), and “digital literature” (Simanowski, 2001; Wardrip-Fruin, 2010b).

Furthermore, Simanowski, Schäfer & Gendolla (2010, p. 9) point out that the book *Reading Moving Letters Digital Literature in Research and Teaching*:

Addresses this need on an up-to-date basis and provides examinations in an international comparative perspective: terminological considerations, close readings, institutional aspects, pedagogical concerns, experiences, and solutions shared by authors from different academic backgrounds.

I would like to stress that *Reading Moving Letters Digital Literature in Research and Teaching* was the printed scenario of my first encounter with the field of electronic (digital) literature when a Master student at the University of Iceland in 2012. Reading the book helped me to define my research subject in those days and to extend it to the present research proposal.

The first part of the book “provides definitions of digital literature as a discipline of scholarly treatment in the humanities and presents the contributors’ main focus in the field of digital literature” (Simanowski et al., 2010, p. 10). This part contains the following chapters: “Reading Digital Literature: A Subject Between Media and Methods” (Simanowski, 2010b); “Five Elements of Digital Literature” (Wardrip-Fruin, 2010b); “Figures in the Interface: Comparative Methods in the Study of Digital Literature” (Zuern, 2010a); “Reading (in) the Net: Aesthetic Experience in Computer-Based Media” (Schäfer & Gendolla, 2010b); “Story Telling Goes On After the Credits: Fanfiction as a Case Study of Cyberliterature” (Wenz, 2010b); “Approaches to Digital Literature: Temporal Dynamics and Cyborg Authors” (Koskimaa, 2010a); “From Revisi(tati)on to Retro-Intentionalization: Hermeneutics, Multimodality and Corporeality in Hypertext, Hypermedia and Cybertext” (Ensslin, 2010); “Digital Literature —A Question of Style” (Saemmer, 2010a); “The Reader in Cyberspace: In Search of Digital Literature in Spain” (Goicoechea, 2010b); “Alphabet on the

Move: Digital Poetry and the Realm of Language” (Strehovec, 2010a).

The second part of *Reading Moving Letters Digital Literature in Research and Teaching* “asks how and why we should teach digital literature and conduct close reading in the classroom” (Simanowski et al., 2010, p. 10). It contains the following chapters: “Teaching Digital Literature Didactic and Institutional Aspects” (Simanowski, 2010c); “Learning to Read Digital Literature” (Wardrip-Fruin, 2010c); “Pop Spells, Hermetic Lessons Teaching on the Fringes of the Literary” (Zuern, 2010b); “Net literature in the Classroom Teaching Practice at the University of Siegen” (Gendolla, Schäfer, & Tomaszek, 2010); “Digital Media@Maastricht University Problem-Based Learning as an Approach to Digital Literature” (Wenz, 2010a); “Teaching Digital Literature through Multi-Layered Analysis” (Koskimaa, 2010b); “Digital Literature in Creative and Media Studies” (Ensslin & Pope, 2010); “Digital Literature —In search of a Discipline? Teaching Digital Literature in France: A Short Overview” (Saemmer, 2010b); “Teaching Digital Literature in Spain Reading Strategies for the Digital Text” (Goicoechea, 2010a); “In Search for the Novel Possibilities of Text-Based Installations Teaching Digital Literature within New Media Studies in Slovenia” (Strehovec, 2010b).

In a second book called *Beyond the Screen Transformations of Literary Structures, Interfaces and Genres*, Schäfer & Gendolla (2010a) put together a new compilation of essays that have two main goals; on the one hand, “to focus on literary processes in interactive installations, locative narratives and immersive environments, in which active engagement and bodily interaction is required from the reader to perceive the literary text”; and, on the other hand, “to analyze how literary structures, interfaces and genres change, and how transitory aesthetic experiences can be documented, archived and edited”(Schäfer & Gendolla, 2010a).

The collection of essays include the following works: “Reassembling the Literary: Toward a Theoretical Framework for Literary Communication in Computer-Based Media” (Schäfer, 2010); “Epistemology of Disruptions: Thoughts on the Operative Logic of Media Semantics” (L. Jäger, 2010); “RFID: Human Agency and Meaning in Information-Intensive Environments”

(Hayles, 2010); “Memory and Motion: The Body in Electronic Writing” (Angel & Gibbs, 2010); “Event and Meaning: Reading Interactive Installations in the Light of Art History” (Simanowski, 2010a); “Why Digital Literature Has Always Been ‘Beyond the Screen’” (Roberts, 2010); “From Concrete to Digital: The Reconceptualization of Poetic Space” (Shaffner, 2010); “The Gravity of the Leaf: Phenomenologies of Literary Inscription in Media-Constituted Diegetic Worlds” (Cayley, 2010); “Beyond the Complex Surface” (Wardrip-Fruin, 2010a); “Hyperlinking in 3D Interactive, Multimedia Performances” (Grigar, 2010); “Framing Locative Consciousness” (Ricardo, 2010); “Walk this Way: Mobile Narrative as Composed Experience” (Raley, 2010); “Locative Narrative, Literature and Form” (Hight, 2010); “A Town as a Novel: An Interactive and Generative Literary Installation in Urban Space” (Balpe, 2010); “The Global Poetic System: A System of Poetic Positioning” (Borràs & Gutiérrez, 2010); “No Preexistent World: On “Natural” and “Artificial” Forms of Poetry” (Gendolla, 2010); How to Construct the Genre of Digital Poetry: A User Manual (Block, 2010); “The Reader, the Player and the Executable Poetics: Towards a Literature Beyond the Book” (Beiguelman, 2010); “Beyond Play and Narration: Video Games as Simulations of Self-Action” (Venus, 2010); “Archivability of Electronic Literature in Context” (Suter, 2010); “On Reading 300 Works of Electronic Literature: Preliminary Reflections” (Tabbi, 2010b); “Classification vs. Diversification: The Value of Taxonomies for New Media Art” (Kwastek, 2010); “Dispersal and Renown An Investigation of Blogs, Listservs and Online Journals” (Shankar, 2010); “Digital Editions in the Net: Perspectives for Scholarly Editing in a Digital World” (Jannidis, 2010).

Naturally, I would like to underline the latest books that in a challenging way have encouraged and continue to encourage my research goals, *Regards Croisés: Perspectives on Digital Literature* (Bootz & Baldwin, 2010); *Digital Art and Meaning* (Simanowski, 2011); *Electronic Poetry. Understanding Poetry in the Digital Environment* (Di Rosario, 2011); *Cybertext Poetics: The Critical Landscape of New Media Literary Theory* (Eskelinen, 2012); *La valeur heuristique de la littérature numérique* (Bouchardon, 2014b); *Analyzing Digital Fiction* (Bell, Ensslin, & Rustad, 2014); *Rhétorique du texte numérique : figures de la lecture, anticipations de pratiques* (Saemmer, 2015); and lately, the thought-provoking

“Introduction” to *Digital Humanities and Digital Media* (Simanowski, 2016). All of them outstanding contributions that have helped me to better understand EL and digital textuality.

## 2.6 Approaches on Digital Literature, Electronic Literature, and Net Literature

Considering the diversity of research subjects that have been remarked in the past section. It is necessary to begin by selecting and mentioning the theoretical works that will be followed on the challenging task of defining and understanding EL. Although, there are certainly many ways to refer to the field of EL, as it has been shown in Walker’s study (2012) on terminology and frequency of terms (cf. I.2.3), I have decided to focus on studying the definition of the following terms: digital literature, electronic literature, and net literature<sup>8</sup>. Therefore, the descriptions I present are centred on the theoretical works of seven authors: Bootz (2005b), Koskimaa (2010a), Wardrip-Fruin (2010b), Schäfer & Gendolla (2010b), Simanowski (2010b), and Bouchardon (2014b).

To begin, we must look in detail at the three different categories proposed by Koskimaa (2010a, pp. 129–130) in order to designate digital literature:

1. *Digital publishing*. This is a perspective that focuses on the production and marketing of literature and books with the aid of digital technology. It includes such phenomena as eBooks (for Kindle and other devices), Print on Demand, AudioBooks as MP3 files, etc.
2. *Scholarly literary hypertext editions for educational and research purposes*. This category includes hypertextually annotated literary works, as well as multimedia implementations of the classics.

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<sup>8</sup> Cybertext theory will be further explained in a different chapter (cf. III.2.2). *Cybertext* focuses on ergodic literature, where the user has to do non-trivial work in order to traverse the text (Aarseth, 1997, p. 1).

3. *Writing for digital media.* Digital texts are always *programmed* texts; on one level they are computer code. This opens up a limitless field for literary play and experimentation, as texts can be programmed to behave in a more or less dynamic way. I call these works cybertexts, following *Cybertext* (Aarseth, 1997) [...] Cybertext, in its turn, is more limited in scope as it refers to those text types which foreground the functional aspect. It is an umbrella term comprising of such various types as hypertexts, kinetic texts, generated texts, texts employing agent technologies, etc. Cybertext may refer to both literary and non-literary texts, but if we explicitly limit the focus on literary cybertexts, then we seem to be dealing with essentially the same concept as Wardrip-Fruin's digital literature (2010b). The slight difference exists because cybertext is indifferent to the distinction between digital and other electronic text types; literary cybertexts could be used synonymously with electronic literature (which is a somewhat broader concept than digital literature).

Koskimaa (2010a) emphasises on the dynamic behaviour of works that are written for digital media, at the same time he emphasises the importance of being "digital-born". As it will be seen, this aspect (digital-born) is frequently repeated among the authors. Though Koskimaa is faithful to the definition of cybertext by Aarseth (1997) he makes associations among the following terms: literary cybertext, digital literature, and electronic literature, where literary cybertext and EL are seen as equals. Yet the boundaries are still fuzzy. However, to my interest, he establishes a difference between literary and non-literary cybertexts. This division is important for me because I am interested on the emergence of these literary aspects in electronic literary works. The difference between literary and non-literary cybertexts will be further reflected on his later theories on "temporal levels for cybertexts with narrative content" (cf. III.2.2.3).

Moreover, another perception regarding the subject is Wardrip-Fruin's explanation on digital literature followed by the presentation of his model "Five Elements of Digital Literature" (Wardrip-Fruin, 2010b); to which (as it has been previously shown), Koskimaa (2010a) refers as possessing similar characteristics to literary

cybertexts. For Wardrip-Fruin (2010b, p. 29), before associating “digital” to computers, he suggests considering that “a phrase like ‘digital literature’ could refer to finger-oriented literature (fingers are digits) or numerically-displayed literature (numbers are digits)”.

I find these associations truly helpful because both actions are accomplished when reading born-digital literary artifacts. On the one hand, we use our digits to interact with the computer (gestural manipulation) (Bouchardon, 2014a, 2014b), and consequently, with born-digital literary works (most of the time the construction of meaning is linked to gestural manipulation). And, on the other hand, as we know, ideally everything that constitutes what is displayed on the screenic surface of the work has been (finger-) programmed (coded) numerically.

Thus, Wardrip-Fruin (2010b, pp. 47–48) proposes the following five-part model for digital literature:

1. *Data*. This includes text, images, sound files, specifications of story grammars, declarative information about fictional worlds, tables of statistics about word frequencies, and so on.
2. *Processes*. These are processes actually carried out by the work, and are central to many efforts in the field (especially those proceeding from a computer science perspective).
3. *Interaction*. This is change to the state of the work, for which the work was designed, that comes from outside the work.
4. *Surface*. The surface of a work of digital literature is what the audience experiences: the output of the processes operating on the data, in the context of the physical hardware and setting, through which any audience interaction takes place.
5. *Context*. Once there is a work and an audience, there is always context—so this isn’t optional. Context is important for interpreting any work, but digital literature calls us to

consider types of context that print-based literature has had to confront less often.

As it can be observed there is a strong co-dependency among the parts that compose the five-part model. Data and processes referred to the importance of the numerically programmed features of the digital work that are triggered due to the interaction of the reader with the machine. Though I am aware of the importance of data and processes in digital creations, the present study will find its context on the outcome of this interaction, that is, on the multimedia event that is taking place in the aesthetics of the (screenic) surface.

Bootz (2005b) also points out to the direction of Wardrip-Fruin (2010b); according to him, there is distinction between the surface aesthetics of the screen and the “processes” for programming these aesthetics events. For Bootz (2005b, pt. 2.2), there is a “semiotic gap” between two entities that can be considered “the text”.

From a semiotic point of view, we can separate the classical and general semiotic notion of text (the text is the object of the interpretation) into three different parts that do not act in the same space. Program and data constitute the “*texte-auteur*”. This is a sign that is only accessible by the author. It is the domain of the author. The second sign is constituted by what will be considered as “the text” by the reader. It is the “*texte-à-voir*” (text-to-be-seen). It is a part of the observable transient event that can differ from a reader to another because readers will not apply the same system depth on the transient observable. The physical process itself is a function. From a semiotic point of view, it transforms the “*texte-auteur*” into the “*texte-à-voir*”. Because it generates the transient observable.<sup>9</sup>

As it can be seen, Bootz (2005b) similarly to Wardrip-Fruin (2010b) shows a particular interest in the programmed level of digital literature. As far as my research is concerned, it has been truly useful to understand the distinction between “*texte-auteur*” and “*texte-à-voir*” so as to acknowledge all the process behind the

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<sup>9</sup> Bootz’s theory on *Transitoire Observable* will be further explained in a different chapter (cf. III.2.1.2)

terms. However, for the purposes of the present work, I will absolutely refer to “text” as the multimedia event displayed on the screen.

Within the same quest for definition, Schäfer & Gendolla (2010b) propose that a better term to approach these creations is “Net literature”, “We, however, prefer *not* to talk of “electronic” or “digital” literature but of “net literature” as an abbreviatory term for writing in networked and programmable media” (Schäfer & Gendolla, 2010b, p. 83) (my emphasis). They accentuate, following Hayles (2007) and Cayley (2007), that the definition of “digital literature” is slightly tautological (cf. I.2.1); and that one cannot reduce the phenomena to the simplicity of such terms as “electronic” or “digital” writing. Moreover, they accentuate that the unconscious use of these prefixes “new”, “hyper”, “cyber”, “digital”, “electronic”, to designate works of art, must be truly considered before putting them into practice.

On developing the subject, Simanowski (2010b, pp. 15–17) explains that there are special features that literary innovations need to have in order to fulfil the condition of “digital birth”. Firstly, he notes that, ““digitally born literary artifacts are written *for* digital media”” (there is an allusion to Koskimaa (2010a) above-mentioned third category “*Writing for Digital Media*”). Secondly, he stresses that, “the condition of “digital birth” points to the more existential characteristic of carrying the features of the “parents” such as connectivity, interactivity, multimediality, non-linearity, performativity and transformability”; and finally, he points out that “by definition digital literature has to go beyond the employment of letters and it has to make an *aesthetic* use of the features of digital media” (original emphasis). In fact, one of the aims of the present work will be precisely how to evaluate the *aesthetic* use of the features of digital media in literary works.

On the subject, Bouchardon (2014b, pp. 74–75) notes that the majority of definitions on digital literature seem to focus on two important components (digital support and literary aspects), which as proposed by the author more than being seen as co-existent they need to be studied from the perspective of the *creative tension* that they produce.



*La plupart des définitions de la LN reposent sur la présence de deux composantes :*

*-Une exploitation des spécificités du support, du médium, du dispositif, en termes de calcul, de programme, de structuration par liens, de multimédia...*

*-Une composante littéraire : le langage, les mots, le texte, une forme narrative ou poétique...*

*Mais ce n'est pas tant la co-présence de ces deux composantes qui va construire la LN. Je propose ici de considérer que la LN naît de la tension entre les deux ; c'est de la tension entre ces deux composantes que naît la LN, et non de leur co-présence.*

Therefore, the *creative tension* within electronic literary works takes place in the “*texte-auteur*”, as well as in the “*texte-à-voir*”. In this sense, we could speak of a creative knowledge generated from the twofold creative process of the works themselves. Lastly, the intertextuality of the concepts “aesthetics of frustration” (Bootz, 2005a), “aesthetic of visual noise” and “aesthetic of sonic noise” (Engberg, 2010) should be highlighted as well as, for they can stand as examples of creative tension. These concepts will be further explained in the theoretical framework (cf. III.2.3.2) and applied in the analysis of the selected corpus.

As it can be seen varying terminology that stems and springs from different points of view is highly present in the theoretical works I have presented. For this reason, based on my readings and understanding of the subject, in the next section, I present the theoretical approaches regarding the concept of EL that I will follow throughout the present study.

## **2.7 Theoretical Approaches Used in the Present Study**

Based on the different perspectives and propositions about digital literature, electronic literature, and net literature, which have been

presented in the previous section. I have chosen to follow the following theoretical approaches regarding the concept of EL throughout my research.

1. I make no distinction between the concepts digital literature and electronic literature. I use both terms accordingly to the paratextual discourse in which they are found. For instance, the titles' *illocutory force* of the *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature* (2012) and the *Collection of Electronic Literature Volume Two* (2011) already indicate that the electronic literary works that compose these compilations are electronic literature. Therefore, I follow these labels and consider their paratextual impact.
2. I regard electronic texts as non-static plurisemiotic systems (text, image, sound, and video) that may require (*or not*) gestural manipulation by the reader to construct their meaning. I will absolutely refer to "text" as the multimedia event displayed on the screen (*texte-à-voir*), and not to the encoded data (*texte-auteur*) (Bootz, 2005b).
3. I am conscious of the importance of data and processes proposed by Wardrip-Fruin (2010b) on his model, "Five Elements of Digital Literature" (data, processes, interaction, surface, context); however, my research will focus specifically on the complexity of the aesthetics of the (screenic) surface (*texte-à-voir*) (Bootz, 2005b).
4. I would not refer to the corpus as literary cybertexts considering that the selected electronic literary works belong to the above-mentioned digital compilations. However, I am familiar with Aarseth (1997)'s propositions on *Cybertext*, and I am truly interested in Koskimaa (2010a) differentiation between literary and non-literary cybertexts. Particularly, since I aim to apply Koskimaa's theory on "temporal levels for cybertexts with narrative content" to the selected corpus.

5. I consider Wardrip-Fruin (2010b) remark on finger-oriented literature (fingers are digits) and numerically-displayed literature (numbers are digits) to be really suitable when establishing (on an introductory level) a differentiation between what happens *on* the screen and *beyond* the screen. Following Wardrip-Fruin's idea on fingers and digits I find the pre-text to occasionally refer to the corpus as digital literature and digital works. Finally, I find a strong relation between his proposition on "finger-oriented" literature and the construction of meaning in digital works through gestural manipulation (Bouchardon, 2014a, 2014b).



## **CHAPTER II. RESEARCH PROBLEM, CORPUS, OBJECTIVES, METHODOLOGY, AND HYPOTHESES**

### **1. RESEARCH PROBLEM: HOW ARE NEW FORMS OF LITERARINESS DEPICTED IN ELECTRONIC LITERARY WORKS? HOW TO DEVELOP A TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH METHODOLOGY TO STUDY THEM?**

The search for a definition of EL is a constant quest that implies a plurality of perspectives. It remains debatable how “important literary aspects” (ELO, 1999) can be identified in an electronic literary work, as well as which methodological ways are needed to study them. The wide range of theoretical approaches that I have presented in the previous chapter has guided me; on the one hand, to define the direction of my research; and on the other hand, to point out the research subjects that I consider can shed light on my exploration for new forms of literariness in electronic literary works.

Taking this into account, I have developed the research problem of the present work out of three main observations: (1) the complexity of finding new forms of literariness in electronic literary works due to their digital-born nature; (2) the need for transdisciplinary research to enhance our understanding of the works; (3) the challenge of coupling current theoretical approaches to analyse electronic literary works.

#### **1.1 The Complexity of Finding New Forms of Literariness**

The countless possibilities of expression in the digital environment call for the search of new forms of literariness yet waiting to be

studied in works of EL. Based on the reading experience of a number of works from three different sources: *Electronic Literature Collection Volume One*, (2006); *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two*, (2011); *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature*, (2012), I have realized that the literary potentialities of electronic texts are *understated* and not being fully examined through a transdisciplinary scientific approach.

Reading a wide array of perspectives has encouraged me to study the diverse possibilities of representation that such “important literary aspects” can have in the electronic literary works. In the last decade, scholars coming from different academic backgrounds, have referred to these aspects in a variety of ways; for instance, “literary performances” (ELO, 2004); “*toute forme narrative ou poétique qui utilise le dispositif informatique*” (Bootz, 2006); “literary modes” (Hayles, 2007); “born-digital literary artifacts” (Rettberg, 2009); “literary communication in computer-based media” (Schäfer, 2010); “media constituted diegetic worlds” (Cayley, 2010); “broken expectations continued in imaginary forms”, “literary processes” (Schäfer & Gendolla, 2010a); “literary play”, “literary qualities” (Koskimaa, 2010a); “a revaluation and relocation of the literary in multiple media” (Tabbi, 2010a); “computer applications in literary studies” (ADHO, 2011); “literary innovations” (Simanowski, 2010b); “literary practices with an emphasis on aesthetics, on intertextuality and writerly processes” (Pressman & Swanstrom, 2013); “literary ramifications of digital media writing” (E-poetry 2013); “*tension créatrice entre exploitation du support numérique et composante littéraire*” (Bouchardon, 2014b); “born-digital experiences and works of a narrative or poetic nature”, “new literary forms that engage with technology on an aesthetic level” (Rettberg, 2016); to name a few.

As pointed out by Simanowski (2010b, p. 16), “No matter how we eventually define the specific “literariness” of digital literature, it is evident that it undermines the identity of digital literature as *literature*.” However, the question remains, how is this “literariness” depicted in such electronic literary works? And furthermore, how can it be scientifically approached? Or as suggested by Schäfer & Gendolla (2010b, p. 82), “Can we discover a new quality of literariness?”, and if so, “What are the

terminological and methodological means to examine these literatures??".

As researchers of new emerging forms of literature in the digital environment, we must seek to identify these literary traces, features, and characteristics in an endeavour to open different paths of interpretation that will help us shape the identity of digital literature as *literature*. For this purpose, it is necessary to understand, and consequently, to apply (or propose) existing (or new) theoretical and methodological ways to examine these phenomena. I consider that such actions open the opportunity to explore, as well as to study, under which conditions these plurisemiotic texts perform in the digital environment, and furthermore, under which criteria they construct their *raison d'être*. The important matter is to study how the aesthetical effects produced by the digital medium (enunciative device) affect the representation of such literary aspects: how do they interconnect in order to create literariness<sup>1</sup>?. In other words, the goal is not only to grasp the meaning of the aesthetic elements of expression but also to search for literary patterns still veiled and unknown in such poetic and narrative forms.

## 1.2 The Need for Transdisciplinary Research

That said, I will comment on how the potential of transdisciplinary research can enhance studies in the field of EL. On the one hand, the field is transdisciplinary by nature given the creation of experimental processes between computer science, literary theory, and the fine arts. And on the other hand, the fact that the field is in constant change and growth due to the versatility of the digital environment also makes it subject to multiple methods of analysis. In this regard, I am particularly interested in applying theories of Discourse Analysis (DA) (Charaudeau, 1983, 1992, 2006; Ducrot, 1984; Maingueneau, 2014a, 2014b) and Literary Theory (LT) (Bakhtin, 1981; Genette, 1980, 1988, 1997b, 1997a; Kristeva, 1980) when analysing electronic literary works. The idea is to evaluate

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<sup>1</sup> It must be mentioned that in 1921 R. Jakobson wrote: "The object of study in literary science is not literature but 'literariness,' that is, what makes a given work a *literary* work" (quoted in Nöth, 1990).

how the outcome of such dialogue in between these disciplines benefits the analysis of the works.

On the subject of transdisciplinarity and creation, Hayles (2007) speaks of a “trading zone” where a plurality of vocabularies and expectations come together to generate a truly fruitful transdisciplinary *creative tension* (Bouchardon, 2014b). Though Hayles recognises the importance of EL being created in a context of networked and programmable media (Schäfer & Gendolla, 2010b), the author underlines that the polyphonic dialogue derived from its own hybridity calls for the acknowledgement of other disciplines inside the field.

At the same time, because electronic literature is normally created and performed within a context of networked and programmable media, it is also informed by the powerhouses of contemporary culture, particularly computer games, films, animations, digital arts, graphic design, and electronic visual culture. In this sense, electronic literature is a “hopeful monster” (as geneticists call adaptive mutations) composed of parts taken from diverse traditions that may not always fit neatly together. Hybrid by nature, it comprises a trading zone (as Peter Galison calls it in a different context) in which different vocabularies, expertise, and expectations come together to see what might come from their intercourse. Electronic literature tests the boundaries of the literary and challenges us to re-think our assumptions of what literature can do and be (my emphasis) (Hayles, 2007, pt. 1).

The effects of the artistic hybridity and the test for boundaries to which Hayles refers must be thoroughly considered when analysing the works. For not only we will be able to be critical about the problematic on terminology regarding new forms of literariness, but also we will reach our own conclusions concerning the theoretical singularities and discrepancies within these plurisemiotic electronic texts. For I consider that only applying an adequate methodology of interpretation based on past and recent criteria will assure the understanding of their complexity. In regards to the subject Schäfer (2013, p. 3) notes:



On the one hand, this is a welcome move towards more transdisciplinary research. This is absolutely essential, as a comprehensive study of electronic literature *should still apply* but *cannot only rely* on the traditional methods of literary criticism only. It can also benefit from the methods and experiential background of social sciences, computer sciences, design studies, arts history, and so on, in order to understand the conditions under which the examined works have emerged (original emphasis).

On the same subject Simanowski (2010d, pt. 1) points out:

One could argue that traditional criteria cannot be applied in discussing new media artifacts and that digital arts require a completely new methodological approach. However, a theoretical discussion of digital arts is best grounded in a combination of new and old criteria.

As it can be observed, on the one hand, distant disciplines have come together providing an unexpected variety of cultural artefacts allowing us to see them in completely new ways. And, on the other hand, these cultural artefacts demand that we learn not only how to study but also how to evaluate the artistic outcome of such a challenging convergence. For this reason, it is necessary to analyse the selected corpus under a theoretical framework that attempts to confront this problematic through a transdisciplinary research methodology.

### **1.3 The Challenge of Coupling Current Theoretical Approaches**

As presented in the previous chapter, the diversity and plurality of electronic literary works has produced an increasing number of theoretical approaches that aim at studying these works from different perspectives (cf. I.2.5; I.2.6). In their critical and theoretical writings, Saemmer (2013) and Koskimaa (2010a) have underlined two challenging and promising research subjects facing digital literature: (1) the exploration of the tropological potential of couplings between text, movement and manipulation; and (2) the

reorganization of temporal issues within the complex narrative practices of EL.

On the subject, Saemmer (2013, p. 6) notes:

It seems to me that the exploration of this tropological potential of couplings between text, movement and manipulation, is one of the most interesting challenges facing digital textuality. It also requires readers to re-discover the implied textual or iconographic contents; it requires them to read with attention. In the most compelling experiments, the immersive potential of animation and manipulation is explored while being subtly questioned, thus turning the digital work into a “medium for drifting times”<sup>2</sup>(my emphasis).

For his part, Koskimaa (2010a, pp. 134–136) points out:

Temporal dimension is the most underdeveloped part of the cybertext theory. There is the distinction between user-controlled time (transient texts), and text controlled time (intransient texts), and also dynamics (both in intratextonically and textonically dynamic texts), which necessary implies temporal change, but they offer only rudimentary starting points for pondering the temporality of cybertexts [...] It seems to us that one of the most promising areas of research within digital literature is the reorganization of these temporal issues through the dynamics of the system time (the succession of the processor cycles pacing the execution of the code), reading time, and textual (fictive) time (my emphasis).

The noteworthy research gap created by these two subjects has led to the theoretical reflection on specific theories and practices. However, there is relatively little academic literature dealing with their application, which emphasises the challenge to evaluate the outcome of their viability. In regards to the first subject: “the exploration of the tropological potential of couplings between text,

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<sup>2</sup> Saemmer notes that the term "medium for drifting times" is borrowed from Blanckeman (2000, p. 15).

movement and manipulation”, the theoretical works of Bouchardon (2005, 2011, 2014b) and Saemmer (2008b, 2010a, 2013, 2015) must be highlighted. Moreover, there are few critical works that particularly apply these theories to specific electronic literary works, among which the following must be cited: Saemmer (2008a, 2010c, 2014, 2015); Di Rosario (2011, 2012); Bouchardon (2011, 2014a, 2014b); Skains (2013); Ensslin (2014c).

Concerning the second subject: “the reorganization of temporal issues”, the theoretical works of Eskelinen & Koskimaa (2001); Eskelinen (2007, 2012), and Koskimaa (2010a); must be highlighted as well. Once again there are only few critical studies using these theories in order to analyse electronic literary works: Eskelinen (2007, 2012); Sándor (2012); Zuern (2014); Karhulahti (2015); Koskimaa (2015a, 2015b).

The above-mentioned theoretical and critical studies stand as an invitation to further explore these subjects. However, there are no studies in which both theoretical approaches are combined in the examination of electronic literary works. Since part of my research problem is centred on the complexity to find new forms of literariness in EL, I think that the coupling of these two theories will shed light on the search for such narrative and poetic forms. For I seek to find associations between the influence of space over time and time over space in the digital works, that is, as a result of interaction and manipulation.

I consider that the coupling of these two theories encourage us not only to submerge into these new theoretical propositions but also to emerge from them with a critical awareness and comprehension of what we read, examine and analyse. Lastly, these theoretical approaches strengthen the global purpose of the present work, that is, the act of contributing to the analysis and interpretation of electronic literary works, and consequently, the critical discussion and appliance of current methods for their investigation.



## 2. CORPUS PRESENTATION

Based on the critical reading of several works from three different sources, *Electronic Literature Collection Volume One*, (2006); *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two*, (2011); and *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature*, (2012). The corpus of the present research project is composed of two works of EL belonging to two different digital compilations: *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two* (2011) and *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature* (2012).

The selection was based on the following criteria: a) both works needed to belong to different digital compilations in order to compare their paratextual presentations; b) the works needed to be contemporary due to the exponentially growth of EL creations and the rapid pace of technological change; c) the two works needed to show variability of the text composition to increase the chance of finding new forms of literariness; d) the two works needed to require different levels of interaction and manipulation by the reader so as to assess the viability of the proposed methodology. Therefore, the selected works are the following:

1. **Title:** *88 Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)* (2008). **Author:** David Clark. **Source:** *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two* (2011). **Language:** English. **Translation:** No translation available. **Keywords** (provided by *ELC2*): Animation, Kinetic, Critical, Political, Philosophical, Database, Documentary, Essay, Creative, Nonfiction, Flash, and Hypertext. **Access:** [http://collection.eliterature.org/2/works/clark\\_wittgenstein.html](http://collection.eliterature.org/2/works/clark_wittgenstein.html)
2. **Title:** *Déprise (Loss of Grasp)* (EN) (2010). **Authors:** Serge Bouchardon and Vincent Volckaert. **Source:** *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature* (2012). **Language:** French. **Translation:** Available translations in English, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese. **Keywords** (provided by *AEEL*): Interactive Digital Work. **Access:** <https://anthology.elmcip.net/works/loss-of-grasp.html>



### 3. OBJECTIVES

Considering the previous research questions: How are new forms of literariness depicted in electronic literary works? How to develop a transdisciplinary research methodology to study them? I have developed the following five main objectives:

1. To examine literary potentialities of electronic literary works by identifying their literary traces, features, and characteristics;
2. To identify conditions and patterns of appearance by studying how these literary potentialities are aesthetically and poetically represented in the digital works;
3. To evaluate the degree of integration between past and recent theoretical approaches when examining electronic literary works, through:
  - a. The application of DA Theories and Literary Theory;
  - b. The proposition of new terminology based on past and recent theoretical approaches;
4. To test the viability of coupling new theoretical approaches when examining electronic literary works, through:
  - a. The evaluation of tropological potential of couplings between text, movement and manipulation;
  - b. The search for specific examples of temporal dynamics and temporal manipulation within the works' complex narrative practices;
5. To develop a methodology of interpretation that examines electronic literary works through transdisciplinary research due to their digital-born nature and the versatility of the digital environment.





## 4. METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in the analysis of the selected corpus is based on a descriptive, semiotic and analytic approach. A close reading that combines theories of Discourse Analysis (DA) (Benveniste, 1970; Charaudeau, 1983, 1992, 2006; Ducrot, 1984; Maingueneau, 2014a, 2014b), Literary Theory (LT) (Bakhtin, 1981; Genette, 1980, 1988, 1997b, 1997a; Kristeva, 1980) and Electronic Literature (EL) theories (Bouchardon, 2005, 2011, 2014b; Eskelinen, 2012; Eskelinen & Koskimaa, 2001; Koskimaa, 2010a; Saemmer, 2008b, 2010a, 2013, 2015) will be applied when examining the works.

The analyses will be presented in Chapter IV and Chapter V (cf. IV.1; V.1). Each one of them has a section labelled “General Overview” that explains in detail specific aspects of their methodology. In general terms, the analyses will be divided in three sections. In the first section, I will describe the paratextual elements (peritext and epitext) of two interrelated settings: the online presentation of the *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two* (2011) and the *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature* (2012), correspondingly; as well as the presentation of each electronic literary work: *88 Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)* (2008) and *Déprise*, (2010) within each corresponding compilation. By paratextual description, I refer to the spatial, temporal, substantial, pragmatic, and functional characteristics of the paratextual message (Genette, 1997b).

The second section will centre on the variability of enunciation and text composition. On the one hand, I will study the polyphony (Bakhtin, 1981; Ducrot, 1984; Maingueneau, 2014a) and intertextuality (Genette, 1997a; Kristeva, 1980) within the narrative discourse, which emerge from the manipulation of time and space in the digital medium (enunciative device) (Benveniste, 1970; Charaudeau, 2006; Ducrot, 1984; Maingueneau, 2014b). And, on the other hand, I will study how by evoking a surprising or incongruous effect on the reader, the combinations between text, movement, and manipulation can create figures of animation and figures of manipulation (Bouchardon, 2005, 2011, 2014a, 2014b, Saemmer, 2008b, 2010a, 2013, 2015).

Finally, the third section is centred on the application of new temporality theories within the complex narrative practices of EL. In order to reach this goal, this section of the analysis will be focused on two subjects: (1) the exploration of temporal possibilities in programmed texts and (2) the exploration of temporal levels for cybertexts with narrative content (Eskelinen, 2012; Eskelinen & Koskimaa, 2001; Koskimaa, 2010a).

It is important to point out that the analysis of temporal possibilities is required prior to exploring the temporal levels. Firstly, I will explore the temporal possibilities in programmed texts as follows: a) limiting reading time, b) delaying reading time, c) limiting the reading opportunities, d) temporally evolving texts (Koskimaa, 2010a, p. 135). And consequently, taking into account the previous results, I will examine the temporal levels of electronic texts with narrative content following these categories: a) user time, b) discourse time: pseudo-time and true time, c) story time, d) system time (Koskimaa, 2010a, p. 136).

Following these criteria my aim is to develop a transdisciplinary research methodology based on theories of DA, LT, and EL's methods of analysis, which contributes to the study and interpretation of electronic literary works, and consequently, to the critical discussion and appliance of current methods for their investigation.

## 5. HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses of the present work are based on two on-going developments, firstly, on the exploration of the research problem, and secondly, on the possible results obtained during the critical practice of the above-mentioned research objectives. Therefore, I propose the following hypotheses:

1. Literary potentialities could be located within the act of communication of the different multimedia and discourse layers. They could be shown as an image, as a gesture, as a sound, as a figure of animation, as a figure of manipulation, as a blur, or as an empty space;
2. The instability of the digital medium (enunciative device) may be a condition for the emergence of new forms of literariness;
3. The application of past and recent theoretical approaches on electronic literary works will expose the limitations of each theory and underline the need to expand them;
4. The coupling of new theoretical approaches could give birth to new terminology to describe the outcome of their convergence;
5. The construction of meaning of the text, as well as its interpretation could be conditioned to the successful gestural manipulation of the reader. Alterations, misinterpretations or media additions during the reading process could lead to reading failures, aesthetical effects, re-readings, lack of control, and loss of grasp;
6. The tropological potential of couplings between text, movement, and manipulation could be depicted in the selected works through such concepts as, memory, time, infinity, emptiness, love, ephemerality, and language itself;
7. The reorganization of temporal issues within the complex narrative practices of EL could be altered due to the instability of the digital medium, which may lead to temporal manipulation and temporal dynamics.



## CHAPTER III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 1. DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

#### 1.1 General Comment on the Discipline

One of the main features of Discourse Analysis (DA) is to constantly open the boundaries of the study of language by examining new practices of communication. If we consider that nowadays, DA is being structured as a research sphere of, not only multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, but also transdisciplinary approaches; then we can suggest that the versatile works of EL are an attractive *mise en scène* where DA theories can be applied for their analysis.

To put it differently, if according to Lemke (2013, p. 80) in the past decades, “Discourse analysis was shaped by the kinds of questions people were asking, and by the kinds of uses to which this new discipline was being put”; therefore, the possibilities of “literary discourse” (Ensslin, 2014b, p. 14; Koskimaa, 2010a, p. 130) within electronic literary works can be studied through the lens of DA theories. For such examination, will not only stand as a transdisciplinary practice for DA, but will also address original research questions to both disciplines.

A transdisciplinary approach asks “how a dialogue between two disciplines or frameworks may lead to a development of both through a process of each internally appropriating the logic of the other as a resource for its own development” (Fairclough (2005, p. 53) quoting Chiapello & Fairclough (2002)).

The importance of such transdisciplinary features of DA is vital for the present study, since it is in this intersection (crossing) of disciplines where twofold theoretical limitations may be encountered. As pointed out by Ramsay (2010), to believe that the presence of electronic modes of communication is just “a

fascination with gadgets is to miss both the epochal nature of what's afoot, and the ways in which technology and discourse are intertwined" (my emphasis). For this reason, it is important to notice that the intertwining of technology and discourse, to which the author refers, can not only create theoretical agreement but also fruitful disagreement among the fields of DA, LT, and EL, respectively.

Therefore, the rapid pace at which technologies are introduced has given birth to new theoretical propositions within the transdisciplinary practice, not only of DA, and EL, but also of Communication. I think the interchange in between these disciplines requires a conscious examination since in order to understand "what is afoot", as proposed by Ramsay (2010), it is necessary to know and *carefully revise* "what was before".

To accomplish this, as a point of departure, the aim of the first section of the theoretical framework is to provide the reader with specific theories of DA, which were theoretically chosen in accordance to the research subjects stated in the "Research Problem" section (cf. II.1.2; II.4). Firstly, I will present a general summary of the notion of DA. Secondly, I will offer a presentation of specific semio-discursive and enunciative-discursive oriented theories. The aim is to create a dialog [in the digital age] between the theoretical writings inspired and proposed by authors, linguists, and philosophers of language such as Bakhtin (1981), Genette (1980, 1988, 1997b, 1997a), Benveniste (1970), Kristeva (1980, 2002), Ducrot (1984), Charaudeau (1983, 1992, 2006), Maingueneau (2014a, 2014b); and the contemporary studies on discourse and multimodality, and discourse and multimediality proposed by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001), Van Leeuwen (2005), Kress (2010) and Lemke (2013), to name but a few.

## 1.2 The Field of Discourse Analysis

### 1.2.1 *The Polyhedron Nature of Discourse*

Even though there are many approaches on DA, there are also many misuses of the term due to its *polyhedron nature*. As described by Angermüller, Maingueneau & Wodak (2014, p. 6), “‘Discourse’ is one of those polymorphous notions which –despite the efforts of certain individuals to propose a rigorous definition– can mobilise a large number of theoretical opinions” (my emphasis). Ever since the origin of the term “*discourse analysis*”, which is associated to the linguist Z. S. Harris (1909-1992) and his article entitled “Discourse Analysis” (Harris, 1952), the term has undergone numerous noteworthy changes.

Among these changes, is the fact that for decades DA has been considered as an analytical practice, in which the theory and method surrounding the field had been included within the same term: *discourse analysis*. However, it is important to mention that nowadays the field is also referred as Discourse Studies, “a field where both discourse theory and discourse analysis are integrated in the practice of discourse research” (Angermüller, Maingueneau, et al., 2014, p. 5).

As of the present study, I have chosen to refer to the field as DA, though being aware of the current terminological transition. Certainly, the definitions and opinions on the subject are varied, which resembles the problematic presented in the State of the Art when referring to Digital Humanities (DH) and Electronic Literature (EL) (cf. I.1.1; I.2.1). This only shows the moment of transition in which various disciplines find themselves today, partially owing to the impact of computer-mediated communication and the challenges produced by the digital environment.

As a point of departure, I have chosen to present to the reader a few definitions of the term “discourse”. Now, due to the nature of my object of study: *electronic literature*, the definitions I present are based on the importance of the construction of meaning as a product of social and cultural practices, and linguistic signs. In order to

illustrate these ideas I will follow the definitions on “discourse” proposed by Blommaert (2005), Charaudeau (2006), Reisigl & Wodak (2009) and Gee (2014).

As proposed by Blommaert (2005, p. 2), discourse can be seen as “a general mode of semiosis, i.e. meaningful symbolic behavior”; and as “all forms of meaningful semiotic human activity seen in connection with social, cultural, and historical patterns of use”. In Blommaert’s statement the emphasis not only centres on the idea of language-in-use but also encompasses the meaning we give to language through cultural and social action, interpretation, and criticism; as for instance in the new practices of communication of the digital environment.

For their part, when addressing their definition of discourse, Reisigl & Wodak (2009) make special emphasis on the co-dependency of the same words: context, practice, action, and actors:

(...) a cluster of context dependent practices that are: situated within specific fields of social action; socially constituted and socially constitutive; related to a macro-topic; link to the argumentation about validity claims such as truth and normative validity, involving several social actors who have different points of view (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 89) (my emphasis).

The aforesaid definitions are centred on the impact that discursive practices have on the social and cultural settings in which they occur, as well as on the social actors who perform these practices. Therefore, if we consider the creation and criticism of EL as a social practice it seems interesting to study how each semiotic mode contributes with a set of possible unrevealed meanings.

Following the same semiotic and social stream of thought, in order to define discourse, Gee (2014) constructs a metaphor in which he associates discourse to the performativity of these sociocultural elements. This perspective is of great interest to the present study since the allusion to the versatility of language, culture, and meaning echoes the possible manifestations of (literary) discourse in the works of EL.



In the end a Discourse is a “dance” that exists in the abstract as a coordinated pattern of words, deeds, values, beliefs, symbols, tools, objects, times, and places and in the here and now as a performance that is recognizable as just such a coordination. Like a dance, the performance here and now is never exactly the same. It all comes down, often, to what the “masters of the dance” (the people who inhabit the Discourse) will allow to be recognized or will be forced to recognize as a possible instantiation of the dance (Gee, 2014, pp. 53–54) (my emphasis).

If we consider the manifestation of hidden and complex discourses in EL to be the product of Gee’s (2014) coordinated pattern of words, deeds, values, beliefs, symbols, tools, objects, times, and places that work together to produce meaning via interaction and manipulation; then we should ask ourselves, how these components could be depicted in the performativity (Simanowski, 2010b) of works of EL? Could we identify such components in each work of the selected corpus? And what is more, how do the works of EL shape and create their identity?

### *1.2.2 Three Problematics on Discourse*

Furthermore, from an epistemological perspective of discourse, Charaudeau (2006, pt. 1) proposes three problematics which he uses not only to define the term discourse, as I have shown with the previous examples, but also, claims the author, to represent the three theoretical points of view *on* discourse. Before presenting these problematics it must be noted that for Charaudeau (2006, pt. 1), the word “problematic” is understood as follows:

*Une problématique n’est pas une théorie mais un lieu de questionnement général qui rassemble un ensemble de propositions données comme provisoirement (ou hypothétiquement) vraies, selon certains paramètres. Elle délimite en quelque sorte un positionnement épistémologique à l’intérieur de la discipline.*

This means that a problematic resembles a terrain of questions where there is not absolute truth because it all depends on how the question is formulated and addressed. That said, these problematics, which are also classified by three internal parameters (object of study, subject of study, and corpus) are presented as follows: (1) *une problématique cognitive et catégorisante*, (2) *une problématique communicationnelle et descriptive*, (3) *une problématique dite représentationnelle et interprétative*. In the following paragraphs, I will briefly summarize the main ideas behind these problematics.

By a “cognitive and categorizing” problematic (*une problématique cognitive et catégorisante*), Charaudeau (2006, pt. 1) refers to the “discursive mechanisms” (*mécanismes discursifs*) inside a discursive production. The coherence and cohesion of a text from which language games could derive<sup>1</sup>, and most importantly, the fact that there is not a situational corpus required as the corpus can be *aléatoire*.

By a “communicative and descriptive” problematic (*une problématique communicationnelle et descriptive*) the author refers mainly to the characteristics of the situation of communication, (1) The identity of the exchange partners, (2) The purpose of the exchange, (3) The content at stake, (4) The material circumstances that surround it (Charaudeau, 2006, pt. 1)<sup>2</sup>. In this problematic, the corpus is empirically grouped together in agreement with the situation of communication to which they correspond. For instance, in the case of our object of study, electronic literary works which have been selected and archived (by several institutions) in the *Electronic Literature, Collection Volume Two*, (ELC2), and in the *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature*, (AEEL) with the fixed purpose of disseminating such new propositions of

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<sup>1</sup> cf. *Philosophical Investigations* for different perspective on “language games” (Wittgenstein, 2010) [1953].

<sup>2</sup> (1) *L'identité des partenaires de l'échange*, (2) *la finalité actionnelle (but) de la situation dans laquelle ils se trouvent*, (3) *le propos* (4) *les circonstances matérielles de la communication* (Charaudeau, 2000) I shall explain in detail the characteristics of the situation of communication in a subsequent section (cf. III. 1.4.1).

experimental literature to a specific target and the general public (cf. IV.2; V.2).

Finally, by “representational and interpretative” (*une problématique dite représentationnelle et interprétative*) the author refers to the socio-discursive representations of a specific social group in a specific social and historical context, as well as to the interpretation of this phenomenon. Charaudeau (2006, pt. 1) claims that given the diversity of these socio-discursive representations and its interpretative nature, it is not easy to construct a corpus regarding this problematic.

Therefore, considering the nature of the present subject of study: *electronic literature*, I will centre on the “communicative and descriptive problematic” proposed by Charaudeau (2006, pt. 1) (*une problématique communicationnelle et descriptive*). I will specifically focus on exploring the characteristics of the situation of communication (the identity of the exchange partners, the purpose of the exchange, the content at stake, and the material circumstances that surround it) when applied to the texts of EL. These characteristics will be explained in detail in the subsection devoted to the “situation of communication” of a discourse (cf. III.1.4.1).

## **1.3 Historical Overview of Discourse Analysis**

### *1.3.1 The Anglo-American and German School*

Given the vastness and diversity of the field, I begin by presenting a short historical literature overview, which is particularly centred on the research works developed in the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, and France.

In the United Kingdom, the social sciences were dominated by poststructuralist discourse theories such as Laclau & Mouffe (1985), Hall (1980), and Rose (1996). Social Semiotics had an important development and was represented by the works of Halliday, *Language As Social Semiotic* (1978), and Kress & Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images. The Grammar of Visual Design* (1996).

Speech Act Theory was expressed by the works of Widdowson (2007), and Corpus Analysis by the studies of Sinclair (2004) and Baker (2005). Sociolinguistics was manifested by the works of Sinclair et al. (1975), Coulthard (1977), Stubbs (1983), Brown and Yule (1983), Hoey (2001) and Hyland (2005). Lastly, Critical Discourse Analysis was mainly represented by Fairclough (1992) in the United Kingdom, as of continental Europe it was represented by Jäger (2007), Wodak & Meyer (2004), Van Dijk (1984, 2009) and Wodak (1989).

In the United States, the study of discourse was nourished by a diversity of fields, in particular by the Ethnography of Communication proposed by Gumperz & Hymes (1986); and the ethnographically oriented studies of Duranti & Goodwin (1992). In the field of Sociolinguistics, one must underline the studies on Labov & Fanshel (1977) and Johnstone (2008), in Corpus Analysis Biber et al. (1998), and in Applied Linguistics Kramsch's (1998) studies on language and culture. The reader must be aware of the works on Ethnomethodology by Garfinkel (1994), Conversational Analysis by Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson (1974) and Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1990), and finally the works of Goffman (1981), which were mainly focused in interaction rituals in everyday life (microsociology).

In Germany, DA developed later but in a very intellectually profound way. They experimented a big influence from holistic approaches to the construction of meaning. Among the diverse examples are Habermas' philosophical proposals, and his model of discourse (Habermas, 1985). Now, regarding text linguistics, the works by Beaugrande & Dressler (1981) on cohesion and coherence must be mentioned; Functional Pragmatics is manifested by the studies on communicative patterns of interaction of Ehlich & Rehbein (1986). Not to mention, social phenomenologists as Berger & Luckman (1966) and their *Social Construction of Reality*, and certainly the proposals by Keller (2005) on intersubjectivity. Most recently Angermüller et al. (2014) has written *Discourse Studies. An Interdisciplinary Manual*, and Wrana, et al. (2014) have edited *DiscourseNet Dictionary Interdisciplinary Discourse Studies*, to mention but a few.

### 1.3.2 *L'Ecole Française*

In France in 1969, the Linguistics Magazine *Langages* (edited by Jean Dubois) dedicated an issue (number 13) to a new domain of study to which they referred as, “*L'Analyse du discours*”. In the same year, Pêcheux published a book entitled *Analyse automatique du discours* (Pêcheux, 1969). His point of view was mainly representational and ideological. This school can be considered as a precedent of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in France. In 1969, Foucault published *Archéologie du savoir* (Foucault, 1969), which did not centre on the linguistic side of discourse but on the construction of sense derived from enunciation. Finally, the studies on Corpus Analysis by (Demonet, Geffroy, & Gouazé, 1975) must be mentioned as well.

Regarding enunciative theories the works of Benveniste (1970), Culioli (1991, 1999), and Ducrot (1980, 1984) must be underlined. In the field of Text Linguistics the work of Adam & Lorda (1999) on narrative texts must be mentioned, and in the same line of research, most recently Adam (1999, 2011) has developed a sequential text linguistics theory. Charaudeau (1983, 1992, 2006) has proposed a semio-discursive theory where he integrates enunciative aspects and different notions on discourse, which I will develop in detail in a subsequent section (cf. III.1.4). Maingueneau (2014b) [2003], who has proposed the fruitful notion of *scénographie du texte*, and carefully studied literary discourse (1993) has collaborated with Charaudeau in the elaboration of one exhaustive dictionary on DA, *Dictionnaire d'Analyse du Discours* (Charaudeau & Maingueneau, 2002), and recently published *Discours et Analyse du Discours: Introduction* (Maingueneau, 2014a).

### 1.3.3 *Digital Discourse*

Recently, different books have been written focusing on DA in the ever-changing landscape of digital media. With the fast production of multimodal and multimedia texts new analytical frames have been developed to study different digital discourse manifestations. *Digital Discourse: Language in the New Media* (2011) explores

from a sociolinguistic perspective discourse, technology, multimodality, and ideology in the current digital media landscape. The studies centre on Heteroglossia and Erasure in TV news (Squires, 2011), new media synchronicity or asynchronicity (Spilioti, 2011), creative literacies through mobile phone novels (Nishimura, 2011), Heteroglossia in the Study of Computer-Mediated Discourse (Androutopoulos, 2011), amongst others. Edited by Rodney H. Jones, Alice Chik and Christoph A. Hafner, *Discourse and Digital Practices* (2015) covers an array of subjects such as, discourse analysis of games (Gee, 2015), co-construction of identity in virtual worlds (Hafner, 2015), digital literacy practices in context (Merchant, 2015), digital discourse in public space focusing on online and offline discourse (Lee, 2015), and discourses of curation in digital times (Synder, 2015), to name but a few.

## **1.4 Semio-Discursive Approaches on Discourse Analysis**

### *1.4.1 The Situation of Communication and The Problematic of Genres*

In 1992, Charaudeau (1992, p. 635) stated that “*Communiquer, c'est procéder à une mise en scène*”. However, if his idea were to be extended to the realms of EL, we could trigger the following questions: What happens when the “*mise en scène*” of the situation of communication is affected by the lability of the electronic device? Which are “*les avenues de sens*” (Barthes, 1970) or “*les possibles interprétatifs*” (Charaudeau, 1983) of such emerging (literary) electronic discourse? And, what is more, what happens when the “*mise en scène*” breaks the boundaries of the enunciative device and explores the *texte-auteur* (Bootz, 2005b) in the situation of communication?

In order to explore these ideas, I will further explain “the communicative and descriptive problematic” proposed by Charaudeau (2006, pt. 1) (*une problématique communicationnelle et descriptive*) (cf. III.1.2.1). I will centre specifically on exploring

the characteristics of “the situation of communication” which focus on the construction of meaning through linguistic signs.

To my interest, this semio-discursive approach mirrors two aspects that shed light upon my research; in the first place, it focuses on the material scenography (semiotic dimension) of “the lability of the digital device” (aesthetics of surface, mimetic aesthetics, aesthetics of the ephemeral, aesthetics of re-enchantment) (cf. III.2.3.2). This material scenography corresponds to what Charaudeau (2000) names “*les circonstances matérielles de la communication*”. In the second place, but not of least importance, it centres on the problematic of genres. This subject being one of the main concerns today when dealing with the *polyhedron nature* of electronic literary works.

It must be noted that understanding “the situation of communication” will benefit the discourse genre categorization and the degree of literariness of the selected corpus. Let us not forget that it is its artistic individuality what makes each electronic literary work of the corpus unique. As mentioned above, Charaudeau (2006, pt. 1) notes that the elements constituting the situation of communication are the following, (1) the identity of the exchange partners, (2) the purpose of the exchange, (3) the content at stake, and (4) the material circumstances that surround it.

To explain his model, the author addresses the following questions to define each element. By identities of the exchange partners (“*qui parle à qui ?*”) the author refers to the social identity of the partners in the communicating act, their social role(s) as well as their place in the communicative relation. By purpose of the communication act (“*on est là pour quoi dire ou faire ?*”), Charaudeau (2000) refers to the goal of the communication act. The content (*le propos*) seeks to answer to the subject of this communication (“*à propos de quoi ?*”). This refers specifically to the thematic within the communication exchange partners. Lastly, the author presents the complexity of the material circumstances (“*dans quel cadre physique d’espace et de temps ?*”), which is highly influential to the present research, considering the emphasis on the relationship between discourse, space, and time within the digital medium (enunciative device). In this regard, Charaudeau (2006, pt. 1) notes:

The material circumstances constitute what determines the situations of communication from the point of view of its materiality: the number of participants, their respective position towards each other, the medium (channel) of the exchange transmission, the place of exchange, the moment, every circumstance deemed as relevant to the constitution of the messages (my emphasis).

To summarize the ideas exposed at the beginning of this section, it must be highlighted that the medium (channel) or “*le dispositif énonciatif*” is the discursive space where all “*les possibles interprétatifs*” (affected (or *not*) by the lability of the electronic device) will take place. It is within the “situation of communication” that the importance of this “enunciative device” must be highlighted to later mirror with the concept of digital medium in the *mise en scène* of works of EL; and more importantly, to open the terrain to introduce the complex concept of enunciation.

#### 1.4.2 *La scène d'énonciation*

In 1970, the linguist Émile Benveniste wrote, “*L'énonciation est cette mise en fonctionnement de la langue par un acte individuel d'utilisation [...] L'énonciation suppose la conversion individuelle de la langue en discours*” (Benveniste, 1970, pp. 12–13).<sup>3</sup> Further on his work, the linguist accentuated the difference between “*un énoncé*” (the product of the act of enunciation) and the text from which this “*énoncé*” emerges, as he explains in the following lines.

*Le discours, dira-t-on, qui est produit chaque fois qu'on parle, cette manifestation de l'énonciation, n'est-ce pas simplement la « parole » ?— Il faut prendre garde à la*

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<sup>3</sup> The very term “enunciation” raises certain problems for translation; in Romance languages, a distinction can easily be made between enunciation (*énonciation*), which refers to the activity of language in use, and *énoncé* (‘*enunciado*’ in Spanish and Portuguese, ‘*enunciato*’ in Italian), which refers to the product of this activity. In English the situation is more complicated since ‘utterance’ can cover both the activity (*énonciation*) and its product (*énoncé*) while the term ‘enunciation’ usually designates ‘*pronunciation*’, especially a speaker’s particular way of articulating his or her discourse (Angermuller, Maingueneau, & Wodak, 2014, p. 135).



*condition spécifique de l'énonciation : c'est l'acte même de produire, un énoncé et non le texte de l'énoncé qui est notre objet. Cet acte est le fait du locuteur qui mobilise la langue pour son compte (Benveniste, 1970, p. 13) (my emphasis).*

Therefore, we can suggest that the act of producing “*un énoncé*” (e.g a linguistic text, image, sound, video) via interaction and manipulation in the works of EL generates a *mise en scène énonciative* of challenging meanings where all these plurisemiotic *énoncés* co-exist.

On a previous work, *Le discours littéraire. Paratopie et scène d'énonciation*, Maingueneau (2004, p. 42) defines “*scène d'énonciation*” as follows:

*L'œuvre, à travers le monde qu'elle configure dans son texte, réfléchit en les légitimant les conditions de sa propre activité énonciative. De là le rôle crucial que doit jouer la « scène de l'énonciation », qui n'est réductible ni au texte ni à une situation de communication qu'on pourrait décrire de l'extérieur. L'institution discursive est le mouvement par lequel passent l'un dans l'autre, pour s'étayer, l'œuvre et ses conditions d'énonciation. Étayage réciproque qui constitue le moteur de l'activité littéraire (my emphasis).*

As pointed out by Maingueneau (2014a), each discourse genre must claim its own “*scène d'énonciation*”, given that this is what makes it unique, “*Un genre de discours mobilise ses participants à travers un rôle déterminé, non dans toutes leurs déterminations possibles*”. In this sense, it can be said that the “*scène d'énonciation*” proposed by Maingueneau can be seen as another perspective on the notion of genre, as defined by Charaudeau (2006, pt. 1) (cf. III.1.4.1).

Following the same “*mise en scène*” stream of thought, Charaudeau (1983) proposed to represent the communication act as a kind of theatrical representation where the exchange partners (immerse in an external communication situation) project diverse enunciators (present in an internal discourse space). These enunciators deal with a linguistic battle among them to obtain their communication goals (cf. IV.6.1; V.7.1). This idea immediately redirects my thinking to Ducrot's theory of enunciative polyphony where the author

underlines that, “the meaning of the utterance, in the representation it gives of the enunciation, can reveal several voices that are not those of only one locutor” (Ducrot, 1984, pt. XIII). Ducrot’s theory of enunciative polyphony shall be explained in a later section (cf. III.1.4.4).

Therefore, if we consider that the *scène d’énonciation* is already complex, the complexity enhances when a complex exchange partner (text author, programmer, designer...), known in cybertext theory as cyborg author (cf. III.2.2) has already elaborated the sophisticated texts of EL. Therefore, we must reflect on how the variability of enunciation can be studied in such texts?

### *1.4.3 Locuteurs Angéliques and Locuciels*

In a first attempt to study the most complex forms of enunciation from a perspective of DA, Maingueneau (2014a) highlights that the everyday innovations in communication technologies demand to categorize new written or oral voices emerging in the space of discourse. The author refers to these voices as “*des locuteurs problématiques*”. Given their novelty and complexity, he proposes to name these speaking subjects as “*locuteurs angéliques*” and “*locuciels*”. Maingueneau (2014a, pt. 15.3) defines the former concept as follows:

*Le locuteur angélique est un être qui n’existe que comme le corrélat d’une énonciation...il ne parle de sa propre initiative, mais toujours agi par quelqu’un d’autre, c’est un simple porteur de messages ; il n’a pas de corps ; il apparaît pour délivrer un message et disparaît...(my emphasis).*

From the authors’ point of view, “*locuciels*” stand as a kind of more elaborated “*locuteurs angéliques*”, which host the “*mot-valise*” that associates “*locuteur*” (speaker) and “*logiciel*” (computer software). Maingueneau (2014a, pt. 15.3) goes further on to explain that, as the identity of the work becomes problematic owing to the diverse materiality of discourse; therefore, we should consider that among the “*logiciels*” there could be a specific and more refined kind,

which in an extraordinary way is able to produce literary texts of a certain genre and a certain style.

*Il existe également des logiciels beaucoup plus sophistiqués, capables mêmes de générer des textes “littéraires” relevant d’un certain genre et d’un certain style (Maingueneau (2014a) quoting Balpe (2000)).*

To my view, the idea of “*des locuteurs problématiques*” suggested by Maingueneau (2014a, pt. 15.3) echoes the concept of “cyborg author” in cybertext theory described by Aarseth (1997, p. 129) echoing “the creative process undertaken in collaboration between a human actor and a machine”; and later developed by Koskimaa (2010a, p. 139) as, “The combination of human and machine producing texts with literary qualities” (my emphasis). Both important cybertext theories that I shall present in a later section (cf. [III.2.2](#)).

#### *1.4.4 Enunciative Polyphony*

Heteroglossia, *raznorechie*, dialogism, music, painting, literature, history, characters, voices, diversity, imagination, universe; these are but a few terms that we should bear in mind when associating polyphony to the world of meanings of our everyday life. Though “Bakhtin never explicitly defined polyphony” but rather decided “to explicate it in curious ways, which has made misreading rather difficult to avoid” (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 231); the term will never cease to manifest itself in “curious ways” nor to be a challenging research subject to study.

In 1934-1935, Mikhail Bakhtin wrote his famous essay “Discourse in the Novel” in which he states that “The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even a diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 261) (my emphasis). For Bakhtin, these voices possess an interior concert (a sort of orchestration of meanings), from which they build opinions, and consequently these opinions express a diversity of points of view. The central idea of Bakhtin’s theory is that there are different voices being spoken in

the orchestration of the text (he refers to the novel), he argues that the complexity of these voices relies on the fact that they can call into scene different times and spaces, and therefore different contexts.

In the same essay, Bakhtin (1981, p. 263) also wrote, “the novel orchestrates all its themes, the totality of the world objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it”; and we can add so does the world, as seen by Wittgenstein, “The world is the totality of facts, not of things” (1.1) *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 1961) [1921]. As proposed by Wittgenstein, we can only know the world through our ideas of it, given that language *disguises* our thoughts. Therefore, keeping these thought-provoking ideas in mind, one cannot but introduce Ducrot’s ideas on the polyphonic organization of utterances (*énoncés*). For Ducrot (1984) even the slightest utterance is interweaved by the rich presence of multiple voices that co-exist within the *énoncé*. Additionally, the author notes that these voices might speak simultaneously in the linguistic battle of the internal discourse space.

For Bakhtin, there is a whole category of texts, and in particular literary texts, for which we must recognise that many voices are speaking at once, without any of them being dominant or judging the others: this is what he calls popular or carnival literature, also sometimes called masquerade, meaning that the author puts on a series of different masks, as opposed to dogmatic or classical literature. But the theory of Bakhtin, to my knowledge, has only been applied to texts, that is to say, to sequences of utterances, and never to utterances in which these texts are constituted. So it has not led to questioning the postulate that an isolated utterance allows the audibility of only one single voice (...) (Ducrot, 1984, p. 171) (my emphasis).

Ducrot states that the speaker (*locuteur*) is not the same as the enunciator (*énonciateur*), therefore, the referent is able of hosting within its own voice, the voices of different enunciators that at the same time express different points of view. Each utterance equals a dialogue, a universe of meaning constructed by the polyphonic

organization of utterances. In this sense, the speaker can agree with the message, and at the same time s/he can be completely in disagreement from the message (e.g. Ursa Minor and Hydra cf. IV.5; IV.6). The scene of enunciation, therefore, can be divided and inhabited by different enunciators that not necessarily correspond to different locutors since one utterance can contain within in itself, a diversity of points of view.

#### *1.4.5 Split Subject and Interdiscourse*

The idea of the *internal dialogization of discourse* proposed by Bakhtin (1981) and the proposition that “the locutor responsible for the utterance confirms through it the existence of enunciators whose views and attitudes it organizes” by Ducrot (1984, pt. XIII) are retaken by the French linguist Authier-Revuz (1984). She proposed a theory that positions discourse is as a product of interdiscourse. This theory postulates “a regulated functioning which, from outside the interdiscourse, explains the production of the discourse and the structural machinery ignored by the subject who, in the illusion, thinks of it as the source of its discourse while it is only the support and effect” (Authier-Revuz, 2014, p. 157) [1984].

This postulation underlines the existence already pointed out by Ducrot (1984) of different enunciators that battle in the internal discourse space (enunciative polyphony); for Authier-Revuz (1984) the heterogeneity of the subject and its discourse emphasises the idea that “speakers believe that their discourse is controlled by their intentions, but in reality it is dominated by ‘interdiscourse’ (Angermuller, Maingueneau, et al., 2014, p. 155).

These ideas trigger the question of how interdiscourse is circulating in the works of EL, and therefore represented in the internal discourse space of the communication act. The enunciative heterogeneity, to which Authier-Revuz (1984) refers inevitably and *fruitfully* associates the ways in which intertextuality, is manifested in the electronic literary works that I analyse in the present study. As explained in the section devoted to “Transtextuality”, according to Genette (1997a, p. 6), intertextuality can be expressed through quoting, plagiarism, and allusion (cf. III.1.6). Within the literary

artefacts which are objects to this study, intertextuality will find new settings of expression governed by “*les circonstances matérielles de la communication*” (Charaudeau, 2006, pt. 1), which are skilfully represented by the verbal, visual, aural and multichannel media (Thon, 2014, p. 334) elements that populate the discursive spheres of the digital medium (cf. III.1.5.1) .

#### 1.4.6 Hyperphony

In addition to all the examples of dialogism that have been shown, when referring to electronic literary works, Chiappe (2012) points out that it is important to consider the use of an special kind of polyphony to which the author refers as *hyperphony*. Chiappe (2012) explains that the origins of polyphony in a work of EL could be read as its conception, previous organization, artistic projection, all of which, are the fruitful result of a dialogue among different arts and authors. Since they plan, conceive, and finally put the work into practice, as a work of “collective intelligence” (Lévy, 1994).

The hyperphonic work not only offers the reader or user a multiple vision of the universe according to the characters that live in that universe, but it also grants him or her the vision of the creators about the created universe. It’s a quality of the multimedia work, which demands previous agreements among authors in order to start from the same artistic intention, which is independent in itself, but converges on a territory, that of the work, enriched by the (certainly divergent) visions of the creators (Chiappe, 2012, p. 46).

These actions are a previous polyphony to the discourse itself that is why; Chiappe (2012) situates *hyperphony* in the meta-work plane. This characteristic one can say exclusive up to this moment to the electronic literary works, grants them with a greater richness that; in the first place, it is born from the necessity of agreement and negotiation; and in the second place, it stands as the sum of artistic visions that interconnect in the work. In this sense, *hyperphony* occurs in the external situation of communication, at the level of “the creative collaboration of various authors”.

## 1.5 The Mediality of the Enunciative Device

### 1.5.1 Dimensions of Media and Mediality

The enunciative device of the works of EL is a new writing discourse space characterized by multimodal and multimedia features. These constellations of semiotic elements offer authors, artists and writers of EL new possibilities to explore their creativity, expressivity, narrativity, poeticity, and as aforesaid, their “collective intelligence” (Lévy, 1994).

Reflecting on McLuhan’s famous quotes about the medium, “The medium is the message”, and “The medium is an extension of ourselves” (McLuhan, 1964); as well as Ryan’s narrative approach to media, “What counts to us as a medium is a category that truly makes a difference about what stories can be evoked or told, how they are represented, why they are communicated, and how they are experienced” (Ryan, 2004, p. 18) (my emphasis); the concept of “medium” begins to acquire a diversity of features in our relationship to knowledge, meaning, and the world that surround us.

One could say that the term “medium” was presented in 1949 by the theoreticians Shannon & Weaver (1949, p. 7) in their well-known *Communication Chain Model*; in their proposition, they established that “the communication channel is defined as the physical or technical medium of transmission, in which the signal moves from the transmitter to the receiver” (quoted in Nöth, 1990, pp. 174–175).

However, since that moment on, the definition of medium has extended to many research areas producing diverse definitions, notions, uses, and approaches. Regarding the subject, Ong (1982, p. 176) notes:

The term can give false impression of the nature of verbal communication, and of other human communication as well. Thinking of a “medium” of communication or of “media” of communication suggests that communication is a pipeline transfer of material called “information” from one place to another.

As it can be observed the outcome of such quest for definition is the different ramifications and multifaceted meanings that the concept has developed, depending on the subject of study of each discipline. Considering my research question: how are new forms of literariness depicted in electronic literary works? My aim is to study the media features that frame the selected corpus to examine different aspects of narrative and enunciative meaning, and possibly new forms of literariness within the narrative and enunciative “pipelines” of the works.

Therefore, I will follow Ryan’s aforementioned narrative approach to media when analysing the selected corpus, “the choice of medium makes a difference as to what stories can be told, how they are told, and why they are told” (Ryan, 2014, p. 25) (my emphasis). In order to accomplish this, I will describe three approaches on dimensions of media and mediality (Rajewsky, 2005; Ryan, 2014; Schmidt, 2000; Thon, 2014).

I will begin by presenting Schmidt (2000) model of four dimensions of media, which is structured as follows: a) semiotic dimension, b) technological dimension, c) institutional dimension, and d) dimension of media products (quoted in Thon, 2014, p. 334). By semiotic dimension, Schmidt (2000) underlines the combination of words and images (semiotic systems) in the creation of meaning. This immediately echoes the proposition of “pluricode couplings” discourse described by Saemmer (2013), which involves two different semiotic systems, e.g. a text and an icon, within the same active support of the sign (cf. III.2.3.4).

By technological dimension, Schmidt (2000) makes emphasis on the medium whether printed, online, or other; at the same time, he aims to answer to the question, how is this work published? This echoes the above-mentioned question proposed by Charaudeau (2000) regarding the material circumstances of the situation of communication, “*dans quel cadre physique d’espace et de temps ?*” For instance, the technological dimension of the *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two* and the *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature* in terms of publication, preservation, and accessibility (cf. IV.2; V.2).



By institutional dimension, Schmidt (2000) refers to the publication criteria of media, aiming to answer the question, who is responsible for the maintenance, edition and publication of these media products? For instance, the institutional dimension of publication, preservation, and accessibility of the electronic literary works in the already mentioned digital compilations (cf. IV.2; V.2).

Finally, the last part of Schmidt's model points out to a dimension of media products, which are sometimes described as products of intramediality, intermediality, and transmediality (Rajewsky, 2005). On an introductory level, the author explains that intramediality refers to phenomena that only involve a single medium (e.g. cases of intertextual reference); intermediality refers to a variety of phenomena that transcend medial boundaries and involve at least two conventionally distinct media (including both general reference to the mediality of other media and specific references in particular texts in these media); and transmediality refers to “medially unspecified phenomena” that are not connected to a specific medium or its mediality and can, hence, be realized using the means of a large number of different media (Rajewsky, 2005).

As I shall show in a subsequent section, Schmidt's dimension of media products is a true example of the complex mediality found in the preservation and presentation of electronic literary works. It must be highlighted that within these media products the complexity of discourse space is populated by the mediality of the enunciative device, which is represented, by verbal media, visual media, aural media, and multichannel media (Thon, 2014, pp. 335–336).

Recently, Ryan (2014, p. 29) proposed a similar criteria to which the author refers as three dimensions of mediality: semiotic substance (image, sound, language, and movement); technical dimension (any kind of mode of production and material support); and cultural dimension (public recognition of media as forms of communication, behaviours, practices and the institutions that support them).

Based on the aforementioned three dimensions of mediality, Ryan (2014, p. 30) goes further and proposes three approaches to which she refers as “media conscious narratology”:

- a) A semiotic approach, which investigates the narrative power of language, image, sound, movement, face-to-face interaction, and the various combinations of these features (Wolf, 2002).
- b) A technical approach, which explores such issues as how technologies configure the relationship between sender and receiver...how they affect dissemination, storage, and cognition (Ong, 1982); and what affordances certain types of material supports bring to storytelling (for instance, interactivity in the case of digital technology). It is also under this heading that the cognitive impact of material supports, such as the page or the screen, will be investigated in the future.
- c) A cultural approach, which focuses on the behaviour of users and producers, as well as on the institutions that guarantee the existence of media. Applied to narrative, this approach will investigate such topics as fan cultures (Hellekson and Busse; Jenkins; Thomas), the kind of stories one tells in blogs or on Twitter (Page), and the process of production and selection of TV news stories.

Considering the theories proposed by Schmidt (2000) and Ryan (2014), the digital compilations (*Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two*, 2011, and the *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature*, 2012) will be located under “institutional dimension” or “cultural approach”; the “enunciative device” will be located under “technical dimension” or “technical approach”, and the complex materiality of multimodal and multimedia discourse under “semiotic substance” and “semiotic approach”. Bearing these theories in mind, I shall further explain how these concepts mingle in the creation of meaning from other perspectives; I will do so in the following section, which is specifically devoted to multimodality (Kress, 2010; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Van Leeuwen, 2005) and multimediality (Lemke, 2013).

### 1.5.2 Multimodality and Multimediality

As proposed by Ryan (2014) another way to avoid the ambiguity of the concept of medium is to focus on what Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001) call “modes.” By mode the authors refer to: “any semiotic resource, in a very broad sense, that produces meaning in a social context; the verbal, the visual, language, image, music, sound, gesture, narrative, colour, taste, speech, touch, plastic, and so on” (quoted in Elleström, 2010, p. 14) (my emphasis). To our interest, “gesture”, “narrative”, and “touch” are considered as modes, which in a way reflect on the “gestural manipulation” needed to construct the meaning of certain works of EL (Bouchardon, 2014a, 2014b).

Following the idea of “semiotic resource”, Kress (2010, p. 5) acknowledges that “semiotic systems” are “semiotic resources” or “resources for representation” that “are shaped by the practices of members of social groups and their cultures”. This immediately recalls the definition of “social semiotics” proposed by Van Leeuwen (2005, p. xi), “in social semiotics the focus changed from the sign to the way people use semiotic ‘resources’ both to produce communicative artefacts and events and to interpret them...in the context of specific social situations and practices”. Therefore, considering that modes are ways of expression and representation, we can ask ourselves, how are “semiotic modes/resources” used in the works of EL to get across the messages to the reader? How are “semiotic modes/resources” used to depict the literariness in the works of EL?

For his part, Lemke (2013, p. 82) states that “a semiotic system is an interrelated collection of signs or symbols that can be deployed to construct more complex meanings”. Moreover, argues the author, “all meaning making is in fact multimodal [...] To make sense of what is going on, you need to be able to integrate all the different modes of meaning-making, and that is a very complex task”(Lemke, 2013, p. 82). The propositions made by Lemke (2013) are an excellent preamble for the challenging *mise en scène* of the selected corpus where different modes, media (and *gestures*) conjoint in the construction of meaning of the works.

Furthermore, Lemke (2013, p. 82) emphasises that a key distinction between modes and media must be made.

We can make a formal distinction between modes (different semiotic resource systems) and media (different technologies for realizing meanings that are made possible by these systems). We often also classify multimedia phenomena according to the sensory channels used by the technologies (auditory–acoustic, visual, tactile, etc.). This multimodal, multimedia character of meaning-making happens to be particularly obvious in the case of scientific communication, teaching, and learning.

For their part Jones, Chik, & Hafner (2015, p. 8) present a further vision of multimodality in which they specifically address the “dynamism of digital texts” as a process of “resemiotisation”. Though their proposition was not thought for an EL corpus, I find that “resemiotisation” can be a potential characteristic found in electronic literary works.

The most important thing about multimodality is that, because of the inherent dynamism of digital texts, meanings are rarely expressed in stable configurations of modes, but rather travel across modes and combinations of modes in ways that alter them, sometimes subtly, sometimes dramatically, a process Jones (this volume, after Iedema (2001)) refers to as resemiotisation (Jones et al., 2015, p. 8).

As explained in the previous section, if regarded as semiotic representations; therefore, the discourse dance (Gee, 2014) of the works of EL within the mediality of the enunciative device is represented by transformed, combined, and mingled, verbal media, visual media, aural media, and multichannel media (Thon, 2014). Considering our interest in “intertextuality”, “polyphony”, and “enunciative polyphony” it would be interesting to demonstrate that the mingling of these (multi)media produce different polyphonic manifestations, which knit together different semiotic resources and different media dimensions, into one complex texture.

### *1.5.3 Remediation, Intermediality and Intertextuality*

The dynamic media mosaics that surround us require that the intersections and interplays between different media be studied carefully. As Bolter and Grusin (2000, p. 45) put it, “we call the representation of one medium in another remediation” (my emphasis). A sort of intermedial relationship through medial co-dependency that creates new modes of signification. For the authors, in the landscape of (digital) media ecologies, “all mediation is remediation”. To put it differently, media is in a constant aesthetic flux with other media.

All mediation is remediation. We are not claiming this as an a priori truth, but rather arguing that at this extended historical moment, all current media function as remediators and that remediation offers us a means of interpreting the work of earlier media as well. Our culture conceives of each medium or constellation of media as it responds to, redeploys, competes with, and reforms other media (Bolter & Grusin, 2000, p. 55) (my emphasis).

For Erll (2011, p. 141), remediation can be read as a concept of memory studies, as the “ongoing transcription of a ‘memory matter’ into different media”. Therefore, amongst such medial constellations, there are “intermedial bridges” made of multi-materiality bonds that can be interpreted from a large number of critical approaches depending on the intermedial practices that they stand for; e.g. “intermedial practices within works of EL that have specific research objectives”. As of the present work, our interest relies on the relationship between intermediality and intertextuality (intermedial quality) and the search for literary aspects in works of EL. Rajewsky (2005, p. 45) speaks of a “proliferation of heterogeneous conceptions of intermediality and heterogeneous ways in which the term is used”. For her part, she proposes the following definition of “intermediality”.

Intermediality can be said to serve first and foremost as a flexible generic term ‘that can be applied, in a broad sense, to *any* phenomenon involving more than one medium’ and thus to any phenomenon that –as indicated by the prefix

inter– in some way takes place *between* media. Accordingly, the crossing of media borders has been defined as a founding category of intermediality (Rajewsky, 2010, pp. 51–52).

Our intermedial research interest relies on the interrelations that can be found between various arts and media and the new propositions, emergences, or ways of existence that are depicted in works of EL. As proposed by Elleström (2010, p. 12), “Intermediality must be understood as a bridge between medial differences that is founded on medial similarities”. The challenge is to understand the relationship between medium and media in divergent scenarios. For instance, in electronic literary works the relationship between the act of literary communication (the interaction of the reader with *88C* or *DP* in search for literariness), as well as the interrelation and interplay that constructs such aesthetic associations within the works. In other words, how intermediality depicts intertextuality and polyphony? What are the medial transformation processes in *88C* and *DP*? In her theoretical work, Rajewsky (2005, pp. 51–53) seeks to distinguish different manifestations of intermediality based on their specific intermedial qualities. Hence, the author proposes three subcategories:

(1) intermedial transposition: here the intermedial quality has to do with the way in which a media product comes into being, i.e. with the transformation of a given media product (a text, a film, etc.) or of its substratum into another medium. For example, film adaptations and novelizations.

(2) media combination: here the intermedial quality of this category is determined by the medial constellation constituting a given media product (formation of new independent art or media genres), which is to say the result or very process of combining at least two conventionally distinct media or medial forms of articulation. For example, opera, film, theatre, performances, illuminated manuscripts, multimedia, mixed media, and intermedia, amongst others.

(3) intermedial references: are thus to be understood as meaning-constitutional strategies that contribute to the media product’s overall signification: the media product

uses its own media-specific means, either to refer to a specific, individual work produced in another medium, or to refer to a specific medial subsystem, or to another medium *qua* system. For example, references in a literary text to a film through the evocation or imitation of certain filmic techniques, musicalization of literature, *transposition d'art*, *ekphrasis*, references in film to painting, or painting to photography, and so forth.

As it has been briefly shown the field of intermediality constructs new intermedial qualities depending on the intermedial practices to which it is constantly exposed. These encounters and engagements between intermediality (specifically intermedial references) and intertextuality will reveal new associations and materialities, and will certainly call for the creation of new ways to describe the medial forms of enunciation that, to our interest, take place in the interconnectivity space of intermedial bridges. For it would be interesting to know if the flexure of intermedial bridges leads to the creation of rhetorical constructions and potential figures.

## **1.6 Theoretical Approach on Transtextuality**

### *1.6.1 Genette's Theory*

The object of this section is to present Gérard Genette's Theory of Transtextuality (Genette, 1997a, pp. 1–10) [1982] since it provides a rich theoretical framework of the possible and ingenious interrelations between texts. Genette's theory will shed light on our investigation as it represents an analytical tool to define the different degrees of (digital) textuality found in the presentation of the selected corpus within the digital compilations, and certainly, in the digital works, themselves.

To Genette (1997a, p. ix), “the subject of poetics is not the (literary) text but its textual transcendence, its textual links with other texts”. In order to explain how all texts are woven into secret relations, Genette (1997a, p. 1) underlines that *transtextuality* is “all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other

texts.”. To further develop the concept, the author introduces five categories, to which he refers as, “transtextual relationships” between texts. These categories are: intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, architextuality, and hypertextuality.

It is important to mention that for the present study the concepts of intertextuality, paratextuality, and architextuality are mainly used in the analysis of the selected corpus. However it is important to underline that they are part of a whole: Genette’s Theory of Transtextuality (Genette, 1997a, pp. 1–10).

### 1.6.2 Intertextuality

When explaining *intertextuality*, Genette (1997a, pp. 1–2) acknowledges that the philosopher and literary critic Julia Kristeva had previously explored the term in her critical writing *Séméiotikè* (Kristeva, 1969). In a later work, Kristeva (1980, p. 36) defines the text as “a...permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another” (my emphasis). Interestingly, in a recent essay Kristeva (2002, p. 8) speaks of intertextuality as follows:

For me intertextuality is mostly a way of making *history* go down in us. We, two texts, two destinies, two psyches [...] My concept of intertextuality thus goes back to Bakhtin’s dialogism and Barthes’ text theory. At that time, I contributed by replacing Bakhtin’s idea of several voices inside an utterance with the notion of several texts within a text” (original emphasis).

In his work, Genette (1997a, pp. 1–2) defines *intertextuality* as “a relationship of co-presence between two texts or among several texts: that is to say, eidetically and typically as the actual presence of the one text within another”. To further develop the idea Genette points out that there are three different categories within *intertextuality*, these are: a) quoting, b) plagiarism, c) allusion.

By quoting he means “the most explicit and literal form which includes quotation marks with or without specific references”. By



plagiarism he refers to “an undeclared but still literal borrowing”. And, finally, by allusion, he means “an enunciation whose full meaning presupposes the perception of a relationship between it and another text, to which it necessarily refers by some inflections that would otherwise remain unintelligible” (Genette, 1997a, p. 2) (my emphasis). Genette’s ideas on enunciation and intertextuality are embedded in the larger notion of interdiscourse that I have introduced in a previous section (cf. III.1.4.5).

### 1.6.3 Paratextuality

For Genette (1997b, p. 1) [1987], a text “is rarely presented in an unadorned state”, in other words, a text is always surrounded by “verbal productions or statements”. Genette (1997a, p. 3) defines *paratextuality* as “the generally less explicit and more distant relationship that binds the text properly speaking, taken within the totality of the literary work”. Paratexts are accompanying texts hiding unstudied textual practices and discourses from different time periods. Paratexts are vestibules and antechambers that offer us the possibility of either stepping inside or outside different worlds.

In the foreword to *Paratexts Thresholds of Interpretation*, Richard Macksey writes that by “paratexts” Genette refers to “those liminal devices and conventions, both within the book (*peritext*) and outside it (*epitext*), that mediate the book to the reader” (Macksey, 1997, p. xviii). On his explanation of *paratextuality*, Genette (1997a, p. 3) provides the following examples in order to explain the concept.

A little, a subtitle, intertitles; prefaces, postfaces, notices, forewords, etc.; marginal infrapaginal, terminal notes; epigraphs; illustrations; blurbs, book covers, dust jackets, and many other kinds of secondary signals, whether allographic or autographic.

Further on his explanation, and to my research interest, given the relation to the concept of *hyperphony* proposed by Chiappe (2012) (cf. 1.4.6); Genette (1997a, p. 3) notes that even the actions previous to the development of the text or work in question can be considered as paratexts, “the ‘foretext’ of the various rough drafts,

outlines, and projects of a work can also function as a paratext”. As it can be seen, all the practices and discourses that circulate within the realms of *paratextuality* enhance the complexity of the paratext as navigational tool within the book. For this reason, Genette (1997b, p. 4) proposes the following characteristics of the paratextual message so as to exemplify and clarify those textual gradations. These characteristics are: spatial, temporal, substantial, pragmatic, and functional.

More concretely: defining a paratextual element consists of determining its location (the question *where?*); the date of its appearance and, if need be, its disappearance (*when?*); its mode of existence, verbal or other (*how?*); the characteristics of its situation of communication –its sender and addressee (*from whom? to whom?*); and the functions that its message aims to fulfil (*to do what?*). (original emphasis).

For the analysis of digital-born works, the fact that the concept and practice of paratextual theory seems so distant given the shift on the medium has presented a challenge from which I think diverse benefits, differences, and problematics can emerge.

Thus, I will present individually the characteristics of the paratextual message to which Genette (1997b) refers as a “method”.

Spatial characteristics are focused on the location of the paratext (*where is the paratext placed in relation to the text?*). There are two elements sharing the spatial field of the paratext: peritext and epitext. The former being, all those close messages that are located around the text and within the book (title, preface, chapter titles, notes); and the latter being, all those distanced messages located outside of the book (text) (interviews, conversations, letters, correspondences, diaries). It is worth underling that, when writing his theory on *paratextuality*, Genette (1997b) stressed that peritexts were mainly made possible by the help of the media; however, as it shall be shown in the analysis of the selected corpus, currently the “dangerous waters” of the new media complexify our paratextual explorations (cf. [IV.2.1-spatial](#); [V.2.1-spatial](#)).

Temporal characteristics are also defined in relation to the text (*when does the paratext appear in relation to the text?*) There are

*prior paratexts* (appearing before the text) and *original paratext* (appearing at the same time of the text), *later paratext* (appearing after the text) *delay paratext* (appearing a few years later than the text). Interestingly, a paratext might also vanish forever or appear and reappear; as proposed by Genette (1997b, p. 6), “a paratextual element may appear at any time, it may also disappear, definitively or not, by authorial decision or outside intervention or by virtue of the eroding effect of time”.

The close relation existing between Genette’s temporal characteristics and Saemmer (2009a) and Koskimaa (2010a) space and time theories must be underlined. These temporal and aesthetic associations shall be explained later in the analysis: aesthetics of the ephemeral, aesthetics of re-enchantment (cf. III.2.3.2), and *limiting reading time* (cf. III.2.2.3).

Substantial characteristics are defined in relation to the materiality of the paratext, Genette (1997b, p. 7) begins by stating that he considers “almost all paratexts...will themselves be of a *textual kind*, or at least verbal kind... the paratext is itself a text: if it is still not *the* text, it is already *some* text”. The author further explains that there are other types of manifestation of the materiality and textuality of paratexts, for example, “iconic (illustrations), material (typographical choices when making the book), factual (facts, contexts)”. The fact that Genette (1997b) also considers the context to be a paratext is of great importance to the present work given that it certainly relates to the complexity of archiving and preserving electronic literary works; as well as to the complexity of the discourse space within the digital medium as it shall be shown in the analysis section (cf. IV.2.1-substantial; V.2.1-substantial).

Pragmatic characteristics are defined by “the characteristics of the situation of communication”, that is, the nature of the sender and the addressee<sup>4</sup>. The significance as explained by Genette (1997b, p. 8) of “the sender’s degree of authority and responsibility, the illocutory force of the sender’s message” (my emphasis). The main

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<sup>4</sup> As we have seen from a different perspective, as noted by Charaudeau (2006, pt. 1), the elements that composed the situation of communication are the following, i.e., the identity of the exchange partners, the purpose of the exchange, the content at stake, and the material circumstances that surround it. (cf. III.1.4.1).

idea behind these lines is that the sender is not necessary the producer. Therefore, the possibilities proposed by Genette are the following: *authorial paratext* (the sender is the author), *publisher's paratext* (the sender is the publisher) *allographic paratext* (the sender is a third party). These categories correspond to the previously explained identities' complexity in discourse genre (cf. III.1.4.1).

When explaining the role of the addressee, Genette (1997b) states that if one considers the addressee to be the public then one must ask: *who is the public?* And, therefore, *what defines this public?* The author further develops that there are different paratexts (peritext and epitext) that can have different addressees (critics, readers, booksellers), all of which stand as an example of *public paratext*. However, there is the *private paratext* which is addressed to other individuals; for instance, it can consist of messages the author addresses to himself (*intimate paratext*).

Finally, Genette (1997b, p. 10) makes the distinction between *official paratext* (the author/publisher both accept the responsibility of the paratext), and *unofficial (semiofficial) paratext* which most of the time is presented as authorial peritext (interviews conversations, and confidences). A final and very important pragmatic characteristic is the *illocutory force* of the paratextual message, which according to the author can be represented as: *information, intention, interpretation, decision, commitment, advice, command, performative*.

Functional characteristics to Genette (1997b) are the functions of a paratext, which cannot be theoretically framed given that paratexts can have several purposes at once; therefore, they develop individual functions that underline, on the one hand, their heterogeneity; and on the other hand, the voices that circulate in their discourse. For above all, a paratext is a discourse whose main purpose is to serve the text it adorns.

The paratext in all its forms is a discourse that is fundamentally heteronomous, auxiliary, and dedicated to the service of something other than itself that constitutes its *raison d'être*. This something is the text. Whatever aesthetic or ideological investment the author makes in a paratextual

element (a “lovely title” or a preface-manifesto), whatever coquettishness or paradoxical reversal he puts into it, the paratextual element is always subordinate to “its” text, and this functionality determines the essence of its appeal and its existence (Genette, 1997b, p. 12) (my emphasis).

#### 1.6.4 Other Types of “Transtextuality”

*Metatextuality* as defined by Genette (1997a, p. 4) is “the relation must often labelled commentary”. It is the relation that exists between a text and another; however, this relationship is not necessarily created by means of intertextuality (quoting, plagiarism, and allusion) (cf. III.1.6.2); on the contrary, this relationship is created by the critical and analytical relationship that exists between one text and another. As pointed out by Macksey (1997, p. xix), *metatextuality* is “the transtextual relationship that links a commentary to “the text it comments upon (without necessarily citing it)”. Furthermore, the author also comments, “In the *Architexte*, Genette remarks, ‘All literary critics, for centuries, have been producing metatext without knowing it’” (Macksey, 1997, p. xix). Meaning that the academic and non-academic world has been writing essays and critical appreciations about texts; therefore, creating metatexts, even with the slightest critical reading of an oeuvre.

*Hypertextuality* is the core of Genette’s propositions because as noted by Prince (1997, p. ix) in the foreword to *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, “any writing is rewriting; and literature is always in the second degree”. In the book, Genette emphasises that this hypertextual relationship is not created by means of a commentary (critical appreciation) but by drawing inspiration from the generic text. It derives from inspiration (descriptive or intellectual) of a pre-existing text. Genette (1997a, p. 5) defines *hypertextuality* as follows, “I mean any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of a commentary” (emphasis in the original). Therefore, *hypertextuality* occurs when a literary text refers to the fictional world of another text(s). To close, Genette points out that

there are three different categories within *hypertextuality*, these are: imitation, pastiche, and parody. Though in the present study these categories are not analysed in the selected corpus, I consider important to mention them for the advantage of the reader.

Genette (1997a, p. 4) refers to *architextuality* as the most abstract and most implicit of all, the author underlines that “it involves a relationship that is completely silent, articulated at most only by a paratextual mention, which can be titular or most often subtitled but which remains in any case of a purely taxonomic nature”. According to Macksey, *architextuality* refers to “the relation of inclusion linking each text to the various kinds of discourse of which it is a representative” (Genette, 1997b, p. xix). Finally, Genette states, “By architextuality I mean the entire set of general or transcendent categories (types of discourse, modes of enunciation, literary genres) from which emerges each singular text” (Genette, 1997a, p. 1) (my emphasis). This category is of great importance since as the reader may recall in the previous sections I have precisely focus on specific DA theories that centred on exploring: types of discourse, modes of enunciation, and the problematic of genres (cf. III. 1.4).

## 2. THEORETICAL APPROACHES ON ELECTRONIC LITERATURE

### 2.1 The Electronic Text

#### 2.1.1 *Cybertext and Technotext*

All the following concepts explain the composition of the electronic text from the perspective of the medium, in doing so they highlight different elements that are important in the analysis of digital works. For instance, when speaking of *cybertext* the association to ergodic literature is directly made, however throughout the years, different assumptions of what ergodic means have developed. The ergodic is derived from the Greek words *ergon* and *hodos*, which mean “work” and “path”. The earliest definition of the term in regards to digital works was proposed and used by Aarseth (1997) in his book *Cybertext Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*. In his definition, the author describes the path of the reader through the work as a semiotic knitting that the reader not only constructs in this head but also physically performs in the construction of meaning of the text.

The concept of cybertext focuses on the mechanical organization of the text, by positing the intricacies of the medium as an integral part of the literary exchange. However, it also *centres attention on the consumer*, or user, of the text, as a *more integrated figure* than even reader-response theorists would claim. The performance of the reader takes place all in his head, while the user of cybertext also performs in an extranoematic sense. During the cybertextual process, the user will have effectuated a semiotic sequence, and this selective movement is a work of physical construction that the various concepts of “reading” do not account for. This phenomenon I call ergodic, using a term appropriated from physics that derives from Greek words *ergon* and *hodos*, meaning, “work” and “path”. In ergodic literature, nontrivial effort is required to allow the reader to traverse the text. If ergodic literature is to make a

sense as a concept, there must also be nonergodic literature where the effort to transverse the text is trivial, with no extranoematic responsibilities placed on the reader except (for example) eye movement and the periodic or arbitrary turning of pages (Aarseth, 1997, pp. 1–2) (my emphasis).

Furthermore, Aarseth (1997, p. 19) notes that the core of cybertext theory is to see a text as a concrete machine for production and consumption of signs, consisting of the medium, the operator, and the string of signs. The string of signs is divided into *textons* (string of signs as they are in the text) and *scriptons* (strings of signs as they appear to the reader). Therefore, *textons* reveal *scriptons* through what is known as transversal function, which is composed of the following seven variables:

1. Dynamics: in a static text the scriptons are constant; in a dynamic text the content of the scriptons may change while the number of textons remains fixed (intratextonic dynamics), or the number (and content) of textons may vary as well (textonic dynamics [...]);
2. Determinability: this variable concerns the stability of the transversal function; a text is determinate if the adjacent scriptons of every scripton are always the same; and indeterminate if not [...];
3. Transiency: if the mere passing of the user's time causes scriptons to appear, the text is transient; if not, it is intransient [...];
4. Perspective: if the text requires the user to play a strategic role as a character in the world described by the text, then the text's perspective is personal; if not, it is impersonal [...];
5. Access: if all the scriptons of the text are readily available to the user at all times, then the text is random access (typically the codex); if not, then the access is controlled [...];
6. Linking: a text may be organized by explicit links for the user to follow, conditional links that can only be followed if



certain conditions are met, or by none of these (no links) [...];

7. User function: besides the interpretative function of the user, which is present in all texts, the use of some texts may be described in terms of additional functions: the explorative function, in which the user must decide which path to take, and the configurative function, in which scriptions are in part chosen or created by the user. If textons or traversal function can be (permanently) added to the text, the user function is textonic. If all the decisions a reader makes about a text concern its meaning, then there is one user function, here called “interpretation” (Aarseth, 1997, pp. 62–64) (my emphasis).

For the point of view of Hayles (2002), the theoretical contributions of Aarseth (1997) present few limitations. In her opinion, it is necessary to study the specific materiality of the support<sup>5</sup> (Media Specific Analysis) (MSA), as well as the textual meaning that is being produced. Hayles (2002, p. 25) claims that a text’s instantiation in a specific medium shapes in ways that cannot be divorced from the meaning of its “words (and other semiotic components)”; the author calls for the need to develop a theory that takes into account the medium as a crucial aspect of the content of a work. Hayles (2002, p. 25) defines technotext as “Literary works that strengthen, foreground, and thematise the connections between themselves as material artifacts and the imaginative realm of verbal/semiotic signifiers they instantiate”.

### *2.1.2 Transitoire Observable*

For the purpose of this study, the specificity of the medium together with MSA are truly important for I will present specific (singular) readings of the textual meaning that is produced in the spatiality of the enunciative device. I will centre on the materiality (different modes and media) of the selected corpus and on how the reader interacts with this emerging materiality. As I have already pointed

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<sup>5</sup> From the perspective of DA: the specific materiality of the enunciative device.

out in an earlier section (cf. I.2.7), I regard electronic texts as non-static plurisemiotic systems (text, image, sound, and video) that may require (*or not*) gestural manipulation by the reader to construct their meaning. Following Bootz's (2005b) theory on the "*transitoire observable*", I will absolutely refer to "text" as the multimedia event displayed on the screen (*texte-à-voir*), and not to the encoded data (*texte-auteur*) (Figure 2).

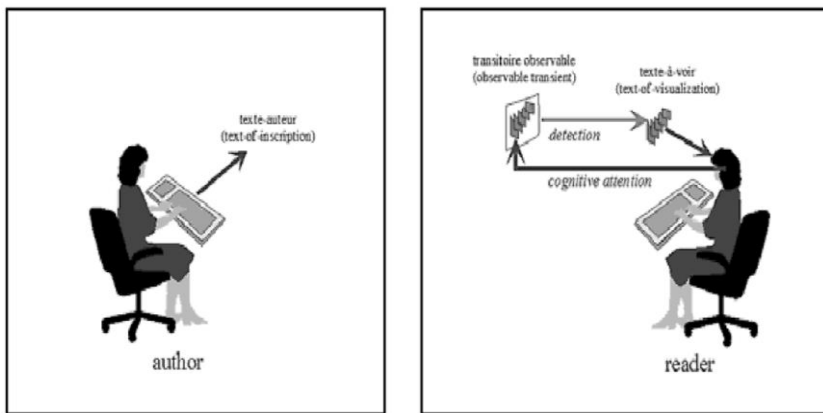
The *transitoire observable* is the multimedia event that happens in the space-sound of the screen at the execution of the program of the piece. It is so named because this event constitutes "the transitory and observable state of the program in the process of being executed". It does not concern a technical state but a communicative and aesthetic state [...] the *transitoire observable* changes within time. The same program produces a different *transitoire observable* when is executed in a different technical context or on a different machine, and this is true even when it consists of just basic description of what it can be seen on the screen (2005b, pt. 2.2) (my emphasis).

As it can be observed, Bootz (2005b) also points out to the direction of Wardrip-Fruin (2010b) (cf. I.2.6); according to him, there is distinction between the surface aesthetics of the screen and the "processes" for programming these aesthetics events. For Bootz (2005b, pt. 2.2), there is a "semiotic gap" between two entities that can be considered "the text".

From a semiotic point of view, we can separate the classical and general semiotic notion of text (the text is the object of the interpretation) into three different parts that do not act in the same space. Program and data constitute the "*texte-auteur*". This is a sign that is only accessible by the author. It is the domain of the author. The second sign is constituted by what will be considered as "the text" by the reader. It is the "*texte-à-voir*" (text-to-be-seen). It is a part of the observable transient event that can differ from a reader to another because readers will not apply the same system depth on the transient observable. The physical process itself is a function. From a semiotic point of view, it transforms

the “*texte-auteur*” into the “*texte-à-voir*”. Because it generates the transient observable.

Bootz (2005b) similarly to Wardrip-Fruin (2010b) shows a particular interest in the programmed level of digital literature. As far as my research is concerned, it has been truly useful to understand the distinction between “*texte-auteur*” and “*texte-à-voir*” to acknowledge all the process behind the terms. However, for the purposes of the present work, I will absolutely refer to “text” as the multimedia event displayed on the screen.



**Figure 2.** The different structural and functional components of the work: *transitoire observable*, *texte-auteur*, and *texte-à-voir* (reproduction from Bootz (2005b)).

## 2.2 Cybertext Theory

### 2.2.1 Ergodic and Narrative Discourse

As previously stated, “In ergodic literature, nontrivial effort is required to allow the reader to traverse the text” (Aarseth, 1997, p. 1). Therefore, we must have a close look at the intersection between interactive and ergodic components, as well as the narrative elements that are born as a product of this interaction. We can say that in the narrative space of digital works stories are unfolded

through the impact of the ergodic upon the narrative. A key example of this statement will be shown in the analyses of our selected corpus (88C and DP) where narrative, the joy of play and intrigue are linked to the construction of meaning of the work.

That said I am interested in the discourse types that ergodic literature can produce through the reader's semiotic knitting particularly in different gradations of "interactive/ergodic discourse". If as stated by Eskelinen (2012, p. 88), "we already know that the ergodic side can coexist and be combined with traditional text types (argument, description, and narrative), but how to properly theorize these relationships is another matter". The liaison between these text types might suggest an interactive discourse that produces arguments, descriptions and narrative. However, the individual characteristics of each of these multiple combinations as suggested by Eskelinen (2012) require further investigation and development.

Furthermore, when speaking of negotiation and intrigue, Aarseth (1995, p. 127) speaks of a series of events that "unfold through the negotiation of this space by text and user". We can say that the experience of this negotiation will be a product of gestural manipulation in the case of interactive narratives that will lead to the creation of ergodic discourse. Hence, Aarseth (1995, p. 127) notes, "instead of the story/plot-constituted narrative, we get the intrigue-oriented ergodic log, or to adopt Genette's and Chatman's term, ergodic discourse" (my emphasis).

As suggested by Eskelinen (2012, p. 203), "the importance of ergodic intrigue is that it takes place in the extrafictional level", and it is directed against the user "who must figure out for herself what is going on" (Aarseth, 1995, p. 125). The user becomes a detective of sings in ergodic narratives, or seen from a different perspective:

While to a certain extent readers always act like detectives trying to figure out the meaning of a text by collecting "evidence", it can be said that particularly with respect to interactive digital literature the reader duplicates the investigation of the detective reconstructing the story by reconstructing the text (Simanowski, 2010b, p. 21).

For my research, it is important to underline that it is in this space/labyrinth of interpretation, reconstruction, deconstruction, negotiation, intrigue and narrative planes where rhetorical readings and temporal alterations will unveil the literariness of the works.

In a narrative, the discourse consists of the event plane, where the narration of events takes place, and also what we shall call the progression plane, which is the unfolding of the events as they are received by an implied reader. Here, these two planes are identical, as the reader's progression follows the event in line. In an exploratory ergodic text such as hypertext, the progression plane is divorced from the event plane, since the reader must explore actively and non-trivially to make sense of the event plane. In adventure games, the relation between events and progression is defined by a third plane of discourse: a negotiation plane, where the intrigee confronts the intrigue to achieve a desirable unfolding of events (Aarseth, 1995, p. 139).

In the selected corpus, examples of exploratory ergodic text are found in *88C* where the progression plane is divorced from the event plane. I consider that the work has different event planes that combine to form different versions of the same stories and therefore multiple temporalities. However, this same text experiences a space of ergodic intrigue as new functions are provided to the reader to create a negotiation plane (addition of different semiotic systems via piano keys). In a way, we can say that the intrigue triggered by the user creates complexity in the plot. This is the case of *DP* where the detective figure of the reader enhances, as some parts of the plot may not reach this negotiation plane. I think that one of the greatest achievements of ergodic intrigue in digital texts is the potential creativity of the user's ergodic activity, that is, the way in which it can be materialized in different semiotic modes, as well as evoked as diverse forms of art such as film, theatre and painting. In this sense *DP* can be considered as a literary adventurous game.

### 2.2.2 Towards a Cybertextual Narratology

To show the relation between narrativity and mediality it is important to understand the dynamics between discourse, story, narration, and the medium. The narratological horizon has expanded well beyond the limits of literature and now includes, as it has been shown in the previous sections, other media and modes (cf. III.1.5). In my view, even if there are many ideas at play to understand these new propositions, it is necessary to revise the value of the classical narratological approaches.

Bearing this in mind and considering that one of the main aspects explored in the present study is temporal dynamics in works of EL (Eskelinen, 2012; Eskelinen & Koskimaa, 2001; Koskimaa, 2010a); it is important to underline the significance of Genette's theory on narratology. As stated by Eskelinen (2012, pp. 112–115), "Genette's narratology is taken as a point of departure for several reasons" (my emphasis).

- (a) It contains many concepts that have not been abandoned in postclassical narratology but only fine-tuned or further developed there.
- (b) Genette's three-layered model of narrative (narration/narrative/story) is able to foreground narrating and its relation to both narrative and story, unlike the more usual binary models (*fabula/sjuzet*; discourse/story; discourse/possible worlds; discourse/story world).
- (c) Genette's categories have considerable explanatory and descriptive power that should not be abandoned.
- (d) The values of Genette's basic parameters (order, speed, frequency, distance, focalization, time of the narrating, level and person) are usually easy to verify in the narrative text, which grants them considerable explanatory and descriptive power.

- (e) Genette's formal and modal project could have been continued by using postmodernist, digital, interactive and ergodic narratives to modify and expand it, but for various reasons this didn't happen.

As explained by Eskelinen (2012, p. 104) in letter (e), the proposition is to expand these concepts in what the author proposes to call "towards cybertextual narratology", to further apply these new media literary theories to works of EL (cf. IV.3; V.3).

The narratological framework proposed by Genette (1988, pp. 13–15) is based on three main components: *récit*, *histoire*, and *narration* (narrative/discourse, story and narration). The author distinguishes them in the following way: by *récit* (narrative/discourse) the author refers to the discourse or narrative itself, that is, the analysis of narrative as a mode of representation of stories; by *histoire* (story) the author refers to the narrative content, in other words, the analysis of the story or narrative events, and finally by *narration* (narration), the author refers to the act of narrating, the narrative production.

Furthermore, Genette (1980; 1988) highlights three major aspects in a story: *time*, *mood* and *voice*. I will briefly summarize these narratological framework concepts and categories. The reader must keep in mind that I will further develop Genette's conceptualization of narrative time considering its importance in temporally dynamic texts theory (Eskelinen, 2012; Eskelinen & Koskimaa, 2001; Koskimaa, 2010a) (cf. III.2.2.3), but as explained above as "a departure point" it is necessary to underline the value of the classical narratological approaches.

Narrative time refers to the chronology in the story, to the temporal relations between the discourse of the narrative and the story. These relations are organized in three main categories: *order*, *duration* and *frequency*. By order, Genette (1980, pp. 33–35) refers to the interaction between the chronology of the story and the textual arrangement (*pseudo-time*) of the events in the narrative; by duration, the author refers to the comparison between the length of the events, and the length of their textual presentation (*pseudo-time*); and by frequency, the author emphasises in the number of

occurrences of an event in the story to the number of times it is narrated in the text.

Additionally, Genette (1980, pp. 35–40) calls *anachronies*, to the lack of chronological coordination between the story and the text. This can be represented in two ways; by *analepses* (retrospections) or *prolepses* (anticipations). To my interest, he additionally refers to *anisochronies*, that is, accelerations and decelerations. On the one hand, by *ellipsis* the author means the highest acceleration of the text. And, on the other hand, notorious slowing down of the text occurs during descriptive pauses. Other forms of these *anisochronies* (Genette, 1980, pp. 86–112) are summaries (rapid recount of events), pauses, (descriptive pauses), ellipsis (absence of summary or descriptive pause, discontinuities) and scenes (slow recount of events). In the analyses, I will show how gestural manipulation affects and triggers examples of such *anachronies* and *anisochronies* in *88C* and *DP*.

By narrative mood, Genette (1980, p. 162) refers to how much of the story will be told in the text, “the regulation of narrative information”. Mood is represented by *distance* and *perspective*. When speaking of *distance* (the quantitative modulation of narrative information), the author explains the distinction between story of events and story of speech. The story of speech is divided in three degrees of distance: ‘narrativized or narrated speech’, ‘transposed speech or free indirect style’ and ‘reported speech’ (Genette, 1980, pp. 171–172).

In terms of *perspective* (the qualitative modulation of the information), Genette speaks of *focalization*. Eskelinen (2012, p. 165) argues that focalization does not refer to who narrates, but to who perceives or where the perceptual focus of the narrative is situated. To better describe this term, Genette (1980) proposes three degrees: *non-focalized* corresponding to omniscient narrator, “that knows more than the character, or more exactly says more than any of the characters know”; *internally focalized* corresponding to the point of view of a specific character “the narrator says only what a given character knows”; and *externally focalized* corresponding to the moment when the narrator knows less than the character, “the narrator says less than the character knows” (Genette, 1980, pp. 189–190).



By narrative voice, Genette (1980, p. 212) refers to the act of uttering the narration. This is always situated at a *diegetic* level inferior to the narrated event. When the author speaks of *diégèse*<sup>6</sup> he refers to the fictional world of the characters as well as to the primary story level, “the *diégèse* is therefore not the story but the universe in which the story takes place” (Genette, 1988, p. 17). Within this universe, there is the *extradiegetic* level, which is situated outside of the events (external voices); in this level, the narrative act is external to any diegesis. Furthermore, the *intradiegetic* level refers to the main story; in this level, the events are presented in the main narrative. Finally, the *metadiegetic* level occurs when narratives are embedded within the *intradiegetic* level.

Therefore, narrators are classified in agreement with their participation in the action. The *homodiegetic narrator* is the one that is present as a character of the story s/he tells. The *heterodiegetic* narrator is the one that is absent of the story s/he tells; and *autodiegetic* narrator is the one that is identical with the protagonist (Genette, 1980, pp. 244–245). Lastly, when examining intratextonically and textonically dynamic texts (Eskelinen, 2012, p. 184) speaks of a “bidegetic narrator”, “we could reserve a new category of bidiegetic narrator for narrators that either reversibly or irreversibly shift their position between homodiegetic and heterodiegetic positions”.

### 2.2.3 Time in Cybertextual Narratology

Eskelinen & Koskimaa (2001) proposed the first theoretical approach that focused on exploring the multiple temporal dimensions within a work of EL. In their article “Discourse Timer

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<sup>6</sup> In *The Republic*, Plato differentiated literary genres on the basis of the genre-specific constellation of two fundamental modes of speech termed mimesis, the direct imitation of speech in the form of the characters’ verbatim dialogues and monologues, and diegesis, which comprises all utterances attributable to the author. According to Plato, the lyric genre is restricted to the use of diegesis and the dramatic genre to the use of mimesis, with only the epic genre combining both. This fundamental distinction of the two principal modes of narrating not only anticipated the 20<sup>th</sup> century opposition showing vs. telling, but it also prefigured one of the three analytical dimensions adopted by Genette (1980), namely voice (Hühn, Schönert, Pier, & Schmid, 2009, p. 332).

Towards Temporally Dynamic Texts” the authors presented: “Discourse Timer”, an authoring tool that could show “examples of ways to manipulate the relation between story time (the time of the events told) and discourse time (the time of narration) which do require significant expansion of the traditional narratological categories” (Eskelinen & Koskimaa, 2001, pt. 2) (my emphasis).

As a way to establish new relations within the temporal organization of digital texts and underline other temporal issues yet unexplored, “Discourse Timer” began to take different paths in the subsequent years. For his part, Koskimaa (2010a, p. 135) proposed a classification of temporal possibilities in programmed texts: *limiting reading time*, *delaying reading time*, *limiting the reading opportunities*, and *temporally evolving texts*.

1. *Limiting reading time*. Text appears on the screen only for a limited period of time. The period may be long enough for a through, focused reading, but it may also be used to challenge the reader, to force her to read on the edges of apprehension.
2. *Delaying reading time*. Whereas it is practically impossible to implement means to hinder the reader of a print book from browsing through the pages with a pre-determined speed, or to jump over dozen of pages on one turn, it is extremely simple in digital cybertexts to force the reader to wait for a fixed time before it is possible to proceed from one text passage to another.
3. *Limiting the reading opportunities*. The text may only be accessible at certain times, or only for a limited period of time. An extreme case here would be what Gonzalo Frasca has termed “one-session game of narration”, which, as the self explanatory phrase describes, can be accessed and read only once [...] Some of these possibilities are such, that the reader does not necessarily even notice them, if she does not read the text several times under different circumstances or, if the text is not explicitly reflecting on them.

4. *Temporally evolving texts.* This category includes texts that evolve continuously through additions posted by the author or the readers, or both. The addition or modifications may also be programmed according to certain variables outside the text (stock marker rates, environmental factors, etc.), so that no authorial intrusion is needed after the initiation of the text (even though it may be quite hard to guarantee that feeds from external web sources would stay in existence for longer periods).

On his proposition, Koskimaa (2010a) underlines the importance of reading time when it comes to grasping the appearance and disappearance of linguistic texts or other semiotic modes. The author speaks of the possible manipulation of reading digital texts given that as being pre-programmed the reader will be forced to “stop” his/her reading due to the pre-determined speed elements found in the works. The last two points focus on the unannounced total disappearance of the digital text, to put it differently, its one click-life possibility. And on the aspect of continuous “linguistic and semiotic” evolution that some works present because of the addition of different semiotic systems either by author, reader or an external entity. Let the reader not forget that all these limitations, delays, and unexpected appearances will trigger interesting aesthetical research subjects that will be studied in the analyses.

Based on the original proposition of the authoring tool, “Discourse Timer”, Koskimaa (2010a, pp. 135–136) highlights that the time within the textual work (the fictional time) also represents interesting theoretical approaches. For this reason, the author proposes four temporal levels for cybertexts with narrative content:

1. User time (the time the user spends reading the cybertext)
2. Discourse time (the time of the narrative discourse)
  - a. pseudo-time
  - b. true time
3. Story time (the time of the narrated events)
4. System time (the time of the cybertext system states)

I will briefly comment on each of Koskimaa's temporal levels. *User time* depends on the time the user spends reading the text (the reader's actions). One might think that the "reading time" is normally conditioned to the time dictated by the system, "system time"; however, in the variety of digital works *scriptons* allow the reader to "read images" and "view texts" at different duration levels depending if the text is transient or intransient. In this sense, we should also consider the "real time" duration of the act of reading and the number or "re-readings" that the user will be allowed to perform. It should be noted that if the text were intransient the textual meaning being produced would change with each visit, which will lead to different interpretations of the story. Eskelinen (2012, pp. 156–157) notes that the effect of the reader on the text's settings of *reading time* could be explicit or implicit. Therefore, he proposes three major types of setting *reading time*: given (i.e. beyond the reader's influence), chosen, and caused.

*Discourse time* is divided into two separate categories: *pseudo-time* that as noted by Genette (1980, p. 34) is "false time standing in for a true time", and *true time* that can be compared to screen time in film studies and it is always measured in seconds and minutes. It is important to notice that *pseudo-time* is not a temporal measure but a spatial one. *Pseudo-time* is counted in number of words, sentences and pages used to describe certain events. As noted by Koskimaa & Eskelinen (2001, pt. 2), "For print orientated narratology the clock measured true time has no significance at all (or only as a background comparison model); discourse time is always reduced to pseudo-time" (my emphasis). Nonetheless, in digital texts *discourse time* creates challenging scenarios where the different combinations between *pseudo-time* and *true time* affect *reading time* and *story time*; for instance, let's consider a text in which the time of reading is not equal to the time of textual presentation in *true time*, or a situation in which *discourse time* is similar to *true time* and *story time*.

*Story time* refers to the time of the narrated events, to the temporal sequences in which the events are arranged. As noted above, by *histoire* (story) Genette (1980) refers to the narrative content, in other words, the analysis of the story or narrative events. For this reason, it is easy to be studied once the *pseudo-time* has been located in the digital text. Normally, the transcription of the narrated

events is needed in order to study their chronological order. It should be noted that sometimes events appear as they are programmed without the intervention of the reader (88C) and sometimes they are triggered by the reader's actions. For example, the manipulation of *story time* via the addition of new contents (events) to the narrative as a product of the reader's actions (*DP*).

*System time* is seen as the "varying degrees of permanence of the text and its parts and phases...Fundamentally it is about what is permanent and what is temporary in the text" (Eskelinen, 2012, p. 157). To explain the subject, the author explains that books and printed texts are permanent until *time* begins to physically deteriorate them, or until they are unfortunately destroyed to the point that they cannot be read any more. The author gives examples that we might have once experienced; for instance, the feeling of reading illegible ink, encountering missing pages, or reacting to tenacious or stain marks. He contrasts these examples by saying that digital texts can go through several temporary states in which the changes can be either reversible or irreversible and affect their contents and signifiers. He gives the example of a printed letter "A" saying that even though it may gradually become invisible it will remain an "A" until it is invisible; however, on a digital setting, the "A" may not only change its size, shape and colour, but it may also become another letter or sign again and again<sup>7</sup>. But most importantly, Eskelinen (2012) underlines that in a digital work *system time* could either be static or dynamic (i.e. its settings either change or they don't). Lastly, he writes, "only when some parts are permanent and others temporary does *system time* truly matter, as it presents a new type of aesthetic challenge to both writers and readers" (Eskelinen, 2012, p. 158) (my emphasis).

### 2.3 Digital Rhetoric as a Tool for Electronic Literature

The peculiarities of the new medium and the versatility and malleability of the multimedia event on the screen allow for new rhetorical compositions that require different approaches and reading practices to be understood. While there are certainly many

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<sup>7</sup> cf. *The Dreamlife of Letters* by Brian Kim Stefans.  
[http://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/stefans\\_the\\_dreamlife\\_of\\_letters.html](http://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/stefans_the_dreamlife_of_letters.html)

possibilities to approach such “*imaginaire technologique*” (Gervais & Guilet, 2011, p. 92), I have decided to use specific theories from the emerging and evolving areas of Digital Rhetoric.

The term *digital rhetoric* is perhaps most simply defined as “the application of rhetorical theory (analytic method or heuristic for production) to digital texts and performances” (Eyman, 2015, p. 13).

In my view, a way to begin exploring these rhetorical compositions is to have a close look at the poetic outcome of interactive and manipulative practices required for the construction of meaning. I think it is not only a matter of “applying rhetorical theory to digital texts and performances”, but also a matter of understanding and expanding the traditional aspects of rhetoric and poetics by creating hybrid transdisciplinary tools to better the analyses of the works.

In order to understand the rhetoric of interactive discourse in works of EL I will centre on Bouchardon’s proposition “rhétorique de la manipulation” (Bouchardon, 2014b) and Saemmer’s proposition “rhétorique de la réception” (Saemmer, 2015).

### *2.3.1 Digital Rhetoric Practices*

The power of spatiality it is as immense as the horizon of expectations of the reader. To consider the value of (rhetorical) composition is to consider the value of the new language created from this composition. In the versatility and malleability of the multimedia event on the screen, new tropes and figures begin to emerge as a new kind of textuality, which consequently enhances the aesthetic sense of digital works. These changes imply new reading strategies, as well as the importance of the reader’s participation in the construction of meaning. To avoid a superficial reading one must have a close look at rhetorical components, strategies, processes and materialities. In the “horizon of expectations” of the reader term introduced by Jauss (2010) [1978] who was the leading member of the Constance School of Literary Reception Theory, the flow of the reading process is accompanied

by a set of expectations constructed by the readers in a prolonged moment of interpretation.

The term ‘horizon of expectation’ refers to the set of expectations and shared assumptions held by readers in any given period according to which they understand, interpret, and judge literary texts [...] Horizons of expectation are in perpetual flux; as they change so does our understanding and evaluation of literary texts (Herman, Jahn, & Ryan, 2010, p. 224).

The potential action of the digital text offers an array of possibilities that cannot be seen at first glance. In the shifting sands of signification of multimodal elements, a repertoire of forms and figures begins to emerge within the imaginaries of digital texts. Since the study of the relationship between materiality and poetic meaning making is of central concern to this investigation, reading figures means to understand the terrain in which they develop, or seen from a different perspective, the terrain in which they once existed, “*La figure est une forme, mais une forme qui n’apparaît que sur la base d’une absence*”; “*L’absence est au cœur des processus sémiotiques*” (Gervais, 2007, pp. 20–21). To put it differently, the material scenography (semiotic dimension) of “the lability of the digital device” (aesthetics of surface, mimetic aesthetics, aesthetics of the ephemeral, aesthetics of re-enchantment) is the terrain where all these rhetorical absences will appear and disappear by the hand of the reader’s painting or by the brush of the reader’s eyes.

### 2.3.2 *The Lability of Digital Works*

When something is labile it means that something changes or breaks down, that something is unstable. In digital textuality this term refers to the potential instability of the electronic device and the shifting sands of significations of multimodal elements. In the section devoted to the situation of communication and the problematic of genres, I have underlined two points. On the one hand, the importance of considering how the “*mise en scène*” of the situation of communication can be affected by the lability of the

electronic device (cf. III.1.4.1); and on the other hand, how this instability can produce challenging research settings where all “*les possibles interprétatifs*” (affected (or *not*) by the lability of the electronic device) will take place.

As proposed by Saemmer (2009a), the causes of this instability are the changes that programs and operating systems experience over time. Considering that we are dealing with a non-stop technological transformation, the author further discusses that the changing speed of computers (or any other enunciative device) might also affect the display of the work. The spatio-temporal agreement and compatibility between the age of the computer and the date of birth of the electronic oeuvre are frequently a challenge. To my interest, these changes affect not only the aesthetic result in the digital work but also the *discursive* one, being the latter very important for the analysis of the selected corpus; one may wonder, what is the potential action of this instability in terms of aesthetic creation? If materiality affects representation what happens then when materiality is reinventing itself due to the lability of the device? Taking these thoughts into account, Saemmer (2009a, pt. 1) suggests the following four approaches when dealing with the potential instability of the electronic device:

- a) The aesthetics of the surface
- b) The mimetic aesthetics
- c) The aesthetics of the ephemeral
- d) The aesthetics of re-enchantment

Aesthetics of the Surface. In the aesthetics of the surface, the instability of the electronic device is to a certain degree ignored. The artist assumes that the work will not be affected by this instability. The digital work to the eyes of the artist remains ideally intact; “the artist simply ignores this instability”. Following Saemmer & Dufrière (2014), the reader must be aware that even though this aesthetics considers that all that inhabits the surface of the screen contains “*des «modèles» figés et non pas des flux instables*” (my emphasis), this is not completely accurate. For it is precisely from “*des flux instables*” where challenging aesthetic and discursive research settings emerge.



Mimetic aesthetics. In the mimetic aesthetics there is awareness of this instability; however, the impact on the work is prevented “providing the work with a stable experimentation frame”, as well as, with “the right context for the reception of the work” (Saemmer, 2009a, pt. 1). The ideal is to recreate in every reader the conditions experienced by the author in the creative process; in other words, “to imitate” the setting in order to preserve the surface events as well as possible. However, Bootz (2008) considers that this is a utopia, “*l’utopie de la «machine-auteur» où il s’agirait de reconstruire le cadre idéal pour l’actualisation du projet-auteur*”, because it is impossible to prevent the evolution of programs and operating systems in which the digital work will be displayed in future horizon of expectations. Let us not forget that the spatio-temporal settings of the electronic literary works are evolving as I type these words.

Aesthetics of the Ephemeral. In the aesthetics of the ephemeral there is awareness of this instability; but most importantly the “uncontrollable nature of the electronic device” is highly considered. The important matter is the way in which this instability aesthetically (and *discursively*) affects the digital work. As I have mentioned earlier, the reader ought to explore “*les avenues de sens*” (Barthes, 1970) or “*les possibles interprétatifs*” (Charaudeau, 1983) of such emerging literary electronic discourse, that is, in order to grasp the meaning of the EL work (cf. III.1.4.1).

An important feature of the aesthetics of the ephemeral, which is significant to my research, is the fact that chronology neither survives the changes made to the work nor the traces the reader leaves on it (additions via interaction and gestures of manipulation). These changes and traces have a short life in the surface, and most of the time, are not saved by the system. I shall present convincing examples of the aesthetics of the ephemeral in the section devoted to the analysis of the selected corpus (cf. IV.1;V.1). One last feature of the aesthetics of the ephemeral highlighted by the author is the fact that “letting the work slowly decompose, accepting that, through its changing forms and updates, unexpected mutations may even, sooner or later, lead to the obsolescence of the artistic project” (Saemmer, 2009a, pt. 1). These features can affect its materiality and composition, and eventually lead to the obsolescence of the

artistic project itself. As I shall single out in the analyses, these aesthetic features are repeatedly found in some works of EL.

Aesthetics of Re-enchantment. Like the aesthetics of the ephemeral, in the aesthetics of re-enchantment there is full awareness of the instability of the electronic device. Saemmer (2009a) argues that the relationships between the animated words and images, between the sounds and gestures of manipulation in a digital artwork mystify in order to advocate the “unrepresentable”. That is, “something that words cannot describe and yet one can ‘feel’ by experiencing the work” (Saemmer, 2009a, pt. 1) (my emphasis).

To strengthen Saemmer’s idea let us bring back Lemke’s previously discussed words on the subject of discourse and multimedia analysis, “seeing that there is no meaning without feeling” (Lemke, 2013, p. 85) (my emphasis); and, review Simanowski’s words on the subject of the interactor’s body and the aesthetic experience, “in such context, we think much more directly through the body and somehow feel the meaning of the work at hand” (Simanowski, 2011, p. ix) (my emphasis). Moreover, Saemmer (2009a) highlights that on the screen surface the unrepresentable can be explored through intermediality. The reader when navigating via manipulation and interaction through “*les avenues de sens*” in search for “*les possibles interprétatifs*” of the electronic oeuvre can only but experience these sensations. Lastly, following the author’s propositions it can be said that when this instability is over-exploited, the machine ideally continues to work by itself in a sort of “technological sublime.”

For their part, Bootz (2005a) and Engberg (2010) propose two additional aesthetic features: Aesthetic of Frustration and Aesthetic of Visual Noise.

Aesthetics of Frustration. Another important aesthetic feature that must be mentioned is what Bootz (2005a) calls “*L’esthétique de la frustration*”. The author refers to this aesthetic as a specific strategy of writing when the reader finds her/himself frustrated for not being able to (physically) control or understand the text or even get lost. The reader feels manipulated by the text (by the programme) and may even wonder if something is wrong with it; however, it is in this frustration where s/he may find the possible understanding.

*Dans l'esthétique de la frustration, le lecteur est manipulé par le programme. Il peut s'en suivre une frustration s'il aborde le poème avec un comportement inadapté et des modalités de lecture classiques, cherchant une cohérence à la fois globale, locale et constante. Il n'y a pas de frustration lorsqu'il accepte de voir le sens lui échapper en partie, ce qu'il remplace par une activité créative ou un rapport ludique avec l'interface (Bootz, 2005a, pt. 2.3)*

Aesthetics of Visual Noise. Engberg (2010) refers to a visually “busy” and “typographically” dense aesthetic. The author defines that the density of semiotic substances creates busy atmospheres and crowded screens, which might blur the sight and understanding of the reader. In an attempt to define such experiences the author claims that visual noise is generated by a tactilely responsive surface in combination with visual excess. This requires an embodied engagement from the reader in order for a reading to take place; therefore she defines visual noise as a “distinctly definable strategy which combines letters with images, sounds, and in the case of digital works, kinetic operations to create a sense of excess” (Engberg, 2010, p. 2). The distortion of reading and viewing creates a nervous atmosphere around the work that might aesthetically join with the “aesthetics of frustration” proposed by Bootz (2005b, pt. 2.3). As explained by the author, “exploring digital visual noise poems with the cursor is often a way to either incur or disentangle the clutter of the poetic surface” (Engberg, 2010, p. 2).

The five-digital aesthetics presented above show that the possibilities to interpret the spilling streams of persuasive meaning produced by the instability of the electronic device are vast.

### *2.3.3 Gestural Manipulation*

From the perspective of DA, “*Gesture* is a presence in all cultures, even if in quiet different ways” (Kress, 2010, p. 5). A gesture is an act of writing, a way to create identity through a variety of semiotic resources. A gesture is a zoom that helps us to construct a detailed analysis of our interactions with the works. A gesture produces multimodal interaction analyses. A gesture shapes a modality of

representation. A gesture creates choreography between our hands and fingers while reading the texts. A gesture directs the orchestration of semiotic forms on the screen. A gesture is an utterance.

Bouchardon (2011, p. 39) proposes that the action of the reader should be considered as an enunciation of gestures, “*l’action considérée comme un énoncé de gestes*” that reveals the materiality of the text. Gestures of manipulation such as touching, clicking, dragging, hovering, rolling over, amongst others, can be considered as interactive piano keys that trigger the orchestration of meaning on the screenic surface; as the reader stands in the horizon of expectations of the works of EL.

The reader realizes that there might be “discrete units with formal rules” in the process of manipulation (Bachimont quoted in Bouchardon & Heckman, 2012). It is not only a matter of interaction with the text but also a matter of identifying the products and the sub-products of this interaction.

*Pour pouvoir analyser la dimension manipulable dans les créations numériques, il s’agit ainsi de penser le geste ni uniquement à partir du geste en soi, ni uniquement à partir de ce qui se passe à l’écran. Dans la manipulation, le geste prend sens dans l’interaction (Bouchardon, 2011, p. 38) (my emphasis).*

Therefore if as stated by Bouchardon & Heckman (2012) “manipulation is the essence of the digital”; then one can ask what is the composition of these manipulation gestures? And why is their role extremely important in the construction of signification (or rhetorical composition of the digital works)? In order to deeply explain these actions and ideas, Bouchardon (2011) explains that as a part of a collaborative research together with Philippe Bootz, Jean Clément, and Alexandra Saemmer they developed the following five-level analysis model as a way to explain the importance of the rhetoric of interaction in digital creation, where figures of interactive discourse play an important role.

## ***Les cinq niveaux d'analyse de la manipulation***

**Niveau 1.** *Le gestème est le résultat d'un couplage entre une activité physique et une interface d'entrée (par exemple le fait de déplacer la souris ou d'appuyer sur une touche du clavier). Le gestème correspond à une unité sémiotique distinctive.*

**Niveau 2.** *L'actème est fabriqué à partir des gestèmes et est le résultat d'un couplage entre le gestème et le processus sur lequel porte la manipulation.*

**Niveau 3.** *L'unité sémiotique de manipulation (USM). Les actèmes composent des unités sémiotiques de manipulation. Par exemple, les actèmes « cliquer », « glisser » et « relâcher » peuvent composer l'USM tirer-relâcher.*

**Niveau 4.** *Le couplage média. Il est question ici du geste interfacique qui résulte du couplage entre l'unité sémiotique de manipulation et l'état média environnant.*

**Niveau 5.** *Ce niveau est celui d'une séquence interactive complète de couplages média. Nous sommes ici sur le plan du discours. C'est en effet souvent en prenant en compte l'ensemble **du discours interactif** que le geste de manipulation prend tout son sens (Bouchardon, 2011, p. 42).*

## **The Five Levels of Analysis of Manipulation**

**Level 1.** **The gesteme** is the first and lowest level of articulation and corresponds to a distinct semiotic unit. It results from the coupling of a physical act and an input interface (for example, the act of moving the mouse or pressing a key).

**Level 2.** **The acteme** is constructed on the basis of the gestemes. It corresponds to a sequence of gestemes and results from the coupling between the gesteme and the process on which the manipulation bears.

**Level 3.** **The semiotic unit of manipulation (SUM).** The actemes are combined to form semiotic units of manipulation (SUMs); e.g. *pull-release*.

**Level 4. Media coupling** results from the coupling of the SUM with the media context. The SUM, as we have seen, exhibits an iconic dimension. However, it is only through its coupling with actual media that the significant features are realized.

**Level 5. Interactive discourse.** This is the level of a complete interactive sequence of media couplings. We are here at the level of “discourse” (Klinkenberg, 2000). Indeed it is often by taking into account the whole interactive discourse that the gesture of manipulation becomes fully meaningful (Bouchardon, 2014a, pp. 163–166).

Based on the above-mentioned five-level model, Bouchardon (2011) explains that as a continuation of the research project the scholars developed the following table of semiotic units of manipulation (SUM) as an starting point to explain the rhetoric of manipulation in digital creations. This semio-rhetoric approach will be extremely useful when analysing the selected corpus, especially Clark’s 88C (2008) (UMI) (cf. IV.5) and Bouchardon and Volckaert’s piece DP (2011) (cf. V.1), since these SUM are extremely important in the rhetorical composition of the texts themselves.

Moreover, the five-level analysis model emphasises that when the SUM (semiotic units of manipulation) couple with media the outcome is the creation of media couplings. They can be categorized as *couplage conventionnel* and *couplage non conventionnel* (Bouchardon, 2011, p. 40). Therefore, for digital rhetoric practices to take place and for the media couplings to become *figures of manipulation* such couplings need to create an aesthetic reaction on the horizon of expectations of the reader (*couplage non conventionnel*). As further explained by Saemmer (2010a, p. 166), they need to produce “a surprising or even incongruous effect that destabilizes the reader’s expectations”.

**Table 1. Reproduction of *Tableau des unités sémiotiques de manipulation (USM)* (Bouchardon, 2011).**

USM	Description (actèmes)	Délimitée dans le temps	Répétitive	Traits d'iconicité potentiels (ce à quoi l'USM fait penser dans le monde physique)
Activer	Activer de façon ponctuelle : - appuyer sur une touche du clavier, - appuyer avec son doigt sur un écran tactile, - produire un seul son dans le micro <sup>8</sup> , - faire un mouvement brusque et non-itéré devant sa webcam <sup>9</sup> , - presser le bouton de la souris <sup>10</sup> , - déplacer sa souris (déplacement qui entraîne une activation, comme une <i>porte d'entrée</i> ).	Oui	Non	- par un geste, déclencher ou démarrer une action, la bloquer <sup>11</sup> ou la stopper <sup>12</sup> ,  - pointer dans telle direction <sup>13</sup> , pénétrer en un seul pas (et non pas progressivement),  - substituer, remplacer <sup>14</sup> un élément par un autre en un seul geste,  - choisir, sélectionner <sup>15</sup> ...
Mouvoir	- Déplacer sa souris dans le plan (survoler), - Déplacer sa souris en laissant une trace (tracer), - Déplacer la main sur un écran tactile. - Déplacer le doigt sur le <i>touchpad</i> dans un mouvement continu, - Déplacer le stylo sur un agenda numérique.	Non	Non	- caresser <sup>16</sup> (un être humain, un animal, une surface), - étaler de la matière (des cartes, une crème), enlever de la poussière, - dévoiler <sup>17</sup> , révéler <sup>18</sup> , cacher, - tracer, dessiner <sup>19</sup> , effacer, - accélérer <sup>20</sup> , ralentir...

<sup>8</sup> Le site de Andreas Lutz (<http://www.andreaslutz.com/>) propose une navigation par webcam ou par micro.

<sup>9</sup> Bannière publicitaire pour « The National Foundation for the Deaf », [http://www.bannerblog.com.au/2009/09/nfd\\_lip\\_reading\\_lesson.php](http://www.bannerblog.com.au/2009/09/nfd_lip_reading_lesson.php), 2009.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.bannerblog.com.au/2009/06/pringles.php>

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.bannerblog.com.au/2009/09/fas\\_twitter.php](http://www.bannerblog.com.au/2009/09/fas_twitter.php)

<sup>12</sup> Rafael Rozendaal, <http://www.popcornpainting.com/>, 2008, <http://www.hotdoom.com/>, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.red-issue.com/>

<sup>14</sup> Marie Bélisle, *Scriptura et caetera*, « Alter ego », <http://www.scripturae.com/>, 1998.

<sup>15</sup> *Anonymes*, tableau « défragmenter », <http://www.anonymes.net/anonymes.html>

<sup>16</sup> *Toucher*, tableau « caresser », <http://www.to-touch.com/>, 2009.

<sup>17</sup> Marie Bélisle, *Scriptura et caetera*, « Alter ego », <http://www.scripturae.com/>, 1998.

<sup>18</sup> Sophie Calle, *Vingt ans après*, <http://www.panoplie.org/ecart/calle/calle.html>, 2001.

<sup>19</sup> <http://soytuaire.labat.com/>

<sup>20</sup> Rafael Rozendaal, <http://www.hybridmoment.com/>, 2009.

Gratter	Déplacer sa souris de façon répétitive (gratter de façon linéaire dont raboter de façon unidirectionnelle, touiller avec des courbes...)	Non	Oui	- raboter une surface, sculpter une matière, - gratter la peau, gratter un jeu de grattage, gratter une vitre, - creuser un trou, - mélanger des substances, des matières...
Tirer	Faire glisser un élément, à la souris (appuyer - tirer) ou au clavier	Oui	Non	- déplacer un objet avec prise sur lui <sup>21</sup> (tirer un rideau, écarter des voiles, tirer une chasse d'eau, enlever une étiquette, retirer une enveloppe, remonter la couverture, ouvrir une boîte de sardines, retirer un vêtement), - immerger <sup>22</sup> , parcourir...
Tirer-relâcher	Faire glisser un élément et le relâcher (appuyer - tirer - relâcher)	Oui	Non	- ordonner, mettre des objets dans les bonnes cases, ranger des tiroirs ou une chambre, - réorganiser, recomposer <sup>23</sup> un tableau, faire un jeu de puzzle, - déformer <sup>24</sup> , - déclencher un mécanisme <sup>25</sup> , libérer, repousser ...

### 2.3.4 Pluricode Couplings and Iconic Irradiation

The works of EL are universes where animation and manipulation are activated by interactive curiosity. It is within this space that pluricode couplings emerge and intermingle to construct the meaning of the text. According to Saemmer (2013), “pluricode couplings” have the following characteristics:

- (1) They involve two different semiotic systems, a text and an icon, within the same active support of the sign;
- (2) They combine “linguistic text and movement” and “linguistic text and manipulation”;

<sup>21</sup> Bannière publicitaire pour *Compania Athletica*,  
[http://www.bannerblog.com.au/2009/07/cia\\_tramp.php](http://www.bannerblog.com.au/2009/07/cia_tramp.php)

Bannière publicitaire pour une voiture (*Meriva*),  
[http://www.bannerblog.com.au/2009/09/gm\\_meriva\\_drop.php](http://www.bannerblog.com.au/2009/09/gm_meriva_drop.php)

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.bannerblog.com.au/2009/07/samsung\\_led.php](http://www.bannerblog.com.au/2009/07/samsung_led.php)

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.bannerblog.com.au/2009/09/commbank\\_finances.php](http://www.bannerblog.com.au/2009/09/commbank_finances.php)

<sup>24</sup> Rafael Rozendaal, <http://www.coldvoid.com/>, 2008.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.bannerblog.com.au/2009/09/toilet.php>



- (3) They involve an iconic sign with a linguistic sign in the same stimulus (the active support of the sign).

Therefore, a linguistic text plus movement creates TSU; and a linguistic text plus manipulation gestures creates SUM. Both units will lead to the creation of figures of animation and figures of manipulation as a result of the combination of two or more different semiotic systems under *unconventional* couplings circumstances. Bearing this in mind, the term iconic irradiation results from the interaction of an iconic sign with a linguistic sign, both signs belonging to the pluricode couplings array of possibilities, in the same stimulus (the active support of the sign). Iconic signs are also understood as “semiotic units of manipulation” (SUM) activated by a sequence of gestures.

If as above explained an animated text is formed when the linguistic sign is coupled with movement. Therefore, movement can become an iconic sign (iconic movements), and consequently a semiotic unit of manipulation (SUM). To sum up, iconic irradiation derives from the interaction of pluricode couplings, and iconic irradiation is activated by manipulation and interaction. The following description might illustrate it better for the reader: Ics (Iconic Sign) + Ls (Linguistic Sign) = IcR (Iconic Irradiation)

### 2.3.5 *Figures of Animation*

Figures of animation exist in the flux of movements that semiotic substances create on the screen. As forms constantly change, their potential signification might rely on the performance of discrete semiotic units of movement called: *unités sémiotiques temporelles* (UST) (TSU temporal semiotic units). This idea underlines the potential action that movement has in the plurality of semiotic substances on the screen (text, image, sound, video), as well as in the different intensity of appearance patters that they can acquire.

As pointed out by Saemmer (2010a, p. 165), “Now that digital literature seems more and more aesthetically convincing, the time has come to define its stylistic features with more precision”. If *figures* are used to emphasise the messages and to define styles in

the works of EL therefore it is important to understand how they are formed.

There are two definitions of *figure* that have helped me to better understand and visualise the subject. In the first place, I will present the definition by Klinkenberg (2000, p. 343), who defines *figure* as “*un dispositif consistant à produire des sens implicites, de telle manière que l'énoncé où on le trouve soit polyphonique*”. In the second place, I will present the perspective of Gervais (2007) who proposes that “*Imaginer une figure, c'est manipuler une forme*”, and further explains from different viewpoints what does it mean to manipulate a form.

*Qu'est-ce que manipuler une forme ? La question est complexe et cet essai entend l'explorer de nombreuses façons. D'emblée, on peut répondre que c'est la designer, en développer l'image, chercher à comprendre son origine, la mettre en scène dans des situations variées, se perdre dans sa contemplation, s'y projeter tout entier puis se ressaisir et, ultimement, la représenter. La figure est un signe dynamique qui a la labilité de l'imaginaire. Ses fonctions son multiples : elle est un foyer de l'attention et, en tant que signe, elle sert d'interface et de relais, elle appelle et suscite des commentaires, elle sert de principe interprétatif (Gervais, 2007, p. 20) (my emphasis).*

When speaking of *figures of animation*, the reader must differentiate between two things: (1) technical processes used to create the animations and (2) the actual creation of rhetorical figures through TSU or SUM. Saemmer (2010a, pp. 173–174) describes *figures of animation* as follows:

Purely kinetic, non-interactive poetry, referring not explicitly to the instability of the digital device in its poetic project, is primarily characterized by media figures, which create meaning on the surface of the screen between the legible, visible, and audible components of a word.

Bearing in mind the previous definitions, I present the following list of *figures of animation* based on Saemmer's terminology (Saemmer, 2010a, pp. 173–178).

- a. **Emergence and eclipse:** this figure is characterized by fade in-fade out effects but it can only be considered as a figure of animation if it provides the word with additional, surprising or incongruous meaning;
- b. **Animated sporulation:** this figure is used when such multiplication of letters makes sense in an incongruous way. Also, the word sporulation suggests fertilization. The movement insists on the substance of the text in a rather obsessive way;
- c. **Expansion and contraction:** this figure occurs when the resizing effect produces a tropologic meaning;
- d. **Transitional aphaeresis:** this figure occurs when there is the significant loss of one or more phonemes at the beginning of a word. This figure is often based on effects of appearance and disappearance; aphaeresis in digital poetry is always conditioned by the instability of the device;
- e. **Transitional apocope:** this figure occurs when the phonetic transformation occurs at the end of the word;
- f. **Transitional gash:** this figure occurs when a phonetic change occurs inside of the word;
- g. **Transitional metathesis:** this figure occurs when the alteration of a word or a group of words is not based on the removal of phonemes, but on the moving and crossing of phonemes inside this word or that group of words;
- h. **Transposition:** this figure occurs when there is ascending or descending diagonal, horizontal or vertical movement acts on the word or letter as a figure. Emergences and eclipses and transpositions produce catachretic effects;
- i. **Kinetic (animation) allegory:** this figure occurs when several figures merge to form a single tropologic system;
- j. **Movie-grams:** this figure expresses the same meaning by its letters and its movements. When the iconic sign is the same as the linguistic sign then a *ciné-gramme* is produced, “the text does what it is saying”;
- k. **Kinaesthetic rhymes:** this figure occurs when some animations are repeated throughout the poem and create paradigmatic relations between the sequences;
- l. **Transfiguration:** this figure occurs when the morphing effect influences the meaning of a word in an incongruous way.

### 2.3.6 Figures of Manipulation

The interaction between the text and its materialities emphasises the significance that a gesture can have in the creation of the interactive discourse of digital works. In such intersemiotisation of media (Weissberg (2006) quoted in Bouchardon (2014b, p. 166)) the gestural manipulation of semiotic substances: text, image, sound, video contributes and challenges the construction of meaning. When the SUM (semiotic units of manipulation) couple with media the outcome is the creation of media couplings. They can be categorized as *couplage conventionnel* and *couplage non conventionnel*. Therefore, *figures of manipulation* are created as the user encounters examples of *couplage non conventionnel* while interacting with the plurisemiotic systems of the interface. As stated by Bouchardon (2011, p. 40), a *figure of manipulation* can be described as follows:

*Par l'expression « figure de manipulation », nous désignons une relation entre un geste et des médias dans laquelle la construction du sens est fondée sur des processus d'intersection de traits signifiants associés au geste, au média et au contexte.*

A *figure of manipulation* is the rhetoric relationship between the gesture plus the media content (in which this gesture is applied), and the media content appearing after the performance of this gesture. For her part, Saemmer (2010a, p. 166) proposes the following definition when speaking of *figures of manipulation*:

When the relation between the content of an interactive medium, the manipulation gesture and the content of the media discovered or processed by the gesture appears surprising or even incongruous, when it thus destabilizes the reader's expectations, I would propose to call these phenomena *figures of manipulation*.

Considering the aforementioned descriptions and definitions the following points can be underlined:

- a. The interactive discourse level where the figures are created;
- b. The enunciative polyphony of the *figure*;
- c. The rhetoric relationship between gesture, media, context and *figure*;
- d. The importance of non-conventional couplings' emergence (*couplage non conventionnel*);
- e. The destabilization of the reader's expectations as a result of additional, surprising or even incongruous media contents appear on the screen;
- f. The degree of reception of the *figure* in the horizon of expectations of the reader.

Lastly, I present the following table on interfacial media figures proposed by Saemmer (2008b, p. 12) in which I will base my analyses. It must be mentioned that the author also refers to these interfacial media figures as *figures of manipulation* (Saemmer, 2010a, p. 166).

**Table 2. Reproduction of Table on Interfacial Media Figures (Saemmer, 2008b).**

Interfacial retroprojection	The interactive gesture, the activable media content and the activated media content get into metaphorical relationships.
Interfacial neantism	The interactive gesture does not provoke any effect on the screenic surface.
Interfacial incubation	The interactive gesture provokes effects on the screenic surface, which although emerge so late that it is difficult for the reader to establish a relationship between his gesture and the effects.
Interfacial involution	The interactive gesture invariably displays the same media contents; the inter-actor go round in circles.
Interfacial sporulation	The interactive gesture, supposed to provoke the emergence of a single pop-up, provokes the emergence of a multitude of windows; the interactor loses his control over the interface.
Interfacial pleonasm	The interactive gesture does not provoke the emergence of additional information; the message is redundant.
Interfacial randomization	The interactive gesture provokes the emergence of other media contents according to a random process.
Interfacial antagonism	The interactive gesture provokes the emergence of media contents contrary to the contents announced by the activable media.

## **CHAPTER IV. ANALYSIS OF 88 CONSTELLATIONS FOR WITTGENSTEIN (TO BE PLAYED WITH THE LEFT HAND) (2008) BY DAVID CLARK**

### **1. 88C: GENERAL OVERVIEW**

The present analysis is intended to be a guide for the adventurous reader of *88 Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)* (2008) (88C). On an introductory level, Clark's net.art piece explores the life and works of Austrian-born philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. Through his work, Clark portrays each constellation as a small universe unfolding a story, a myth, a statement, a musical score, or a new set of philosophical propositions. In the interactive sky of 88C, multiple associations to other multiple constellations creatively link each star into a network of interrelated stories. The 88 [∞∞∞] points of departure to explore the work invite the reader to unravel stories by discovering unexplored paths and creating her/his own language games.

The analysis is divided in three parts. The first part describes the paratextual elements (peritext and epitext) of two interrelated settings: the online presentation of the *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two* (2011) (*ELC2*); and the presentation of 88C within the *ELC2*. By paratextual description, I refer to the spatial, temporal, substantial, pragmatic, and functional characteristics of the paratextual message (Genette, 1997b).

The second part focuses on two subjects: on the one hand, the variability of the text composition in regards to the mélange of semiotic systems that are activated and interweaved as the reader interacts and manipulates the digital work; and, on the other hand, the enunciative variability that is produced through polyphony and intertextuality within the narrative discourse of the work. These enunciative variations emerge from the manipulation of time and space in the digital medium. I am specifically interested in the topological analysis of the work; in other words, I focus on how by evoking a surprising or incongruous effect on the reader, the

combinations between text, movement and manipulation may create figures of animation and figures of manipulation.

Finally, the third part is centred on the analysis of new theoretical propositions being currently used to understand the temporal dynamics of digital texts; as well as on the appearance of new aspects and dimensions of time due to the dynamic nature of the text. Additionally, all the parts have subdivisions that portray in detail each of the above-mentioned subjects, which, to my understanding need to be examined to provide the reader with a better starting path in the exploration of Clark's challenging digital work.

To clarify the reader's understanding of the way in which I have navigated *88 Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)* (2008) to construct the present analysis; I present the reading path of constellations that I have ventured to explore: 18 Cassiopeia (*Cassiopeia*), 12 Ursa Minor (*Constellations*), 59 Hydra (*Limits of Language*). I have chosen to refer to each screen capture by labelling it with a number (e.g. [Figure 3](#), [Figure 4](#), [Figure 5](#), etc.). In addition, the electronic address corresponding to the exact screen capture being discussed is provided in the caption of each Figure (e.g. [Figure 4](#): Presentation of 88C within ELC2:[http://collection.eliterature.org/2/works/clark\\_wittgenstein.html](http://collection.eliterature.org/2/works/clark_wittgenstein.html)).

Likewise, when referring to the *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two* (2011), and to *88 Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)* (2008), the abbreviations "ELC2" and "88C" will be used. For instance, the study of the presentation of the ELC2 and 88C refers to [Figure 3](#) and [Figure 4](#); and so forth for each subsequent section. Following David Clark's abbreviations when referring to the constellations: Cassiopeia (CAS), Ursa Minor (UMI), and Hydra (HYA), I will borrow them throughout the text when necessary. The audio and video transcriptions that compose the explored constellations are also provided. Along the analysis a parenthesis indicating the number of the corresponding transcription is placed on the left side of the citation.



Lastly, it must be noted that the present analysis is based on the online access of the *ELC2* (<http://collection.eliterature.org/2/>), the reader must know that USB flash drive publications are also available. In my view, it is important to bring this information to the reader's attention, given that the results of the analysis could vary depending on the reading medium (enunciative device) (cf. III.1.5); (mimetic aesthetics) (cf. III.2.3.2); for the individual features of the reading medium are a pre-condition of interpretation.



## 2. PARATEXTUAL DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Presentation of the *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two (ELC2)*



Figure 3. *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two*: <http://collection.eliterature.org/2/>.

The *ELC2* is an example of a social and cultural practice that aims at constructing a world of literary meanings by assembling different media products. Such digital practice was projected to associate a *Collection* of EL by gathering “electronic literary texts” into an online open access digital compilation. As I shall show in the paratextual description, the new practices of communication in the digital environment have challenged the organization of the *ELC2* at a temporal and spatial level. The affordances and limitations of Genette’s Paratextual Theory when applied to digital texts show that the reader’s navigation, interpretation, and negotiation will be circumscribed not only by the boundaries of the enunciative device but also by cultural and technological entities.

Spatial characteristics. In terms of paratextual spatial categories (peritext and epitext), the examples found in Figure 3 are mainly represented by peritexts (cf. III.1.6.3). It is important to clarify that

the following peritextual spatial description has been made from top to bottom based on [Figure 3](#). From the first glimpse at the *ELC2* (original text), the reader can perceive the following peritexts: the innovative sixty-three electronic literary works' main mosaic index, which is created by a collage of screen captures that feature an evocative image of the selected electronic literary work; two iconic-logos of the Electronic Literature Organization (ELO) that are placed within the main mosaic index and intentionally displayed as the first and last element of such index; the classification of the assembled works by “All Keywords, All Authors, All Titles”; the helpful and informative option “About”; the title of the collection, *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two*; the last name of the editors, Borràs, Memmott, Raley, Stefans; and finally, the icon of the creative commons license.

Temporal characteristics. The *ELC2* was published in 2011; therefore, all the corresponding peritexts to which I have referred in the spatial description of [Figure 3](#) date from 2011, which is the year the *ELC2* was compiled. It is important to bear in mind that this fact does not mean that all the works were created in 2011, for each electronic literary work has its own date of creation or previous publication (e.g. *The Sweet Old Etcetera* (2006) by Alison Clifford; *88 Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)* (2008) by David Clark; *Wordscapes and Letterscapes* (2002) by Peter Cho). On the contrary, this means that they were assembled as part of the *ELC2* in 2011 (*original* paratexts) bringing with them their previous *distant paratextual memories*.

Furthermore, it seems helpful to mention that besides the examples of *original* paratexts shown in [Figure 3](#), there are examples of *prior* paratexts. For instance, in the case of the *ELC2*'s compilation, these are represented by epitexts. The best example is the “call for works” on EL published in 2008 on the Electronic Literature Organization's website (<http://eliterature.org/2008/06/electronic-literature-collection-vol-2---call-for-work/>). This example refers to the intention of compiling the *ELC2* previous to its official publication in 2011.

Finally, it is important to add that the *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Three (ELC3)* (Boluk et al., 2016) has been released in February 2016. Therefore, it could be possible to speak

of *posteriori* paratexts; for example, flashback glances or references made in the *ELC3* to the contents of *ELC1* or *ELC2*, “The Electronic Literature Organization (ELO), founded in 1999, has released two volumes collecting works of significance to the field: the *ELC1* (<http://collection.eliterature.org/1/>) in 2006 and the *ELC2* (<http://collection.eliterature.org/2/>) in 2011” (Editorial Statement, *ELC3*, 2016). The fact that there is allusion among the *Collections* sets an invitation for a comparative study about intertextuality in the paratextual organization of the three *Electronic Literature Collections*.

Substantial characteristics. The peritexts within the *ELC2* have a diverse composition, among which there are texts, icons, varied making materials, and factual messages. In Schmidt (2000) model of media dimensions this will be equivalent to the “semiotic dimension” of the *ELC2*. It is fundamental to begin by talking about the different texture of the *ELC2*’s creation resources (semiotic modes, semiotic resources); since it is the digital medium what functions as the enunciative device for the substantial characteristics to exist (or cease to exist) and exploit their features. By this, I mean that the online support of the *ELC2* is what enriches and constrains the way in which the paratextual messages are performed, sent and received. When speaking of “technological dimension” (Schmidt, 2000), I must mention that a USB flash drive publication of the *ELC2* is also available which is important to mention given that the results of the analysis could vary depending on the reading medium.

When referring to examples of only linguistic textual kind, I refer to the text (the written characters) by which the following elements are represented: “All Keywords”, “All Authors”, “All Titles”, “About”; the title of the collection (*Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two*), and the last name of the editors, Borràs, Memmott, Raley, Stefans. However, some of these texts have special features, as it is the case of “All Keywords”, “All Authors”, “All Titles”, and “About”. They have explorative-informative hyperlinks that redirect the reader to specific information concerning their content. The first three examples are alternative navigation pathways to approach the electronic literary works in the *ELC2*. The last example, “About” is a curious and informative route the reader can take to obtain further details regarding sponsors, publishers, editors, design, editorial

house, production, creative commons license, and Web and USB flash drive publications.

In terms of iconic representations, there are two main examples; the first one, is depicted by the design of the main mosaic index, a semiotic constellation of stories in itself whose truly unique “semiotic substance” must be examined (Ryan, 2014). As previously mentioned, this collage is created by screen captures that feature an evocative image of the selected EL work. Each of these denotative icons is an example of a peritext with iconic substantial characteristics that, in this specific case, is equivalent to the title of the work of EL that the reader has chosen to read.

It is important to underline that this action is performed as the reader moves through the surface of the *ELC2*; for there is a white rectangle that serves as a movie screen that shows the name of the electronic oeuvre, as well as the name of the author of the selected electronic literary work (as shown in [Figure 3](#) when selecting 88C). The second example is illustrated by two icons, the first one is the leading icon that appears in the main mosaic index which shows the logo of the Electronic Literature Organization (ELO); and the second one, is the last icon that is shown in the main mosaic index which displays the electronic address of the Organization’s webpage. It must be noted that both icons redirect the reader to the ELO’s main webpage for further reference.

In terms of factual paratextual messages, it can be questioned if the fact that the *ELC2* is published by the ELO increases the reliability of the electronic literary works. That is to say, if the fact of knowing that the selected works have been previously proofread by EL professionals, and therefore labelled and categorized as *electronic literature*, conditions the readers’ perception of the *ELC2*. In this sense, it must be noted that if the substantial characteristics of the paratexts create the context of the text, then *knowledge becomes a paratext*, because it is factual that the *ELC2* has been edited and approved by the ELO. This example underlines the “institutional dimension” and “cultural dimension” of the *ELC2* (Ryan, 2014; Schmidt, 2000). However, there is the other side to this situation, what if the reader encounters the *ELC2* by chance and has no knowledge of these facts? Will the reader be curious enough to investigate further? Will the composition of the paratexts in the

*ELC2* incite her/him to do it? If so, it can be suggested that if knowledge is a paratext, so is ignorance or the willingness to know.

Pragmatic characteristics. By pragmatic characteristics, I refer to the “characteristics of the situation of communication”; in other words, to the nature of the sender and the addressee<sup>1</sup>. In the case of the *ELC2*, “Electronic Literature Organization (ELO)” illustrates the sender because it represents the publishing house of the *ELC2* (“institutional dimension”). However, the specific senders of the spatial, temporal, substantial, pragmatic, and functional characteristics of the paratextual messages (*public* paratexts) within the *ELC2* are the editors in charge (Borràs, Memmott, Raley, Stefans); since they designed the way in which the *ELC2* is visually presented to the readers in the online edition (*publisher’s* paratext and *authorial* paratext). It must be stressed that the *ELC2* is referred as a complete text, not as individual works, and therefore, individual senders; in other words, the authors of each one of the electronic literary works.

Moreover, it seems to me there can be two sorts of “public” for the *ELC2*. On the one hand, critics and lovers of EL, students and researchers who are either doing specific research on the field or, just reading for pleasure and amusement. By this, I refer to individuals that one way or the other are related to the so-called EL community, and therefore are familiar with the *ELC2*. On the other hand, the “public” can be individuals that knew neither about the *ELC2* nor about the field of EL, and came across it by different circumstances, by different *hodos* (paths). It can be suggested that perhaps in their exploration of the labyrinths of the Web they ended up having the opportunity to browse through the *ELC2* (or *ELC1*, *ELC3*), and became interested or challenged by the subject.

In the latter example, it is important to underline that dissemination plays an important role in the acknowledgement of the *ELC2* to the public; not only because it is in this way that these sorts of literary artistic creations will reach an international and wider audience, but

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<sup>1</sup> From a different perspective, as noted by Charaudeau (2006, pt. 1), the elements that composed the situation of communication are the following, i.e., the identity of the exchange partners, the purpose of the exchange, the content at stake, and the material circumstances that surround it. (cf. III.1.4.1).

also because the challenge precisely relies on how to interest new readers to approach these novel proposals of extended and experimental literature. In my view, a true dissemination will also aid to shape and create the identity of EL as literature.

Additionally, it should be noted that most of the electronic literary works are in English (82%), which means that if not mandatory it is expected for the audience to have this linguistic competence. The other languages in which the reader can explore the works are: Catalan, Dutch, English, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish, which make the non-English works the 18% of the *ELC2*. It is important to mention these facts given that it might create linguistic boundaries when it comes to reaching wider reading audiences. This echoes Ryan's (2014, p. 29) emphasis on the cultural dimension of media, which she addresses as, "the public recognition of media as forms of communication, behaviours, practices and institutions that support them".

Finally, a last example of pragmatic paratextual characteristics of the *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two* (2011) is the fact that the title of the collection has implicit two pieces of information (*illocutory force*). Firstly, the assertion of a previous volume, *Electronic Literature Collection Volume One* (2006) (<http://collection.eliterature.org/1/>) edited by N. Katherine Hayles, Nick Montfort, Scott Rettberg, Stephanie Strickland; and secondly, the possibility of a third one in the coming years<sup>2</sup>. For me this fact reinforces the above-mentioned idea that the paratextual message has the force of bringing knowledge, acknowledgement, and expectation to the addressee (*illocutionary force*).

Functional characteristics. Thus, how is the relation between *collection*, author(s), and reader accomplished in the design and composition of the electronic oeuvres that constitute the *ELC2*? Is the arrangement and activity of the paratextual messages successful in terms of interpretation of the text? As part of the audience that has experienced reading electronic works from the *ELC2*, I can say that the search for associations, or echoes, in comparison to the reading letters in the printed medium, is a fact to which I have been

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<sup>2</sup> The *Collection of Electronic Literature Volume Three* (ELC3) was published in February, 2016. <http://collection.eliterature.org/3/>

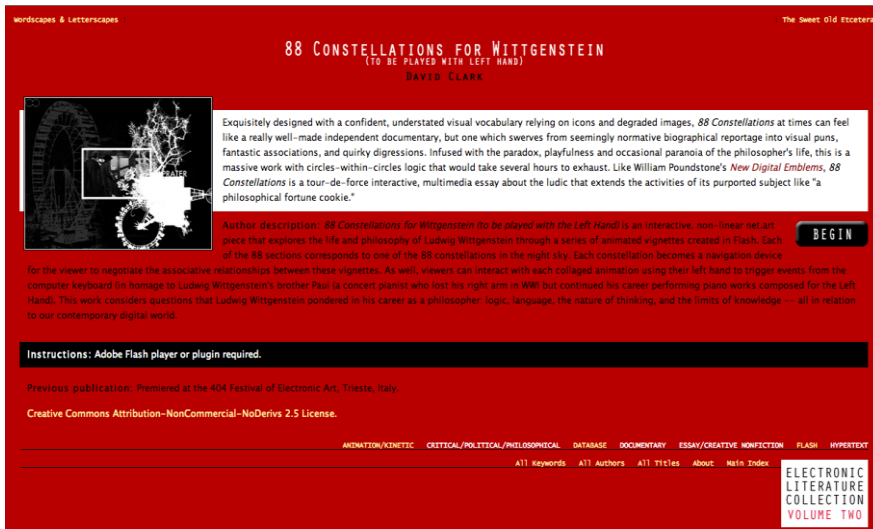


exposed since my first reading experience (2012) of the *ELC2*. And what is more, based on this fact I have inevitably questioned myself about the way of managing the appreciation of the aesthetic use of digital media within the arrangement and content of the *ELC2*.

I consider the *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two* is an example of how digital media generates innovative ways of creating paratextual messages whose main functionality is not only to give mobility but also to provide new materiality to the text, a plurality of semiotic substances, which in a way create an ekfrastic multilingual narrative. Therefore, it is possible to say that in the *ELC2* the act of navigation mainly happens through the peritext. For it guides, orients, supports, and gives directions to the reader to construct her/his unique *hodos* (path) of exploration. The new multi-materialities (semiotic substances) of the peritext become the guide through the navigation of the *ELC2*.

Lastly, the innovations of the paratextual discourse in the *ELC2* create a special materiality that is depicted by the following examples: a) explorative-informative hyperlinks that effectively redirect the reader to detail information concerning “keywords”, “authors”, “titles”, “sponsors”, “design”, “editorial house”, “production”, “publisher”, “formats of publication”, “awareness of creative commons license”; b) dynamic screens that previously display the title and the author of the chosen electronic literary work; and lastly, c) a screen-capture mosaic index that visually portrays by means of screen captures each of the sixty-three electronic literary works that compose the *ELC2*, in a way, a literary narrative materialized in a screen-capture mosaic index.

## 2.2 Presentation of 88C within the ELC2



**Figure 4.** Presentation of 88C within ELC2:  
[http://collection.eliterature.org/2/works/clark\\_wittgenstein.html](http://collection.eliterature.org/2/works/clark_wittgenstein.html)

Spatial characteristics. As it has been mentioned, 88C can be accessed by clicking on its individual icon that is found in the main mosaic index of the ELC2's main page. Once it has been chosen, as a simulation of the turning of a book page, the reader finds her/himself in a new screenic surface; where a diversity of paratextual elements, which will guide her/him through the e-lit work's information, are displayed. Jeanneret (2000) reminds us that turning a page "doesn't involve any particular interpretation of the text"; on the contrary, in an interactive work, "clicking on a hyperword or an icon is itself an interpretative act. The interactive gesture is primarily the actualization of an interpretation through a gesture" (Jeanneret, 2000, p. 113). Furthermore, in terms of paratextual spatial categories (peritext and epitext), akin to Figure 3, the examples found in Figure 4 are mainly represented by *informative peritexts* (cf. III.1.6.3).

It is important to clarify that the following paratextual spatial description has been made from top to bottom based on the screen capture of Figure 4. On the top left corner, there is the name of the preceding e-lit work, which in this case, refers to *Wordscapes and*

*Letterscapes* (Cho, 2002); on the top right corner, there is the name of the succeeding e-lit work, which in this example refers to *The Sweet Old Etcetera* (Clifford, 2006). This is followed by two central pieces of information, the display of the EL work's title, and the author's name, *88 Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)* (Clark, 2008).

In the following section, there is an image that preview, what it can be inferred, is the featuring of one of the constellations belonging to Clark's e-lit work. This might be considered as an example of intertextuality by means of allusion. As each work in the collection, 88C is accompanied by two descriptions; the first one is a review made by the editors of the *ELC2*, and the second one is a description written by each of the selected authors included in the *ELC2*. It is significant to mention that the author's description is labelled by the words "author description", whereas the editors' description is missing this label. This fact can also be found in the *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature* (2012) where both labels: "author's description" and "editor's description" are missing, leaving the reader free to interpret the source of the description of the works (cf. [V.2.2-spatial](#)).

In the subsequent section, the next peritext that comes across the reader's navigating is the linguistic text "BEGIN" which is inscribed in a black icon. Following this information, framed in a black rectangular shape, a small set of instructions is displayed: "Adobe Flash player or plugin required" (instructions by means of paratexts). In the next line, there is additional information that shows the e-lit work was premiered at the 404 Festival of Electronic Art in Trieste Italy (2008). This is an example of exhibitions standing as *distant paratextual memories*.

Apart from this, it is important to add that the subsequent peritext is the "Creative Commons Noncommercial License", which is highlighted in yellow letters. At the bottom of [Figure 4](#), the following keywords are displayed: animation/kinetic, critical/political/philosophical, database, documentary, essay/creative non-fiction, flash and hypertext. Moreover, the reader encounters the following information marked by the words, "All Keywords", "All Authors", "All titles", "About", which are displayed along with the words "Main Index". Finally, as a closure

of the spatial peritextual distribution of the e-lit work's presentation, the logo of the *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two* is presented at the bottom right corner.

Temporal characteristics. *88C for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)* was published in 2008 according to the information provided by the *ELC2*. Therefore, all the corresponding peritexts (*original* paratexts) to which I have referred in the description of the spatial peritextual characteristics of [Figure 4](#) date from 2011; which is the year the collection was not only compiled but also opened to online access. It is important to bear in mind that this does not mean that the editors' review and the author's description were created that same year (2011). This means that they were put together as part of the presentation of the work within the *ELC2* in 2011. This fact creates temporal confrontations concerning date variations among *prior* paratexts, *original* paratexts, *posteriori* paratexts.

Taking that into account, a noteworthy example of *prior* paratexts is the epitext, "Chemical Pictures" (<http://chemicalpictures.net>), which is David Clark's personal website created in 2008. On his website, *88C*'s digital artist describes the e-lit work as an "net.art project", at the same he provides a detailed description of the work, the same exact words that appear in the *ELC2* (2011), presents a screen capture gallery of the *88C*, lists awarded prizes of the digital work, and lastly shares a list of screenings and exhibitions around the world (2008-2012); once again exhibitions are a potential example of *distant paratextual memories*.

It can be suggested that an example of *posteriori* paratexts is indeed the *original* paratexts of *88C* within the *ELC2*. That is, if the text's original date of publication is 2008, and the official publication of the *ELC2* is 2011; then all the editing and arranging of the presentation of Clark's electronic literary work within the *ELC2* becomes a *posteriori* paratext of the original work. Another example of *posteriori* paratexts, in this case represented by epitexts, is the reviews of Clark's work that have appeared in electronic journals after its online publication as part of the *ELC2* (2011). The reader can find examples of such critical writing in the *ELMCIP Electronic Literature Knowledge Database*: Flores (2011a) and Hayles (2012).

To finalize this section, it is significant to add that the “Creative Commons Noncommercial License” is highlighted in white letters and contains a link that redirects to the Creative Commons main webpage. This fact is mentioned given that there is reference to a *prior* paratext (the ELO’s website) that shows the Creative Commons’ label as a part of the requirements stated by the ELO in the *ELC2*’s “call for works” in 2008.

Substantial characteristics. The paratextual material of the presentation of 88C within the *ELC2* is conformed mainly by peritexts, which are represented by texts and icons. However, as it has been previously explained (cf. IV.2.1-substantial), the fact that the digital medium functions as the enunciative device is what gives these texts and icons a different nature. By this, I mean that the materiality of the presentation of 88C is what mainly offers a different aesthetical navigation to the reader’s experience while exploring Clark’s digital work.

In terms of linguistic text with no hyperlink features, the study shows that they are illustrated by the following peritexts: the title of the e-lit work; the name of the author; the author’s description of the e-lit work; the editor’s review of the e-lit work; the set of instructions provided; and the references to previous exhibitions or publications. Therefore, examples of linguistic textual kind with linking features are illustrated by the following peritexts: the name of the previous and next e-lit work in the *ELC2*; the specific link in the editors’ description referring to another e-lit work within the *ELC2*, references to e-lit works with similar characteristics (*New Digital Emblems* by William Poundstone) are also given; the notification of the use of Creative Commons License; the keywords by which the e-lit work has been archived (animation/kinetic, critical/political/philosophical, database, documentary, essay/creative non-fiction, flash and hypertext); and the browsing options “All Keywords”, “All Authors”, “All titles”, “About” and “Main Index” (Figure 4).

Additionally, in terms of iconic representations, there are three main examples of peritexts; the first one, is depicted by an icon that, as a way to announce the work, previews a setting of one of the constellations in Clark’s e-lit work; the second one is illustrated by a black icon with the option “BEGIN”, which serves as a *threshold*

and immediately redirects the reader to the first screen page of 88C; and finally, the third one is represented by the logo of the *ELC2*, which instantly redirects the reader to the main screen-capture mosaic index page. “BEGIN” stands as an example of a *performative* paratext.

In terms of factual paratextual messages, there are several examples that need to be explained. First and foremost, it must be underlined that apart from the fact that the e-lit work is considered *electronic literature* because it is compiled within the *ELC2*; there is the fact that in the field of EL it has been categorized by the editors of the *ELC2* under the following keywords: “animation/kinetic, critical/political/philosophical, database, documentary, essay/creative non-fiction, flash and hypertext”; which in a certain way influences, filters and draws a screen of criticism to the reader’s expectations’ of the work. This information enhances the reader’s vocabulary and terminology in regards to EL.

Moreover, other examples of factual paratextual messages are found within the two main descriptions provided by the editors and the author. In my view, “the content” provided in both descriptions functions as a “vestibule” to the first screen page of the e-lit work. In the editors’ description, when it comes to describing the work, the editors speak of “visual vocabulary”, “icons”, “degraded images”, “visual puns”, “fantastic associations”, “quirky digressions”, “paradox”, “playfulness”, “a tour-de-force interactive multimedia essay”, and “a philosophical fortune cookie”; all of which will be studied and exemplified along the present analysis (cf. IV.3).

In the author’s description, Clark depicts the diverse subjects that build up 88C; that is, the reader learns that he considers his work to be “an interactive, non-linear net.art piece” composed of “constellations that serve as navigation devices” that help the “viewer” (Clark does not refer to a “reader”) “to negotiate the associative relationships between animated vignettes created in Flash” (Author’s Description, 88C’s Presentation within *ELC2*, [Figure 4](#)). Besides, it becomes explicit that the e-lit work is based on the life and philosophy of Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein, the Austrian philosopher (1889-1951).

Another important factual message that the reader learns from Clark's description is the fact that the peritext *88 Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)* (my emphasis) stands for an "homage to Ludwig Wittgenstein brother Paul Wittgenstein (a concert pianist who lost his right arm in World War I but continued his career performing piano works composed for the Left Hand)". Likewise, another factual paratext message is that in keeping with the information provided by the editors of the *ELC2*, the e-lit work was premiered at the 404 Festival of Electronic Art in Trieste Italy (2008); and as further indicated by one of the epitexts belonging to the ELMCIP, it was also awarded the *New Media Writing Prize* in 2011 by Bournemouth University (UK) (Flores, 2011a). As it can be seen, all these peritextual substantial characteristics broaden the reader's knowledge of the text before departure.

Pragmatic characteristics. As explained above, the pragmatic characteristics of the paratextual message refer to the "characteristics of the situation of communication"; i.e. to the sender and the addressee. In the presentation of *88C* all the information provided by *ELC2* within [Figure 4](#), makes the Electronic Literature Organization (ELO) the official sender (*publisher's* paratext) because it represents the publishing house of the *ELC2*. Therefore, all the specific senders of the spatial, temporal, substantial, pragmatic, and functional characteristics of the paratextual messages (*public* paratexts) within the *ELC2* are the editors in charge (Borràs, Memmott, Raley, Stefans), given that they were the ones that designed the way in which the *ELC2* is visually presented to the readers in the online edition (*publisher's* paratext and *authorial* paratext). It should be noted that the only additional (*authorial* paratext) is Clark's own description of the work, which makes Clark the author of a peritext that serves as a *prior* paratext since there is record that shows that the same description was presented by Clark on his personal website in 2008 (*prior* epitext).

Although, it may be considered that there are two sorts of "public" for the *ELC2*; that does not mean that the same public reached this specific e-lit work. To my view, there is a specific pathway in the navigation process of each individual reader that has reached the description of *88C*. For this reason, it can be suggested that there

are different ways to access [Figure 4](#), which are not strictly via the main screen-capture mosaic index. Following this possibility, the reader can be redirected from three potential different pathways: “All keywords”, “All authors”, and “All titles”. If so, a new reading is conceivable; in other words, if the reader is interested or attracted by one or more of the keywords by which the e-lit work has been archived and categorized; therefore, s/he would have accessed the e-lit work through classification (*illocutionary force*) (i.e. animation/kinetic, critical/political/philosophical, database, documentary, essay/creative non-fiction, flash and hypertext).

A second possibility is that the reader simply belongs to one of Wittgenstein’s philosophy lovers, consequently was attracted by the title of the e-lit work; and finally, decided to experience it. It must be underlined that the idea of the paratextual message bringing knowledge, acknowledgement, or willingness to know to the addressee is again reinforced by these examples (*illocutionary force*). Yet, there is also the case in which the paratext is purely *performative* as it happens with the peritext, *88 Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)* (my emphasis) since only by reading the title of the e-lit work the reader instantly gets an instruction by the author, “to use her/his left hand to trigger events from the computer keyboard”.

Functional characteristics. The paratextual dynamics of the presentation of *88C* have given us an overall idea of the e-lit works’ spatial and aesthetical organization within the *ELC2*. By exploring through different navigating paratextual pathways, the reader has been able not only to browse from one e-lit work to another but also to discover different ways to approach the *ELC2*. Hence, it can be said that the innovations of the paratextual discourse in *88C* are depicted by the new tasks the reader is able to perform: a) add depth and information to her/his reading by using explorative hyperlinks, b) visually and thematically portray what s/he can expect from the e-lit work; c) enhance her/his vocabulary and terminology in regards to EL’s categorization; d) learn new ways of archiving and presenting an e-lit work from experienced editors; e) explore through explorative and interpretative hyperlinks the intrinsic connections of the digital works; f) be aware of instructions by the editors of the *ELC2* strictly concerning the computational programs needed in order to experience the e-lit work; g) pay close attention



to other sort of advices on how to navigate the e-lit work by reading the author's description, which is fully charged with reading suggestions for the "viewer"; h) learn about artistic credits of the work in festivals and exhibitions; i) realize about copyright requirements of the e-lit works of the *ELC2*; and lastly, j) be aware of the challenges to aesthetically distribute spatial features in order to create a visually successful presentation of a work of EL.



### 3. 88C: VARIABILITY OF THE TEXT COMPOSITION

#### 3.1 Navigating across 88C

In 88C, *the variability of the text composition* is mainly constructed by the TSUs (Temporal Semiotic Units) that inhabit each unique star. The construction of meaning of each individual star is not strictly related to the gestural manipulation of the reader. Though the peritextual message, “to be played with the Left Hand” may imply that this feature is available in every star, the reader’s manipulation and interaction possibilities with the digital work vary from one constellation to another, underlining their uniqueness. As I shall present later in a specific example (UMI), the reader occasionally inserts additional semiotic systems through SUMs, which creates examples of gestural (melodic) manipulation and I would say of visual music (cf. IV.5).

The analytical approach is organized in three main sections; in the first one, I describe the following topics: a) the reading pathway I have chosen to follow in order to analyse *88 Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)*: Cassiopeia (CAS), Ursa Minor (UMI), and Hydra (HYA); b) the general structure of Clark’s digital oeuvre (paratextual and semiotic description) what I describe as the antechamber of the digital work; and finally c) the possible paratextual negotiations and strategies that can be used when navigating through the constellation map.

The second section centres on exploring multimodal and multimedia discourse elements found in Cassiopeia, Ursa Minor, and Hydra. In my quest to find examples of literariness in digital works I will examine, as well as study cases of intertextuality, polyphony, and enunciation found in the constellation’s narrative discourse. Apart from that I will focus on exploring the “pluricode couplings” that spring from the semiotic dimension (multimodal and multimedia discourse), as well as on the rhetoric effects that these “couplings” may have on the digital work’s construction of meaning due to its lability properties (Saemmer, 2008b, 2009a, 2010a, 2013). I specifically seek to find examples of figures of

animation and manipulation within the constellations. The third section aims at understanding how temporal issues can be studied in these new literary creations. I will follow Koskimaa classification of “temporal possibilities in programmed texts” (limiting reading time, delaying reading time, limiting the reading possibilities, temporally evolving texts) (Koskimaa, 2010a, pp. 135–136) (cf. III.2.2.3); as well as, his classification of “temporal levels for cybertexts with narrative content” (user time, discourse time: pseudo-time and true time, story time, system time) (Koskimaa, 2010a, pp. 135–136) (cf. III.2.2.3).

It is helpful to mention that echoing the previous section (cf. IV.2), each hypermedia narrative star has been labelled with a screen capture number in order to simulate the reader’s action when experiencing the digital work. Therefore, given that the paratextual description of the *ELC2* and *88C* within the *ELC2* ended in Figure 4, Clark’s presentation of *88C* corresponds to Figure 5; the introductory video of *88C* corresponds to Figure 6; the main constellation map (departure point) corresponds to Figure 7; and so forth. Additionally, as mentioned in the general overview of the analysis (cf. IV.1), the audio and video transcriptions that belong to the explored path of constellations are provided. Along the following sections, a parenthesis indicating the number of the corresponding transcription is placed on the left side of the quote.

## 3.2 Accessing the Constellation Map

### 3.2.1 *The Antechamber of 88C*

Before exploring the main constellation map, the reader experiences, two scenarios that can be described as the antechambers of *88C*. Digital works tend to have complex and multimedia furnished anterooms, welcoming spaces for the reader to contemplate and take the time to choose a departure point. In *88C*, following the *ELC2* pathway, the reader immediately encounters Clark’s proposition which consists of a narrativized antechamber that in a way announces the work major themes.

Set in black and white background, the spatial presentation is composed of the following paratextual-semiotic forms: a leading icon combining two texts (the title of the work and the name of the author) (peritext), which contains a link that instantly starts the digital work; three additional linguistic texts (peritexts), the first one labelled, “Blog” that redirects to a blog created by Clark to discuss 88C specifically (epitext); the second one labelled, “Chemical Pictures” that redirects to Clark’s personal blog, named “Chemical Pictures” as well, where the reader learns about 88C and other projects and writings by the author (epitext); and the third one labelled, “A is for apple” that redirects to Clark’s first web-based project “A is for Apple”<sup>3</sup> (2002) (epitext).

Moreover, it is inviting to take a minute and observe the additional denotative icons (peritexts), or adornments of the antechamber that compose the black and white front page of 88C (Figure 5): Rodin’s sculpture *Le penseur* (1880); a grand piano; Wittgenstein’s silhouette; the number **88** circled in a white sphere signifying: the **88** constellations in the sky, the **88** keys of a piano, a double representation of the infinity symbol  $[\infty]$ , Wittgenstein’s date of birth 1[**88**]9. Likewise, there is an image of Cassiopeia’s constellation that alludes to the letter “**W**” which creates a visual association in the reader’s mind to that same letter in “Ludwig Wittgenstein”; this fact clearly constructs an intertextual effect for the reader will begin to collect the associations to the letter **W** throughout the journey. Finally, there is an image of a list of numbers showing the corresponding distance in light years of each of Cassiopeia’s stars. It must be mentioned that in his own presentation of 88C outside the *ELC2* (epitext), Clark draws hints and clues via icons, images, allusions, contemplation and silence that will certainly come across the reader’s explorative navigating later.

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<sup>3</sup> “A is for Apple” (2002) hosts a quite similar structure to 88C in terms of labyrinths and interconnectivity between different fields of knowledge, arts and discourses.

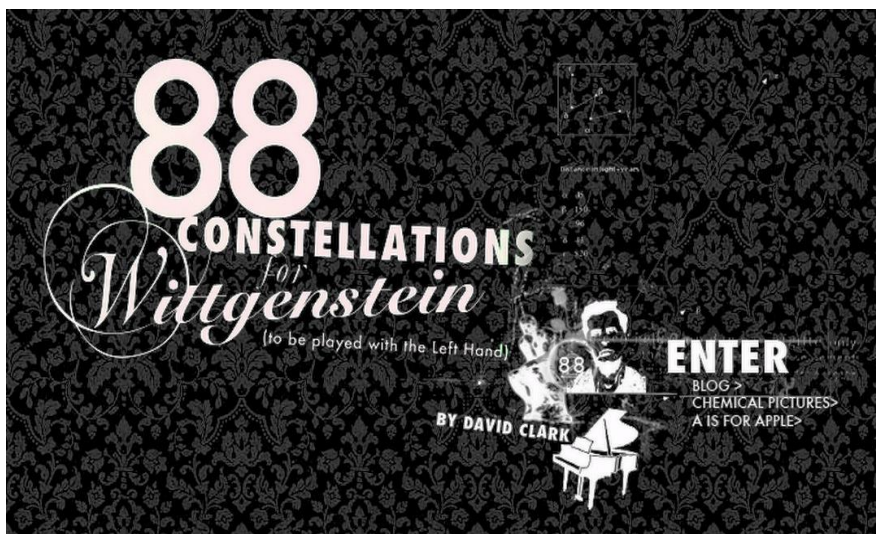


Figure 5. David Clark's presentation of 88C: <http://88constellations.net/>.

In David Clark's Presentation of 88C there are neither sounds nor videos. This part of the antechamber of 88C possesses a highly symbolic yet silent atmosphere; an atmosphere that, in its own universe of fertile thoughts and imagination, may tell stories in an ekphrasitic way. For instance, the variety of stories that can be deduced from Rodin's sculpture *Le penseur* (created in 1880) (exhibited in 1888) and the cultural and poetic touchstones that the inclusion of this image implies (e.g. Dante's legacy). It is not until the reader decides to continue exploring the digital work by clicking on the linguistic text (peritext) "ENTER" that s/he encounters movement joined with new forms of expression; the screen is conquered by moving images, moving words, digitalized voices, sound effects, and music. This description refers to the first video of 88C (Figure 6). The Flash video lasts approximately 37 seconds (37''); I mention the duration of the video because it will be relevant when talking about temporality, since these 37 seconds would be considered within the analysis of the *reading time*, *true time*, and *system time* of 88C (cf. III.2.2.3).

As the journey continues the option "skip" is provided at the bottom right corner of the screen. If the reader decides to click on it, s/he will be redirected to the main constellation map (Figure 7). Nonetheless, the video is introductory, explanatory and helpful. It stands as the formal oral introduction (peritext) to Clark's digital

oeuvre, which underlines the new materiality of the peritext. Firstly, by means of a voice-over (filmic technique), the reader encounters the omniscient narrator for the first time; secondly, if the reader pays close attention to the spoken words, moving text and moving images, a brief but instructive description of the work is provided; and thirdly, it is the first time that 88C is referred to as a “story” by the narrative voice; which means that the reader’s explorative journey includes discovering the features of story, discourse and narration (Genette, 1980) throughout a multimedia night sky.

- (1) Join the dots...join the dots together...make pictures in the sky...connect the model of our thinking to these drawings in the sky...this story is about a man named Wittgenstein...he was a philosopher...his life was a series of moments and our story is a series of constellations. (88C, transcription of [Figure 6](#)) (my emphasis)

By listening to the video’s oral narrative, the reader gets direct instructions from the narrative voice on how to navigate through the digital work; the imperatives, “join the dots together (repeated several times), make pictures in the sky, connect the model of our thinking”; prepare the reader for the tasks s/he will perform during her/his expedition across the philosophical constellations that build up the “story” surrounding Wittgenstein’s life. It must be underlined that the inclusion of an introductory video stands as an example of novel paratextual techniques when it comes to the different materialities in which instructions are presented in digital works.

I previously emphasised on the word “story” because it is essential for the reader to comprehend how the story of 88C is recounted; how the involvement of the narrator is vital throughout the whole text given that he is the leading voice of the narrative discourse from which, as I shall present later, the multivoiced-ness will spring in different forms and textures. And furthermore, it is important for the reader to comprehend how the semiotic systems are mingled together when connecting each hypermedia explorative star in order to construct the narrative discourse. Ensslin (2014a, p. 262) best describes these new conditions of writing as follows:

These semiotic systems comprise text, graphics, digitized speech, audio files, animation, and film. Produced, for example, by means of HTML, Javascript, Flash, and Shockwave technologies, hypermedia is characterized by a variety of pastiche and collage techniques.

Taking this into account, it must be mentioned that the video is composed of a variety of semiotic forms that emerge as flying and twinkling objects in the screenic surface. In terms of linguistic text (peritexts), there is the title and the name of the author at the beginning of the video; the name “Ludwig Wittgenstein” appears in the middle; the emphasis in capital letters of the phrase “JOIN THE DOTS” appears at the end. In terms of evocative images, there is the constellation 04 Orion (which the reader later learns is devoted to Ludwig Wittgenstein’s Biography), a left hand (referring to both Wittgenstein’s brother Paul and the creative gestural manipulation available), a sphere making latitudes and longitudes, a grand piano, an elephant, a telescope, the number **88**, various constellations joined by connecting dots, a picture of adult Wittgenstein, the symbol of money, the symbol of the Roman God Mars, a spider, a silhouette of a man, the silhouette of Charlie Chaplin (b. 1889), a rhinoceros, a building, Rodin’s sculpture *Le penseur*, a globe, a duck, and a silhouette of two women featuring the number 88, to name but a few of the quickly displayed images. As before noted, such rain of signification creates an atmosphere that may tell stories in an ekphrasitic way (Figure 6).



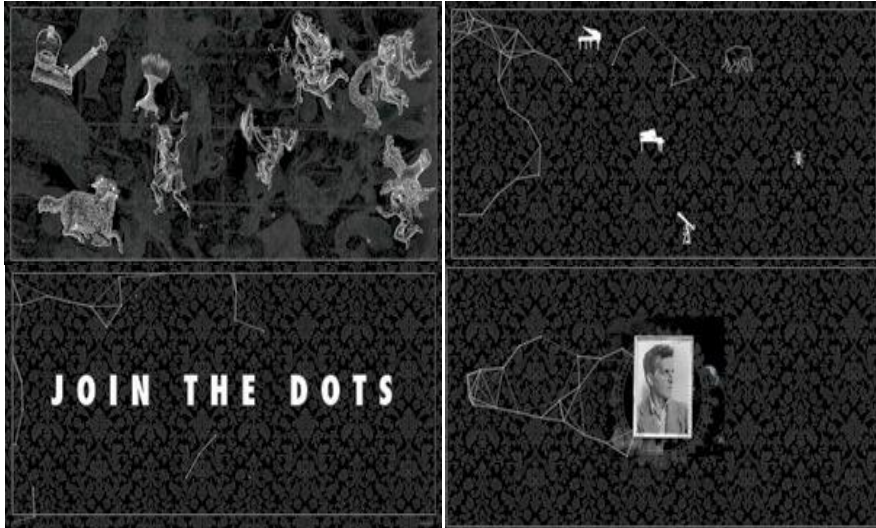


Figure 6. Screen captures from video 1 shown in order of appearance (upper left, upper right, bottom left, bottom right), 88C: <http://88constellations.net/88.html>.

### 3.2.2 *Join the Dots*

Traces of interaction and manipulation found in the antechamber of 88C are few. It can be said that the principal interaction is, on the one hand, to activate hyperlinks in order to reach the main scenario of the digital work (the constellation map) and, on the other hand, to obtain additional information about the author (epitexts). Given that the act of manipulation when reading EL is based on the reader's gestural manipulation of semiotic forms (text, image, sound, video) (Bouchardon & Heckman, 2012), it must be underlined that in [Figure 5](#) and [Figure 6](#), the reader's single interaction is depicted by the use of linguistic text (paratexts) standing as explorative and informative hyperlinks. The reader does not interact nor manipulate other semiotic forms; however, s/he re(collects) semiotic forms and contemplates.

As of now, the reader is more a viewer, as pointed out by Clark in the author's description found in the *ELC2*, "Each constellation becomes a navigation device for the viewer to negotiate the associative relationships between these vignettes" (David Clark,

description of 88C within the *ELC2*) (my emphasis) (cf. [IV.2.2-substantial](#)). Since there is no possibility to manipulate any other elements, the reader must observe and listen; not even time can be manipulated at this point given that the introductory video starts, runs and finalizes without giving the opportunity of being paused, rewound, or stopped (*system time*).

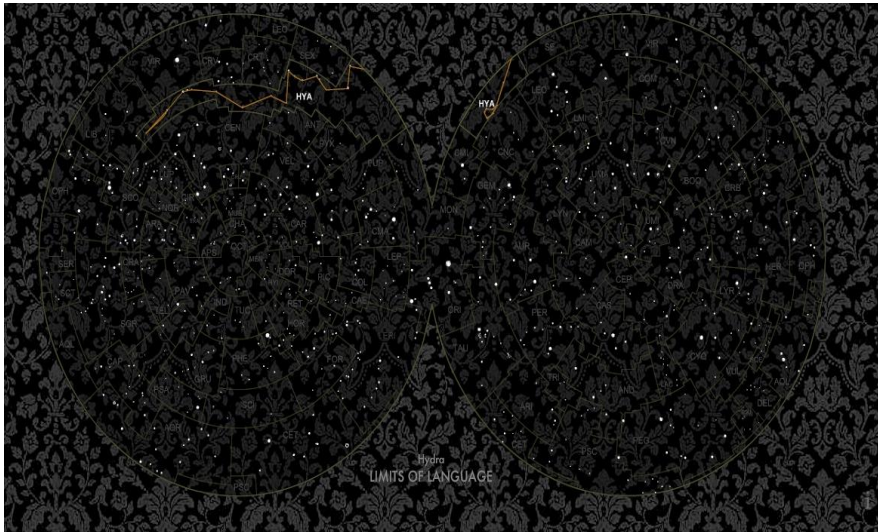
The purpose of the explorative and informative hyperlinks is to weave the thread and path to enter the digital work or, if wished, to deviate the path to access alternative texts. Still, “turning a page doesn’t involve any specific interpretation of the text” states Yves Jeanneret, “on the contrary, in an interactive work, clicking on a hyperword or an icon is itself an interpretative act. The interactive gesture is primarily the actualization of an interpretation through a gesture.” (Jeanneret (2000, p. 113) quoted in Bouchardon and Heckman (2012, pt. 2)). Therefore, the significance of the interaction up to this point is to interpret the paratexts and semiotic forms that compose the antechamber of 88C through the one click away co-construction of a new narrative experience and modes of signification. Let the reader not forget that there is no better way to interlace the story of Ludwig Wittgenstein than by “joining the dots together, making pictures in the sky (mind), and connecting the model of our thinking to those drawings in the sky” (88C, transcription [Figure 6](#)) (my emphasis).

### **3.3 Reading Explorative Stars**

#### *3.3.1 The Constellation Map*

The map is composed of 88 constellations set on a starry night background. There is a sound that resembles a drum and simultaneity creates an atmosphere of continuity while the reader chooses the constellation to be explored; the music is composed of a repetitive tune that lasts for as long as the reader surfs and hovers the pointer over the night sky. This music possesses a temporal effect (*music time*) that adds expectation and suspense to the narrative. The reader realizes that her/his journey is not only a *visual* meaning-making experience, but also an *acoustic* meaning-

making one. Different semiotic systems begin to unfold and to weave meaning. As the reader moves the mouse over both Southern and Northern hemispheres, s/he explores not only the original names of each constellation, but also the thematic name Clark has given to each constellation as a creative way to underline a specific topic.

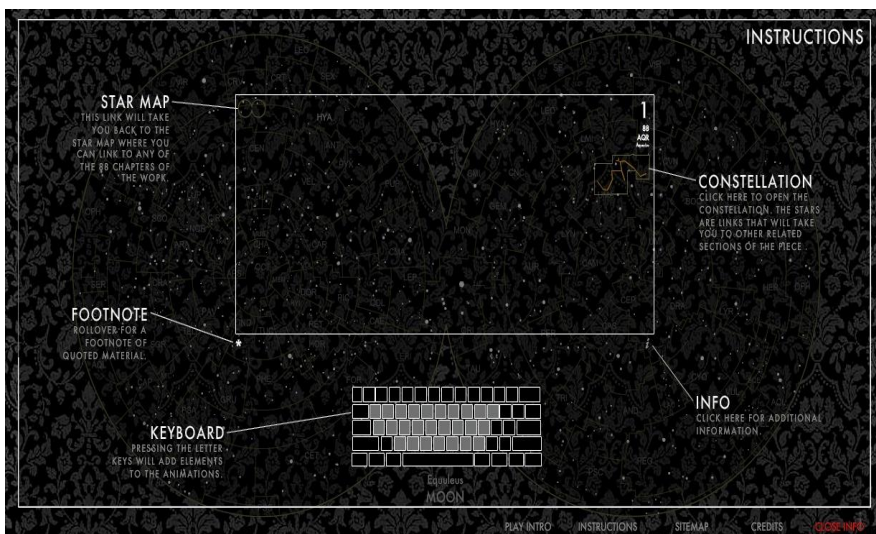


**Figure 7. Constellation map presenting 59 Hydra: The Limits of Language, 88C: <http://88constellations.net/88.html>.**

Additionally, an abbreviation in the surface of each constellation is depicted; e.g. “Aquarius (AQR): 88”; “Ursa Minor (UMI): Constellations”; “Hydra (HYA): The Limits of Language”. By an association of touch, space and infinite, Clark makes sure the reader feels the universe (work) at hand which creates a feeling of possession, expectation and fluidity. If selected, the constellation contour illuminates in a flashy yellow tone, which indicates its boundaries within the neighbouring constellations in the sky. The explorative stars that glow are united in a red-orange light, which shows the “joining dots” of each star within the selected constellation.

Meanwhile, the sound effect continues, on the backstage of the constellation map in an attempt to manipulate the reader's choice and emotion (music *time*). Finally, the name of the constellation appears as a linguistic text at the bottom of the sky map. It is important to mention that the division of both hemispheres is intentionally combined by a heart constellation: Orion (04), which is intentionally devoted to Ludwig Wittgenstein's biography.

The screenic surface hosts other paratexts, for instance, there is an icon in the bottom right corner represented by the letter "i", which redirects the reader to specific information regarding the creation and the instructions needed to interact with 88C. There are always ways to intensify and enhance the navigation. If the reader is curious and wishes to learn more about the digital work, within the same screen night sky scenario the options: "play intro, instructions, sitemap, credits, close info" appear as the constellation map fades away. It is important to point out that the specific instructions regarding the significant use of the "Left Hand" while reading the digital work are given in the above-mentioned instructions' section. All these navigation options are examples of semiotic paratextual elements that show Clark's careful touch and thought to guide the reader through his work (Figure 8).



**Figure 8. Information contents and paratextual instructions, 88C.**

### 3.3.2 *To be played with the Left Hand*

When referring to Dostoyevsky's literary style in his novels, Bakhtin (1981, p. 263) wrote, "He transposes a symphonic (orchestrated) theme on the piano keyboard". This quote suggests an intertextuality effect to the paratext: *88 Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)*. That is, if Bakhtin's idea is extended to 88C it can be said that by using a plurality of artistic references (multi-voices, multi-styles, multi-languages, multi-discourses); David Clark is transposing each one of these artistic references in a hypermedial way throughout 88C. For these voices, are *orchestrated* by a piano keyboard (the interaction and manipulation of the computer keyboard) and indeed artistically played in a different "key"; to put it differently, these voices display diverse modes of signification by delivering harmony, melody, and tune with a different materiality (e.g. repetition through twinkling stars).

The map offers spatial navigation through the interaction of the reader with explorative, interpretative, and configurative hyperlinks. Explorative because the reader searches in the starry sky for the constellation s/he wishes to explore; interpretative because up to this point s/he reflects on the importance and mystery of the "clicking" pathway s/he has followed to be in that precise time and space; and configurative because s/he is about to choose her/his first set of hypermedia explorative stars to construct her/his way to begin or end the "story". Apart from that, the reader learns that the story of Ludwig Wittgenstein possesses a multicursal non-linear navigation that allows her/him to choose among multiple paths from where s/he can start.

The reader must not only click on a link but also interpret the denotative name Clark has given to each constellation (e.g. Hydra (HYA): *The Limits of Language*). Therefore, two things can be pointed out; on the one hand, that gestural manipulation in this part of the navigation relies on the reader's interaction with linguistic text (paratexts), static but degraded images, and a repetitive background sound; and on the other hand, that the reader's choice of hypermedia explorative stars is determined by her/his own

*encyclopedia*, that is, her/his cultural, political, artistic, philosophical knowledge or, simply, by random chance or curiosity.

## 4. CASSIOPEIA 18 (*CASSIOPEIA*)

### 4.1 Voices in the Sky

The multi-voicedness created in 88C possesses different tinges, times and tunes. In the case of constellation number 18 Cassiopeia (*Cassiopeia*) (CAS), these traces are carefully drawn from Greek Mythology to Wittgenstein's diaries written during World War I<sup>4</sup>. From a narrative point of view, the story possesses a heterodiegetic omniscient narrator who inserts stories and utterances at different narrative discourse's levels. As the story flows, these voices gradually unfold, weaving at its pace the literariness of the work through polyphony, intertextuality and other voices of art.

- (2) Cassiopeia was a queen who was both beautiful and vain. Her vanity was to cause her great distress. As a punishment, Poseidon put Cassiopeia in the heavens on a chair that revolved around the North Pole so that half the time she was obliged to sit upside down. In his recollections of Wittgenstein, Norman Malcolm notes an uncharacteristically whimsical moment: "Once when we were walking across Jesus Green at night, he pointed at Cassiopeia and said that it was a 'W' and that it meant Wittgenstein. I said that I thought it was an 'M' written upside down and that it meant Malcolm. He gravely assured me that I was wrong". For the Greeks the W was Cassiopeia's crown as well as a chair. Is it a W or an M? A chair or a crown? A blessing or a curse? It all depends on how you look at it. It depends on your point of view. "The world of a happy man is different from that of the unhappy man", Wittgenstein once said. Wittgenstein struggled with his vanity throughout his life. He was repulsed by his arrogance and yet he aspired to greatness. In

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<sup>4</sup> Wittgenstein volunteered for the Austrian army in the First World War and was decorated for his bravery. He sought out particularly dangerous though not suicidal positions, apparently in an effort to test his fearlessness. A death wish and a desire to do his duty to the outmost are also possible motives. He was known by his fellow soldiers for his devotion to Leo Tolstoy's version of the Gospels. Near the end of the war he was captured and worked on the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* in a prisoner-of-war- camp in Italy (Richter, 2014, p. 199).



a dairy written when Wittgenstein was a soldier in World War I, he wrote: “Oh, how I wish that I could have been something! How I wish that I could have blazed across the sky like a star!”<sup>5</sup>

By means of narrativized speech, the heterodiegetic omniscient narrator opens the story by recounting Cassiopeia’s myth, which explains the name of the selected constellation and alludes to the image of the letter “W” that is graphically evoked by the stars that composed it. The reader finds her/himself in the extradiegetic level of the narrative discourse because the first story is being unfolded to her/him. By these words, the reader learns about Cassiopeia’s myth<sup>6</sup>, and therefore the first example of intertextuality by means of an allusion to Greek Mythology is announced, “Cassiopeia was a queen who was both beautiful and vain”. The ideas of circling and rotating are emphasised by the fact that Poseidon punished Cassiopeia for her arrogance by “putting her on a chair that revolved around the North Pole”. It is important to underline this fact given that the idea of visualizing something upside down is repeated along the narrative discourse. This technique is used to enhance the importance of double meaning and hyperbolic animated effects, which is fundamental for the construction of the visual puns further presented when experiencing the constellation’s semiotic forms (cf. IV.4.2).

The intradiegetic level of the narrative is introduced when the narrative voice mentions Norman Malcolm’s recollections of Ludwig Wittgenstein<sup>7</sup>; the narrative voice introduces Malcolm and

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<sup>5</sup> Before the text is analysed, it is important to bear in mind that the reader experiences the story through a spoken narrative (Flash video); for this reason, the transcription of the recounted events is provided for a better *grasp* of the events in the story. This will be applied to the subsequent constellations: HYA and UMI.

<sup>6</sup> Cassiopeia. The mother of Andromeda and so proud of her beauty that she dared to compete with the Nereids or even, according to some writers, with Hera. The goddesses demanded of Poseidon that he should avenge this blow to their self-esteem and he sent a sea monster which laid waste Cassiopeia’s land. In order to appease the god’s wrath, Andromeda had to be exposed in expiation for the monster to do its worst, but Perseus appeared, freed her and bore her off with him. Cassiopeia was turned into a constellation (Grimal, 1985, p. 91).

<sup>7</sup> Malcolm, Norman. He was a friend and a student of Wittgenstein who became a well-known philosopher in his own right, working mostly on the philosophy of



Wittgenstein's walking *figures* by recreating a memory that Malcolm shared with Wittgenstein during their Cambridge years. This is presented in the narrative discourse by means of Malcolm's reported speech, which is recounted in indirect style, "Once when we were walking across Jesus Green at night, he pointed at Cassiopeia and said that it was a 'W' and that it meant Wittgenstein. I said that I thought it was an 'M' written upside down and that it meant Malcolm. He gravely assured me that I was wrong" (my emphasis).

In this recollection, there are two facts that must be underlined; on the one hand, the reader must know that this exact literary quotation can be found in Norman Malcolm's *Ludwig Wittgenstein, A memoir* (1962), which instantly makes it the second example of intertextuality through a literary reference. On the other hand, it is not a coincidence that the key subject of the recounted dialogue is, in fact, the limitlessness of visual representation. This is an allusion to Wittgenstein's "Picture Theory" within the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (*TLP*) (Wittgenstein, 1961) [1921]<sup>8</sup>; which states, "Our life has no end in just the way in which our visual field has no limits" (6.4311); "sentences or propositions are pictures of states of affairs in the world" (Richter, 2014, p. 145). Therefore, this literary allusion to the limitlessness of visual representation becomes the third example of intertextuality within the narrative discourse.

At this point, the narrative level is metadiegetic due to the inclusion within the narrative discourse of the recounted dialogue between Malcolm and Wittgenstein. The voice of Wittgenstein referred to by Malcolm's indirect style is heard for the first time and may stand as

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the mind and epistemology. Malcolm taught for many years at Cornell University and was one of the main routes through which Wittgenstein's ideas entered the United States. His books include *Dreaming* (1959), *Ludwig Wittgenstein, A memoir* (1962) and *Nothing is Hidden* (1986) (Richter, 2014, p. 115).

<sup>8</sup> The *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* was first published in 1921. Originally called *Logisch-Philosophische Abhandlung* ("Logico-Philosophical Treatise") was the only book published under Wittgenstein's name in his lifetime. In the preface to the book he says that its value consists in two things: "that thoughts are expressed in it" and "that it shows how little is achieved when these problems are solved." The book consists of numbered propositions in seven sets. At the end of the book (proposition 6.54) Wittgenstein says: "My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical" (Richter, 2014, p. 185).

a characterization technique in CAS. The fact of recounting a conversation to learn about the character's remarks adds not only an additional philosophical moment to the story, but also dynamism to its parallel visualization (cf. IV.4.2). In the frame of Cassiopeia's Myth within the recounted dialogue, the omniscient narrator inserts Malcolm and Wittgenstein discussion (parallel to the narrator and the narratee's evoked one) concerning the endless problems of representation while looking at Cassiopeia's visualization in the sky.

As the story goes back to the intradiegetic level of the narrative, the referred conversation opens the space for the upcoming questioning that the narrative voice is about to address to the reader, "Is it a **W** or an **M**? A chair or a crown? A blessing or a curse?" It must be brought to the reader's attention that these questions are strictly related to the visual and mental puns that through diverse voices the narrative discourse evokes; what is more, it can be even suggested that the narrative voice condenses in the following words what it seems to be the *leitmotiv* not only of the story but of the digital work, "It all depends on how you look at it. It depends on your point of view" (my emphasis).

As the story continues, the narrative voice integrates once again Wittgenstein's discourse; however, this time it is created by means of reported speech. "The world of a happy man is different from that of the unhappy man', Wittgenstein once said". This exact literary quotation stands as the fourth example of intertextuality via a literary reference, given that this philosophical phrase belongs to a larger text found in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 1961) [1921], "If the good or bad exercise of the will does alter the world, it can alter only the limits of the world, not the facts, not what can be expressed by means of language" (6.43).

Furthermore, towards the end of the story, in the intradiegetic level, the narrative voice goes back to narrativized speech to point out a few facts regarding Wittgenstein's personality and life, the purpose of such being the inclusion of the last example of intertextuality via a literary reference, which refers to a precise phrase in Wittgenstein's diaries written during World War I. It is important to bring to the reader's attention that these diaries, known as

*Notebooks 1914-1916* (Wittgenstein, 1979) are considered as the draft notes of the *TLP*.<sup>9</sup>

The narrative voice underlines several meanings and associations by enunciating, “Oh, how I wish that I could have been something! How I wish that I could have blazed across the sky like a star!”. Firstly, the fact that Wittgenstein is longing for significance (echoes questions of existentialism and metaphysics in the *TLP*); for he compares himself to the ephemerality of a blazing star. Secondly, the fact that a star shines, brightens, and in a certain way possesses its own fire (light). This creates an emotional dimension of memory because by means of enunciation the narrative voice plurisemiotically brings back together and *highlights* the following memories (events): the myth of Cassiopeia, the starry night under which Malcolm and Wittgenstein were walking in Cambridge, the discussion they held about the representation of the Cassiopeia’s constellation in the sky, Wittgenstein’s recollections of the war scenario he lived during WWI, and lastly, the ephemerality of a star blazing across the sky; as if it all these events were merged as a sudden outburst: an emotion. From a different point of view, these ideas host a strong **intertextual anamnesis**, a calling to mind not only of Wittgenstein recollections but also of the strength of remembering the events (within the events) in CAS; one may wonder, how EL works remember? Lastly, the idea of “a blazing star across the sky” also mirrors the ephemerality found in some works of EL, the sudden outburst of emotion of gestural manipulation at our fingertips (cf. III.2.3.2) (Saemmer, 2009a).

Active intertextuality and multiple voices give presence to the literary in Cassiopeia’s spoken narrative. Although, as I shall explain later, physical interactivity (gestural manipulation) is not highly present; intellectual interactivity and intertextuality within

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<sup>9</sup> These notebooks of Wittgenstein’s were edited by G.H. von Wright and G.E.M. Anscombe. They show Wittgenstein working through the ideas that resulted in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. He also sets out quite clearly here some of his ideas about ethics, including thoughts on God, the meaning of life, and suicide. The *Notebooks* is thus an interesting and instructive book, but of course must be used with care for interpreting the *Tractatus*, since any remarks found only in the *Notebooks* might well have been left out because Wittgenstein changed his mind about them, as he appears to do a number of times within the *Notebooks* itself (Richter, 2014, pp. 131–132).

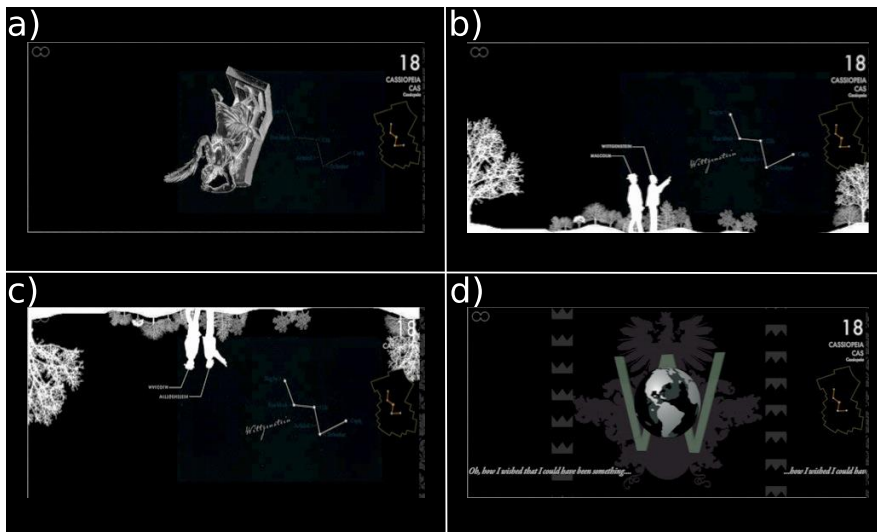
the reader's mind in terms of literary associations is present. This clearly emphasises the contract of literary communication that the reader makes by traversing the text. Likewise, it seems to me that polyphony and intertextuality are connected to the act of memory; to put it in other words, each voice represents a world: Cassiopeia and Poseidon represent the echoes of Greek Mythology; the voice of Norman Malcolm represents the Cambridge period in Wittgenstein's life (1911-1951), as well as the gatherer *figure* of recollections that later became a *memoir* (Malcolm, 1962); the voice of the Austrian philosopher represents his writings, philosophy, wishes, mysteries, and fears; all of which are expressed within different settings, semiotic systems, and time frames, e.g. the breadth of interpretations of a starry night, Cambridge, WWI (1914-1918), *Notebooks 1914-1916* (Wittgenstein, 1979), *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 1961) [1921], amongst others.

In other words, by mentioning the act of memory, I do not only refer to the mind's capacity of making associations by means of literary threads (and now by means of plurisemiotic threads), but also to the challenge of interlacing stories and being able to aesthetically weave all the information that these voices swiftly offered to us. For these voices bring along their own historical, philosophical and aesthetical contexts which without doubt add new literary tinges to the digital work's new imaginary (context) within the digital medium that, by deconstructing the oeuvre, the reader creates.

## 4.2 Is it a W or an M?

Each individual constellation in 88C is arranged the same way in terms of paratexts (peritexts). The Flash video is framed in a rectangle with a white delineation that serves as a movie screen for the presentation. Within the rectangle, on the right upper corner the number and the name of the chosen constellation appear; below this information the icon of the constellation, resembling its visual appearance in the sky hemispheres, is displayed. The reader learns that each explorative star connects her/him to other stories, which emphasises the idea of interactive *tour de force* and non-linearity within the main story (88C) (Figure 9).

In CAS, these interconnected and intertextual stars are: Ludwig Wittgenstein (04), Coded Remarks (19), LOL (86), Cambridge (21), and Constellations (12). The option of returning to the constellation map is available by clicking on an icon that resembles a small constellation map (upper left corner). Additionally, there is the information icon that appears at the bottom right corner of the screen, which redirects the reader to the following options, “play intro, instructions, sitemap, credits, close info”. This shows different accessing points for internal navigation (e.g. performative, informative and explorative hyperlinks).



**Figure 9.** Screen captures of Cassiopeia (CAS) showing a) ciné-gramme, b) visual puns, c) animated hyperbole, d) catachretic animation effect, 88C.

As the spoken narrative begins, the *mélange* of semiotic systems unfolds and challenges the *reading time* and the eyes of reader. As explained in the section of intertextuality and polyphony in CAS (cf. IV.4.1), the narrative voice is composed of multiple stories that possess different time periods; in this sense, I consider 88C to be exceptionally pedagogical because the reader can learn about diverse subjects concerning art, literature and social sciences by time travelling within the constellations. Furthermore, the meaning of these stories is created through the interplay of text, image, sound and movement; but the challenge of creation relies precisely on associating and analysing the coherence of these individual meanings (joining modes through media) (Lemke, 2013), in order to

visualize and decipher the meaning of the whole message (pluricode couplings, coherent couplings, de-coherent couplings) (Saemmer, 2013).

In CAS, the image of a crown appears parallel to the linguistic text, “Cassiopeia”, creating fantastic associations, visual puns, and joining meanings among crown, queen, and Cassiopeia. The image of Cassiopeia as a queen (goddess in the chair) is also displayed (Figure 9a). As a path to express the limits of representation in allusion to Wittgenstein’s philosophy: “Our life has no end in just the way in which our visual field has no limits” (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 6.4311), Clark makes the verbs of the oral narrative the true performers of the screen motion. Language as suggested by Gee (2014) constructs a metaphor in which Clark associates discourse to the performativity of literary and sociocultural elements. This perspective is of great interest to the present study since the allusion to the versatility of language, culture, and meaning echoes the manifestations of (literary) discourse in the works of EL.

In other words, by enunciating, “revolved” not only the image of Cassiopeia rotates but the whole idea of Cassiopeia’s myth comes into scene. Therefore, the narrative voice and the rotating image underline the idea of upside down by creating socio cultural coherent couplings among image, audio and movement. The image of Cassiopeia revolving in the night sky is an example of the figure of animation ciné-gramme (Saemmer, 2010a, 2013) because the oral text, “Poseidon put Cassiopeia in the heavens on a chair that revolved around the North Pole so that half the time she was obliged to sit upside down”, says precisely what the motion represents (Figure 9a). The following example is “walking”, when the narrative voice pronounces, “walking”, the *figures* of Malcolm and Wittgenstein appear walking on the screenic surface; along with a linguistic text indicating the name of each character (addition of new visual semiotic system). Likewise, this is an example of coherent coupling among image, audio and movement; and it can also be read as a representation of memory by means of a black and white recollection and a sudden change in sound, which parallels not only with the “whimsical moment” of the conversation, but also with the “whimsical features” of the constellation’s *mise en scène*.

A similar pattern can be observed with “pointed”; as the word is pronounced by the narrative voice, Wittgenstein’s figure points at Cassiopeia’s constellation. The constellation illuminates in the night sky suggesting the image of the letter “W” which stands as an example of creation of visual vocabulary. This correspondence is followed by the appearance of the second linguistic text representing “Wittgenstein” in the sky, which is an example of addition of visual vocabulary by means of a new visual semiotic system (Figure 9b).

The following example of coherent coupling (image is coupled with movement) is represented when the whole screen turns upside down to emphasise the double perception of the constellation’s shape; “I said that I thought it was an ‘M’ written upside down and that it meant Malcolm” (my emphasis) (Figure 9c). This specific moment can be an example of movement represented as an iconic sign, which suggests that the correspondence between audio and visual movement might have an extended reading. The movement effect-association can be read as a visual exaggeration, and therefore, produce in the reader the effect of the rhetorical figure of hyperbole (**animated hyperbole**). To emphasise this effect, the rotating letters W and M, and the images of a chair and a crown appear on the screen coupled with the audio, “Is it a **W** or is it an **M**? A chair or a crown?”; the mingling of modes evoking the rotating images of M, W, chair and crown create an intertextuality of images (fantastic associations) as the narrative voice emphasises “it all depends on how you look at it, it all depends on your point of view”.

Lastly, by introducing the quotation, “The world of a happy man is different from that of the unhappy man” (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 6.43) different associations are made. In the first place, a globe rotating is shown as well as the rotating letter “W” in the background. It is must be pointed out that the letter “W” and the gyratory image of the world couple with the narrative voice as it pronounces **World War I** (my emphasis). This is an example of visual puns emerging from visual vocabulary where the association between audio, movement, image, and linguistic text test the limits of representation of the screenic surface (Figure 9d).

Secondly, the quotation, “Oh, how I wish that I could have been something! How I wish that I could have blazed across the sky like

a star!” (*Notebooks 1914-1918*); creates a combination of action, language and expression; such integration is needed to construct the effect of ephemerality. Therefore, two aspects must be emphasised; in the first place, as it has been seen, the *reading time* is not enough to grasp the meaning of what is written and moving (*limiting reading time*), which might produce a catachretic animation effect<sup>10</sup> (Saemmer, 2010a, pp. 174–175) (Figure 9d), and certainly underline the effect of ephemerality. In the second place, the fact that the text appears and disappears questions its aesthetic significance by consequently creating a metaphoric effect of life, death, and memory through vanishing visual semiotics, or as Wittgenstein would have philosophically put it, “Our life has no end in just the way in which our visual field has no limits” (*TLP*, 6.4311).

### 4.3 Reading Time (in) Space

To begin, it must be pointed out that constellation number 18 Cassiopeia (CAS) is presented by means of a Flash vignette, which suggests from the start that time is controlled by the system (transient texts). However, although Cassiopeia’s spoken narrative time within the Flash video has an estimated duration of one minute thirty-six seconds (1’36’’), this being the time measured until the narrative voice ceases to speak, the Flash video continues (non-stoppable) voiceless, soundless but not motionless, until the reader decides to explore a new star.

Taking this into account, I consider that in terms of *limiting reading time*, there might be no difficulties when *reading* the linguistic texts that appear in the Flash video: a) Cassiopeia; b) Wittgenstein; c) Malcolm; d) Wittgenstein (the linguistic text is displayed differently); e) M and W (visual puns showing the letter upside down); however, there might be difficulties when reading and listening simultaneously to the last and only quotation that appears as moving linguistic text (catachretic animation effect) at the bottom of the screen, “Oh, how I wish that I could have been

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<sup>10</sup> In her essay, “Digital Literature –A Question of Style”, Alexandra Saemmer states that other examples of catachretic effects can be “the emergence and the eclipse” of the words when they point out the title of a poem; or “the transpositions” of scrolling names at the end of films.



something! How I wish that I could have blazed across the sky like a star” (Figure 9d).

As pointed out by Koskimaa (2010a, p. 135), if the period is not long enough, the reader might be forced, “to read on the edges of apprehension”. Hence, the “blazing” linguistic text represented by Wittgenstein’s quotation can either be fully appreciated or only partially as the reader experiences the digital work. For his part, Eskelinen (2012, p. 152) notes that in terms of presentation speed, perception, and cognition, “this kind of arrangement may, of course, serve as a wide variety of aesthetic purposes” (my emphasis); which confirms the ephemeral purpose of the catachretic animation effect.

In terms of *delaying reading time*, if, as suggested, time is controlled by the system, therefore the reader cannot rewind or forward the Flash video, as s/he would freely move through the pages of a book; firstly, s/he ought to wait for the video to start (*delaying reading time*) (**paratextual techniques of loading time** have been observed in various constellations); and then s/he ought to wait for the video to finalise to be able to play it again. However, it is possible for the reader to pause or stop the Flash video by clicking either on the icon of the constellation map (upper left corner) or on the icon of Cassiopeia’s constellation (bottom right corner), which might resemble the feeling of making a pause while reading a book. Nevertheless, in both cases the pause cannot be time-measured; and more importantly, even if the reader stops s/he cannot rewind the video to re-read (re-view) a specific scene. To continue her/his reading s/he needs to click back on the main frame of the video presentation so that the narrative discourse will continue its pace until, as previously mentioned, the narrative voice ceases to speak.

Moreover, when speaking of *limiting the reading opportunities* of a programmed text, CAS can be experienced as many times as the reader wishes (unlimited, non-measurable). CAS can freely be accessed online within the frame of 88C via the ELC2; therefore, it is not an electronic literary work that has a limited access time or an electronic literary work that can be read only once, as it is the case

of other digital works<sup>11</sup>. CAS (88C) has been archived and preserved within the *ELC2* to be accessed freely by the general public without expiration time frames. In other words, it is less likely to disappear or become inaccessible for the reader, as it occasionally happens with some digital works.

CAS cannot be classified within *temporally evolving texts*, given that, as suggested by Koskimaa (2010a, p. 135), to fulfil this category it is required to add something by the author or by the reader, or both. In Cassiopeia's electronic pattern within 88C even if something can be altered or added in terms of text, image or sound it cannot be permanent (the system does not save the changes); therefore, there is not authorial intrusion whatsoever like in other electronic literary works such as, *Poesía asistida por computadora* by Eugenio Tisselli (2006); *RepeatAfterMe* (2012) by Jörg Piringer.

It is important to mention that though CAS might experience a quick change (additional music, sound, image, text, form) by means of *The Secret of the Left Hand* (cf. IV.4.4) when the reader travels to another constellation, these changes are lost and the text goes back to its organic electronic state. This is an example of “aesthetics of the ephemeral” because even though the work allows the reader to make changes, and additions on it, as pointed out by Saemmer (2009a), “the reader is integrated into the observed system, but the traces he leaves on a poetic work are governed by the same principle of obsolescence as every surface event” (my emphasis) (cf. III.2.3.2). Nonetheless, as mentioned above, if the system does not save these changes, then the verbal, visual, and aural media additions become simply transitory like a blazing star.

### 4.3.1 Grasping Time

When speaking of temporal levels for cybertexts with narrative content; the *user time* in CAS is understood as the time the reader spends reading (experiencing the text); in other words, the number of times the reader can access the text, re-read it and revisit it; that

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<sup>11</sup> See Frasca (2001), “One-session game of narration”, example borrowed from Koskimaa (2010a, p. 135).

is, the sum-up in hours, minutes or seconds of these *reading times* (unlimited; non-measurable). When reflecting upon this concept, it is important to bear in mind that CAS is just one of the 88 constellations of what the narrative voice considers the whole story, “this story is about a man named Wittgenstein...he was a philosopher...his life was a series of moments and our story is a series of constellations” (88C, transcription [Figure 6](#)) (my emphasis). This means that I am only considering the *user time* of one single explorative star. However, if the reader is to follow a path, as I will in the present analysis: 18 Cassiopeia (*Cassiopeia*), 12 Ursa Minor (*Constellations*), and 59 Hydra (*Limits of Language*), then the approximate *user time* will be expanded but still unlimited and non-measurable such as the universe.

Thus, bearing in mind that the *reading time* in CAS definitely depends on the *system time*, and that the *system time* refers to the running time it has been given to CAS within 88C; one might think that the *reading time* can be measured from the moment the reader clicks on CAS in the main constellation map until the Flash video is over; however, this is not completely true. In CAS, the Flash video never stops if not manipulated by the reader, it is the reader who triggers the change (*ergodic time*) (cf. [III.2.2.3](#)); and either expands or shortens her own *reading time*. It is important to mention at this point that when the *reading time* gets expanded at the end of the spoken narrative, this is due to the additional semiotic units that the reader can add by means of *The Secret of The Left Hand* (e.g. sounds, moving images, moving text). In CAS, for example a crown simulating a film strip is added by pressing the **W** and **M** keys ([Figure 9d](#)).

Since, to my view, each explorative star has its own *system time*; it must be brought to the reader’s attention that even though in some cases the spoken narrative stops and the Flash video does not (*dynamic time*); there are some other occasions in which the spoken narrative and the Flash video stop at the same time (*static time*), as it shall be shown when analysing other explorative stars, such as HYA (cf. [IV.6](#)).

Lastly, if the reader wishes to know the total *system time* of 88C, this would be the sum-up time of each of the Flash vignettes that compose the digital work, but as suggested, this is simply non-

measurable and unlimited. Different would be so, if 88C were a film about Wittgenstein's life; for instance, one single Flash video with duration (screen time) of one hour twenty-four minutes. Therefore, the screen time will be considered as the total *true time* and *system time* of the suggested film.

In terms of *discourse time*, there are two ways to explore this temporal level. The first one is to consider that *discourse time* is linked to *system time*, given that in the case of text-controlled time electronic literary works, both times are connected, as for example in HYA (cf. IV.6). However, in CAS the spoken narrative discourse lasts 1'36'' within a *system time* that cannot be measured because it does not stop by itself. Hence, the *discourse time* of the story is equivalent to the time the reader listens to the narrative voice (1'36''), that is the *true time* (screen time). If we consider CAS to be an oral narrative, then there is no *pseudo-time* at all; and it could be suggested that the *true time* is equivalent to the time of the narrative discourse (1'36''). Certainly, a way to consider *pseudo-time* would be in the realms of the *texte-auteur* (cf. III.2.1.2)

However, if the *discourse time* is analysed from the transcription of the spoken narrative that was used to explore polyphony and intertextuality in CAS; then the *discourse time* (the time of the narrative discourse) does possess a *pseudo-time* and certainly a *true time*. In this case, the approximate length of the transcription is fourteen lines (*pseudo-time*: spatial measure); and the duration of the *true time* is equivalent to the duration of the *discourse time* (1'36''), but not to the duration of the *system time*, which as previously noted it is non-measurable and exposed to manipulation (additional semiotic units) by the reader (*dynamic time*).

#### 4.3.2 Time Condensed in Quotations

When exploring *story time* there are certain temporal points of reference that help the reader to situate the events that are being narrated in historical time. Even though the events are narrated in different order within the story; it can be suggested that they have a chronological order outside of it. First and foremost, the reader must take into account that the story (88C) is based on the events that

happened during Wittgenstein's life (1889-1951), as well as in the different locations these events took place (Vienna, Berlin, Manchester, Jena, Cambridge, Norway, Krakow, Russia, Dublin, etc.), all of which, can be historically verified.

However, the voices of polyphony that revolve within each hypermedia explorative star, allow the reader to listen to specific time echoes arranged in a completely different order. In CAS, for example, these echoes date from Ancient Greece (8th to 6th centuries BC to the end of antiquity 600 AD) to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The way to present the duration of these events is quite interesting, for it seems to me as if *time* were intentionally *condensed* not only *in quotations* (spoken, written or both), but also in other *temporal semiotic units* (e.g. **WWI**). For instance, in **WWI**, time is condensed in the iconicity of **World War I** given that historically speaking the First World War has a verifiable lasting time (1914-1918), in a way history becomes form.

It is difficult to set a *true time* for each one of these events within a *discourse time* of one minute and thirty-six seconds (1'36"). Besides the events did not all occur at the same time (historical time). For instance, when the narrative voice summarizes Cassiopeia's myth, the reader immediately situates her/himself in Ancient Greece; but seconds later, by means of a (spoken) quotation inserted as a recollection (**intertextual anamnesis effect**), the reader is brought to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, specifically to the period that Malcolm and Wittgenstein spent together in Cambridge (1938-1951); then again the narrative voice goes back in historical time by the inclusion of the next (spoken) quotation "The world of a happy man is different from that of the unhappy man" that appeared in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 1961) [1921]; and finally to close up the narrative discourse, the only (written and spoken) quotation that goes back in historical time referring to Wittgenstein's diaries during the years of WWI (1914-1918), is announced: "Oh, how I wish that I could have been something! How I wish that I could have blazed across the sky like a star" (*Notes 1914-1916*). As it can be seen literary quotations and verifiable historical time underline the high traces of intertextuality and polyphony found in the narrative discourse.

In this last example referring to Wittgenstein's diaries during the years of WWI (1914-1918); it can be argued that if the duration of presentation usually equals the time of perception (hearing or viewing) (*system time*); therefore, as the text is transient and has verifiable duration, the reader must adjust his reading speed to the speed and duration of presentation and can no longer take all the time he may need to read the text (Eskelinen, 2012, p. 135) (cf. III. 2.2.3).

Hence, the challenge relies not only on merging all temporal levels together (*reading time, discourse time, story time, user time*), but also on making associations among them to unveil aesthetic purposes and construct meaning. The reader must realize that layering time through dynamics in EL creates unlimited possibilities for controlling, embroidering, and adding complexity to the narrative discourse (*discourse time*); given that the classical narrative categories (speed, order, frequency) are subject to manipulation via Semiotic Units of Manipulation (SUM), as I shall show in further examples (cf. IV.5.4; V.5.2).

#### 4.4 The Secret of the Left Hand

As noted before, the fact that CAS is experienced through a Flash video demands the reader to observe more than to interact with the digital work. However, as pointed out in the performative paratextual information of *88 Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)*, Clark suggests that the reader uses "*the left hand*" to navigate and therefore interact with the hidden features (semiotic systems) of 88C. In CAS, *the secret of the Left Hand*, allows the reader to add the image of a crown, formed with a white silhouette of the letter "W" (Figure 9d). The addition of this image by means of the *semiotic units of manipulation* can be done at any moment during the narrative discourse. The image of the crown appears repeatedly in one vertical line on the left side of the screen. By pressing the keys "W" and "M" (SUM, "*activer-appuyer*") this action (appearance of the crown) is activated; if the reader wishes to deactivate it (the image gradually vanishes); the action can be done by pressing any key from "A to Z". In terms of traits of iconicity, this action may remind the reader of the feeling of turning a light on

and off; or the feeling of turning the volume up or down. The overall idea would be to graduate on the screenic surface the intensity of colour, light in relationship to the gradations of recollection.

By adding images, the reader unveils hidden semiotic units and modifies the existing ones; therefore, s/he adds new meaning to the narrative discourse. On the subject, Lemke (2013, p. 85) notes, “And here is yet another dimension that needs to be added to make discourse and multimedia analysis faithful to the world of meaning: seeing that there is no meaning without feeling” (my emphasis). This quotation brings back the idea of grasping “a blazing star across the sky” into scene, which, as before noted, underlines the ephemerality of some works of EL and the sudden outburst of emotion of gestural manipulation at our fingertips (cf. III.2.3.2).

Following Lemke’s idea about meaning and feeling, the reader might also experience the “aesthetics of re-enchantment”, the fourth approach on the lability of the electronic device, which, as Saemmer (2009a) states, “mystifies the relationships between the animated words and images, between the sounds and gestures of manipulation in a digital artwork, in order to advocate an “unrepresentable”, something that words cannot describe and yet, that one can “feel” by experiencing the work” (Saemmer, 2009a) (my emphasis) (cf. III.2.3.2).

Finally, it should be noted that these images could be added either throughout the presentation of the Flash video or at the end. However, if activated at the end, by adding images (via *semiotic units of manipulation*) (Saemmer, 2013), the reader adds time, and therefore expands *reading time*, manipulates *discourse time*, and metaphorically operates *system time*. Likewise, by clicking to pause, exit or replay during the video presentation, the reader manipulates *reading time* and *discourse time*. Lastly, in CAS, the SUM (“*activer-appuyer*”) only triggers the repeatedly image of the crown. This might also suggest the appearance of interfacial involution, which is defined by Saemmer (2008b) as the moment when, “the interactive gesture invariably displays the same media content; the interactor go round in circles” (Table 2). However, as I shall show later, when analysing other explorative stars as for instance, Ursa Minor (*Constellations*) (cf. IV.5.3); *the secret of the*

*Left Hand* will unveil not only images but also new visual and acoustic semiotic systems (text and audio), which will modify *meaning, feeling* and *time* in the narrative discourse.



## 5. URSA MINOR 12 (*CONSTELLATIONS*)

### 5.1 “The World is the Totality of Facts”

The uniqueness of Ursa Minor<sup>12</sup> relies on the fact that there is no story within the constellation. However, UMI is precisely the beautiful presentation and representation of all the stories that construct *88C for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)* for it explains by means of a *métaphore filée*<sup>13</sup> the way the stories can be read and navigated throughout the stellar map. The passage is constructed by means of statements, of facts. Most of the information is expressed in delocutive mode (Charaudeau, 1992, p. 575); in other words, the speaker removes himself from the

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<sup>12</sup> In Greek mythology Ursa Minor is often associated to Arcas the son of Zeus and Callisto, the Nymph of the hunt and the companion of Artemis. When Callisto who was loved by Zeus, died, or in the most familiar form of the legend, was changed into a she-bear, Zeus entrusted the child to Maia, the mother of Hermes, who brought him up. When Arcas was grown up, one day while he was out hunting he met his mother in the shape of a bear, and chased her. The animal took shelter in the temple of ‘Lycian’ Zeus. Arcas, following her, made his way into the sacred precinct. There was then a law of the country, which made this kind of invasion punishable by death, but Zeus had pity on them both and to save their lives he changed them into the constellation Ursa and its guardian, Arcturus (Grimal, 1985, p. 51).

<sup>13</sup> La métaphore filée est celle qui se développe tout au long d’une même phrase ou d’une période. Michel Riffaterre en donne la définition suivante qu’il illustre d’un exemple : “Série de métaphores reliées les unes aux autres par la syntaxe (elles font partie de la même phrase ou d’une même structure narrative ou descriptive) et par le sens : chacune exprime un aspect particulier d’un tout, chose ou concept, que représente la première métaphore de la série. Le littéraire E. Gérusez file la métaphore dans ces lignes où il s’essaie à un plaidoyer en faveur de la rhétorique : “Dans les champs et dans les jardins, les fleurs plaisent sans doute à l’ignorant comme au botaniste par leur parfum et par l’éclat de leurs couleurs ; mais le naturaliste qui sait leurs noms, qui connaît leur famille, les retrouve comme de vieilles connaissances avec un sentiment qui tient de l’amitié. La rhétorique sera pour ces fleurs du langage qu’on appelle figures, et qui émaillent les entretiens et les livres, ce que la botanique est pour les fleurs, dont la nature et l’art ont fait la plus belle parure des prairies et de nos parterres.” (Cours de littérature) (Pougeoise, 2004, p. 165). Filer la métaphore, c’est la développer longuement et progressivement (Le Petit Robert). On appelle donc métaphore filée, une construction cohérente où l’image se prolonge de façon prévue ou imprévue (Ricalens-Pourchot, 2003, pp. 83–84).

enunciative act by using the impersonal form (e.g. predominance of *It*)<sup>14</sup>. This means that the messages are presented as assertions of a fact, or as it is the case in UMI, as a set of postulations.

- (3) That star there; that one as well; together, next to each other, one and the other, and another, and another. Let me get to the point. A point is a fact. A line connects two points. A line is a story that connects two facts. A story is a vector connecting facts together. These vectors make pictures; as above, as below or vice versa.

Ursa Minor hosts a voice that draws as it enunciates; a descriptive voice that transports within itself not one but a variety of rhetorical meanings. The *métaphore filée* found in UMI is gradually constructed by the interweaving of linguistic texts (postulations), images, audio; and more importantly, by the addition of new semiotic systems (SUM) via gestural manipulation. It must be brought to the reader's attention that in comparison to CAS or HYA, *the secret of the left hand*, is of great importance in UMI's construction of meaning; given that by using the keyboard with the Left Hand (the former understood as the piano keys, and the latter understood as an homage to Wittgenstein's brother Paul a concert pianist who lost his left hand during WWI and later composed and performed musical pieces to be played with the Left Hand alone), the reader can alter the constellation's semiotic setting at any moment during the reading (musical) experience by unveiling new semiotic systems through Paul's piano keys (SUM).

The deconstruction of the *métaphore filée* begins with the description of the constellation map expressed in the opening lines, "That star there; that one as well; together, next to each other, one and the other, and another", which verbally draws and neatly emphasises the title of Ursa Minor itself: *Constellations*. It seems to me as if this description were not only an allusion to the stars and stories that construct the 88 constellations within the digital work, but also to the meaning of their aesthetic and rhetoric use of time and space. To put it differently, an allusion to the possible chronotopic or non-chronotopic readings applied not only to UMI

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<sup>14</sup> The enunciator surprisingly emerges a few lines later with the phrase, "Let me get to the point".

but also to all the constellations themselves<sup>15</sup>. Let the reader not forget that one of the characteristics of reading and analysing EL is the possibility to (re)define, (re)evaluate, (re)locate, and (re)visit through multiple materialities such temporal and spatial concepts (cf. III.2.2.3).

Moreover, the phrase “Let me get to the point” (my emphasis) makes variations in the enunciation by changing it for an instant to elocutive mode (predominance of *I*) (Charaudeau, 1992, p. 575). There is a slight but emphatic appearance of the speaker (locutor) whose purpose is to remind the reader (interlocutor) of the importance of his all-knowing all-seeing presence. Additionally, the phrase, “Let me get to the point” (my emphasis) places the linguistic and graphic point of departure for the reader (Figure 11c). On the one hand, it is a way to *begin* to deconstruct UMI’s visual and spoken postulations: What is a point<sup>16</sup>? What is a fact<sup>17</sup>? What is a line<sup>18</sup>? What is a story<sup>19</sup>? What is a vector<sup>20</sup>? What is a

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<sup>15</sup> Chronotope, a term employed by the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) to refer to the co-ordinates of time and space invoked by a given narrative; in other words to the “setting”, considered as a spatio-temporal whole (Baldick, 2004, p. 40). The spatio-temporal characteristics of the constellations selected for the present study will be analysed individually throughout the analysis of the digital work.

<sup>16</sup> *Math. & Sci.* That which is conceived as having a position, but no extent, magnitude or dimension (as the insertion of two lines) (L. Brown, 1993, p. 2267).

<sup>17</sup> 1. An action, a deed. 2. The act of making, doing, or performing. 3. Truth, reality. 4. A thing known for certain to have occurred or be true; a datum of experience. 5. A thing assumed or alleged as a basis for inference. 6. Events or circumstances as distinct from their legal interpretation (L. Brown, 1993, p. 903).

<sup>18</sup> *Math.* A continuous extent of length without thickness; the track of a moving point. A straight line imagined as drawn between two points, or between some point and the observer (L. Brown, 1993, p. 1594).

<sup>19</sup> 1. A true narrative, or one presumed to be true, relating to important events and famous people of the past; a historical account or anecdote. 2. A historical work, a book of history. 3. A historical writing or records in general; history as a branch of knowledge, or as opp. to fiction. 4. A painting or sculpture representing a historical subject; any work of pictorial or sculptural art containing figures. 5. A recital or account of events that have or are alleged to have happened; a series of events that are or might be narrated. 6. A narrative of real or (usu.) fictitious events, designed for the entertainment of the hearer or reader; a series of traditional or imaginary incidents forming the matter of such a narrative; a tale, an anecdote, a (short) work of fiction (L. Brown, 1993, p. 3077).

<sup>20</sup> *Math.* A quantity having direction as well as magnitude, denoted by a line drawn from its original to its final position. An ordered set of two or more

picture<sup>21</sup>? And, more importantly, what is the relationship among them? On the other hand, it underlines, the postulation's characteristics, *brief* and *clear* but rather multifaceted and elaborated.

The following statement, "A point is a fact", stands as the first example of intertextuality in UMI, making a literary allusion to the first lines in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 1961) [1921], "The world is everything that is the case" (1); "The world is the totality of facts, not of things" (1.1); "The world is determined by the facts, and by these being *all* the facts" (1.11); "For the totality of facts determines both what is the case, and also all that is not the case" (1.12); "The facts in logical space are the world" (1.13) (my emphasis). As well as to specific passages of Wittgenstein's Picture Theory within the *TLP*, "We make to ourselves pictures of facts" (2.1); "The picture is a model of reality" (2.12); "The picture is a fact" (2.141); "The picture can represent every reality whose form it has" (2.171) (my emphasis). In my view, these intertextual allusions establish a direct relation to the postulations that the enunciative voice skilfully draws on the screenic surface. It seems to me as if the intertextuality based on the *TLP* that it is found in 88C will create its own complex intertextual aesthetics, which highlights the co-relation between philosophy and digital aesthetics.

Bearing these postulations in mind, I propose the following visual interpretation of the last lines that build Ursa Minor's *métaphore filée*, "A line connects two points. A line is a story that connects two facts. A story is a vector connecting facts together. These vectors make pictures; as above, as below or vice versa" (Ursa Minor, transcription 88C). Hence, if a point (star) is equivalent to a fact (star); therefore, to make lines (stories) two facts or two points

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numbers (interpretable as the coordinates of a point); a matrix with one row or one column (L. Brown, 1993, p. 3552).

<sup>21</sup> 1. The art or process of pictorial representation; painting and drawing. 2. Paintings and drawings collectively. 3. A flat or surface representation of something that visually resembles it or is meant to evoke it; a painting, a drawing, a photograph. 4. A mental image or impression of something; a concrete illustration. 5. A vivid written or spoken description. 6. A person or scene seen as the embodiment of some quality. 7. A visible image produced by an optical or electronic system. 8. A cinematographic scene or film (L. Brown, 1993, p. 2203).

(two stars) must be connected. Moreover, if a vector is constructed by multiple lines (stories), which at the same time, contain within themselves multiple facts or points (stars); then to build a story (line) one needs to have at least two facts (stars) or two points (stars).

Thus, a picture (constellation) more than being constructed by vectors (multiple lines) is the pictorial *outcome* of these vectors; in the same way, a line (story) is the narrative merging *outcome* of different points or facts (multiple stars). In this sense, it can be suggested that a constellation is the graphic representation of vectors connected by stars (points/facts); and therefore, Ursa Minor's reasoning by means of analogy is constructed as follows, constellation is to stars, like story is to facts (points) (Figure 10).

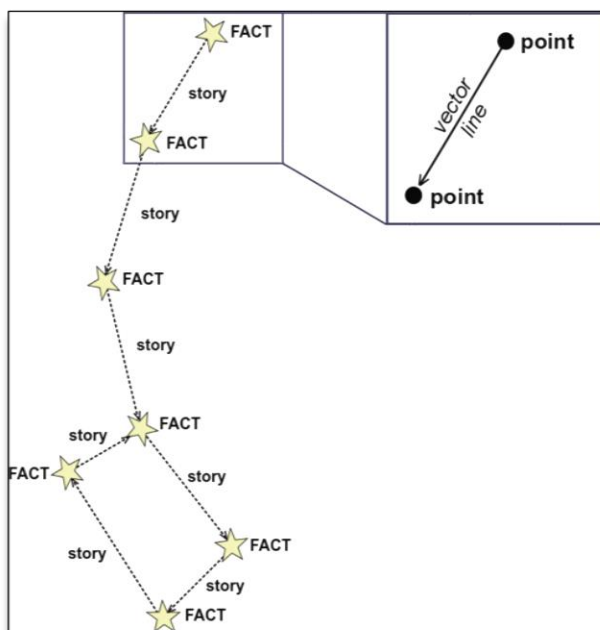


Figure 10. Graphic representation Ursa Minor's *Métaphore Filée, 88C*.

Furthermore, if playfully extrapolated to a literary context, Wittgenstein's above-mentioned postulation, "The world is the totality of facts, not of things" (1.1) (my emphasis); it can be suggested that within 88C, "The world is the totality of stories"; and

therefore, the totality (variety) of texts, and I would add, of modes, nodes and nexus of memory (my emphasis).

I consider that Clark's skilfully combination of Wittgenstein's philosophy and visual representation challenges the screenic surface in a sort of philosophical digital rhetoric encounter where the complexity of Wittgenstein philosophy meets (tests) the possibilities of representation of EL. For the visual representation of Ursa Minor (*Constellations*) is not only accompanied by figures of animation but also by a variety of figures of manipulation played and orchestrated by the secret of *the Left Hand* (cf. IV.5.2).

### 5.1.1 Intertextual Stars

It is important to mention at this point of the analysis that there are two ways in which intertextuality is depicted in 88C. On the one hand, as it has been shown in the previous constellation (cf. IV.4.1), it can materialise as an allusion or quotation to specific literary references written by Wittgenstein or written for Wittgenstein; for example, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 1961) [1921], *Notebooks 1914-1916* (Wittgenstein, 1979), "A Lecture on Ethics" (Wittgenstein, 1993) [1929], *Philosophical Investigations* (Wittgenstein, 2010) [1953], *Ludwig Wittgenstein, A memoir* (Malcolm, 1962). On the other hand, given the **88** possibilities to explore 88C, it can materialise as intertextuality of images or linguistic texts within the same constellations. For instance, the re-appearance of Cassiopeia's vector in UMI alludes to the same image in the introduction and also to Cassiopeia's constellation itself (cf. IV.4.2) ([Figure 5](#); [Figure 9b](#)); the re-appearance of the constellations' wallpaper alludes to the introductory video too ([Figure 6](#)); and finally, the repetition of the linguistic text and voice, "Join the Dots" makes a direct reference to the introductory video as well ([Figure 6](#)). These are clear examples of intertextuality of images and intertextuality of linguistic texts because they create an allusion to something the reader has already experienced while navigating the work; something that in a way is waiting to be triggered once again on the imaginary of her/his memory. A recollection through TSU that produce an **intertextual anamnesis**

**effect** through images and sensations, or as suggested by Clark, a “narrative vertigo”.

These allusions stand as examples of what Saemmer (2009a) calls aesthetics of re-enchantment because by remembering these images the reader experiences a process of re-enchantment via interaction in which s/he identifies the temporal semiotic units (TSU) previously seen in the work. For instance, the visual and aural representation of “Join the Dots” gradually leaves traces not only on the surface of the work but also on the reader’s mind (temporal semiotic units memories). I consider that as s/he encounters these traces s/he experiences a sort of “**W**” mental animated sporulation (“**W**” multi pop-up) (cf. III.2.3.5). In other words, the appearance of Cassiopeia’s vector may trigger the following associations in the mind of the reader: **Vector: Cassiopeia (W or M): Wittgenstein: Malcolm: Crown: Chair: World: WWI: Vector: Cassiopeia: Wittgenstein: Malcolm: Crown: Chair: World: WWI.**

Moreover, the proposition “The world is the totality of facts, not of things”<sup>22</sup> (1.1), stands as an excellent example of intertextuality within the constellations themselves. To begin, it is part of the linguistic text that represents the *TLP* at the beginning of Orion 04 (*Ludwig Wittgenstein*). Likewise, it is discussed and visually explained in detail in constellation Corvus 52 (*Facts not things*) where each letter “O” of the proposition’s linguistic text, “The world is the totality of facts, not of things” turns into TSU resembling a **World** spinning around. Corvus 52 is specifically devoted to the language twists within the proposition; as stated by the narrative voice of the constellation: “It delineates the idea that

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<sup>22</sup> Facts. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* proposition 1.1 says that “The world is the totality of facts.” Black (1964, p. 27) says that this distinction is “ the outstanding innovation of Wittgenstein’s ontology,” distinguishing him from all the most famous philosophers from Aristotle to the early Bertrand Russell. **The universe is implicitly not a thing, not something that can be referred to by a name.** Black takes Wittgenstein’s references to “the world” to mean the universe, explaining that this use is more common in German than it is in English. **A fact** is defined in the *Tractatus* as the existence of a state of affairs or combination of objects. The world is not simply the totality of objects that exist, since these objects exist in particular relations with each other, just as a room is not identical merely with the contents of the room (even if the walls, floor, and ceiling are included in the contents). Those contents must always be in some arrangement, even if it is a messy heap (Richter, 2014, p. 71).

we can only know the world through our ideas of it...language disguises thought... facts not things, things not language, language not facts..." (Transcription, Corvus 52, *Facts not things*, 88C) (my emphasis). This shows how 88C weaves a discursive memory through semiotic forms that can only be located in the interstices and interfaces of mediated discourse.

Furthermore, these intertextual recollections are an example of interfacial incubation, understood as "changes produced by manipulation gestures that occur too late for the interactor to easily create a meaningful relationship between the gesture and the provoked changing" (Saemmer, 2010a, p. 171). This is explained because the reader gathers information as s/he navigates through the work (the role of visual memory must be underlined), producing subsequent **intertextual anamnesis effects** and weaving the complex digital works' *métaphore filée* while interacting with the figures of animation and manipulation. However, these figures do not necessarily need to make sense instantaneously (e.g. when exploring a specific constellation), occasionally they wait, "incubate", hide themselves, and surprise the reader with random appearances across the starry night journey.

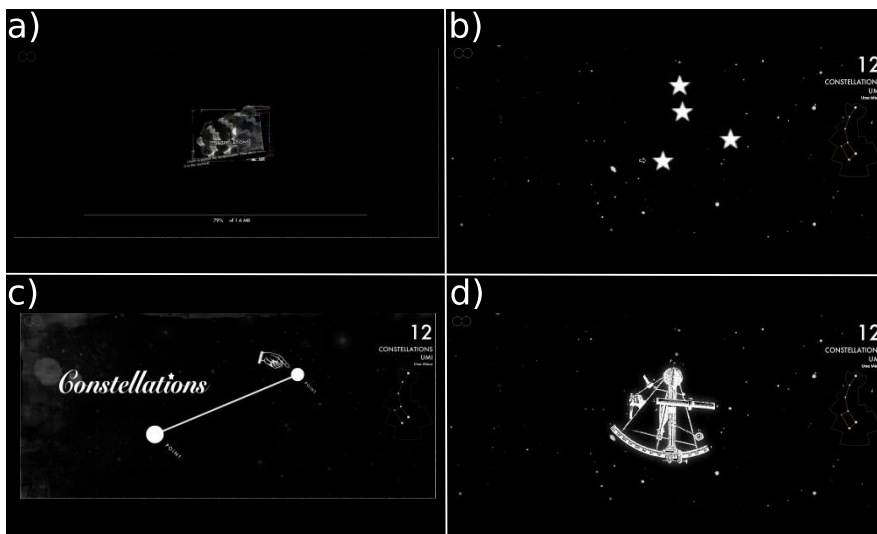
## 5.2 Vectors Make Pictures

As previously shown in the graphical representation of UMI's *métaphore filée*, a picture (constellation) more than being constructed by vectors (multiple lines) is the pictorial *outcome* of these vectors (Figure 10). In UMI, this pictorial *outcome* is composed of figures of animation and figures of manipulation. For instance, the animated stars that appear one by one, as the narrative voice transforms itself into a twinkling arrow, are a good animation reference, "That star there; that one as well; together, next to each other, one and the other, and another, and another". The effect of blinking stars and the twinkling arrow is an example of how semiotic content plus movement are used to construct meaning (TSU) using a repetitive and intensive animation (Figure 11b).

To put it differently, if movement is considered to be an iconic sign (iconic movements), one can speak of the correspondence between



the following pluricode couplings. In the first place, the reader listens to the audio (“that star there; that one as well”); and, in the second place, the visual movement emphasised by the one-by-one appearance of the stars in the screenic surface (TSU) suggests the appearance and visual representation of the stars in the sky when seen by the human blinking eye. Additionally, the linguistic text (peritext) “Constellations” can be added by pressing the letter key “F”. The emergence of these pluricode couplings will create a “syncretic assembling” with what the reader listens and what s/he sees.



**Figure 11.** Screen captures of constellation 12 Ursa Minor (UMI) showing a) paratextual techniques of loading time, b) syncretic assembling, c) peritextual interfacial involution, d) sextant, 88C.

This image can stand as an example of aesthetics of re-enchantment because the reader is familiar with the screen navigation from one explorative star to another; that is, as a consequence of her/his interaction with the paratexts (peritexts) of 88C. The reader is acquainted not only with these movements but also with this vocabulary (star, point, fact, vector...); it seems as if her/his interactive experience were zoomed *in* and summarized *by* these animated stars (Figure 11b).

The second example is the allusion to the weaving-like construction of the constellation map: a line (story) is the narrative-merging

*outcome* of different points or facts (multiple stars). This is constructed through the linguistic texts (linguistic signs): “point” and “fact” and the image of a pointing hand, which seconds later, are coupled into a graphic story (line) through animation (TSU) (Figure 11c). In addition, white and yellow moving lines (suggesting the stories within each star) populate the screen with oscillating movements. At this point, the narrative voice ceases to speak and unexpectedly a floating image of a sextant<sup>23</sup> appears on the screen (Figure 11d). To my view, the sextant’s appearance symbolizes two things; on the one hand, the navigation instrument the reader needs to explore 88C; and on the other hand, the idea that the *métaphore filée* constructing Ursa Minor is the sextant of 88 *Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)*. In other words, constellation number 12 (*Constellations*) can be considered as the navigating reference star of Clark’s digital work.

Finally, the last animations to appear on the screen are Cassiopeia’s vector, the constellations’ celestial map, and the linguistic text “Join the Dots” (Figure 13c). Though the reader might think this is the end of the constellation’s *system time* and *reading time*, s/he will be surprised to find out that this is just the beginning of a *mise en scène* full of interactions and manipulations. For the last animation (“Join The Dots”) remains on the screenic surface, opening the scenario for the mingling between the aesthetics of re-enchantment (the reader has already seen this linguistic sign) and the aesthetics of the ephemeral (the linguistic sign will stay on the screen surface as long the reader plays with *the secret of the Left Hand* by adding a variety of new semiotic systems) (SUMs). If not further action performed by the reader, the work will eventually and aesthetically decompose on the screenic surface.

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<sup>23</sup> Sextant. Instrument for determining the angle between the horizon and a celestial body such as the Sun, the Moon, or a star, used in celestial navigation to determine latitude and longitude. The device consists of an arc of a circle, marked off in degrees, and a movable radial arm pivoted at the centre of the circle [...] The name comes from the Latin *sextus*, or “one-sixth,” for the sextant’s arc spans 60°, or one-sixth of a circle. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/537066/sextant>.

### 5.3 Piano keys

In UMI, *the secret of the Left Hand* is a great example of gestural manipulation. The SUM transform the computer keyboard into Paul Wittgenstein’s piano keys, inviting the reader to play semiotic melodies and create visual music with the left hand. In the paratextual section labelled “instructions”, the legend reads, “pressing the letter keys will add elements to the animations” (Instructions, 88C) (my emphasis). The activation of these “elements” is understood as a sort of melodic iconic irradiation, that is, the interaction of an iconic sign with a linguistic sign via manipulation gestures (Saemmer, 2013, p. 2).

UMI opens SUM possibilities beyond the reach of most other constellations. The rate of manipulation and interaction is higher in comparison to Cassiopeia (*Cassiopeia*) (cf. IV.4) or Hydra (*The Limits of language*) (cf. IV.6). As I shall explain in the following paragraphs, this fact sets a remarkable array of playing possibilities where figures of manipulation (SUM) and figures of animation (TSU) are the key to the construction of meaning. It must be underlined that the experience of UMI was made in a Spanish QWERTY keyboard, I mention this because the letter keys may vary from one keyboard to another (QWERTY-AZERTY) (mimetic aesthetics).

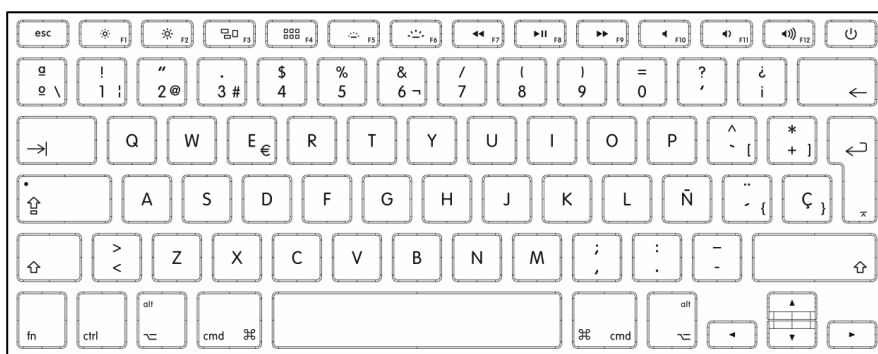


Figure 12. Spanish QWERTY keyboard.

### 5.3.1 List of Piano Keys in Ursa Minor (Constellations)

In the following list, I explain in detail the functionality of the piano keys (keyboard) that trigger SUM (figures of manipulation) on the already TSU (figures of animation) active background. As the title suggests the digital work should be “played with the Left Hand”, this means that there are additional semiotic units (e.g. sounds, moving images, moving text, video clips) hidden in the constellations that the reader can add to the narrative by means of interaction and manipulation. I argue that by discovering unexplored paths and creative unknowns the reader encounters examples of gestural melodic manipulation that will consequently lead to the creation of visual music through piano keys.

**Q:** letter key Q can be used as a controller deactivator of SUM that have been already activated by other letter keys. It might erase at one glance or gently erase the contents.

**W:** letter key W activates the images of a musical score overlapped with a city (most probably Vienna)<sup>24</sup>. This produces fade-in fade-out effects emergence and eclipse for the images appear and disappear as the reader presses the letter key (W) provoking reminiscence and association of previous constellations on the reader’s mind through an **intertextual anamnesis effect**. The reader remembers the previous associations to Vienna in 88C and in Wittgenstein’s life. It also intertextually connects UMI to constellation 43, *Ophiuchus*<sup>25</sup>: Vienna (intertextual stars).

**E:** this letter key does not provoke any changes on the screenic surface.

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<sup>24</sup> Vienna. Wittgenstein grew up in Vienna at a time when the city was perhaps at its most fertile culturally, in a house that was one of the centers of this cultural life. This was the Vienna of Karl Kraus, Adolf Loos, Arnold Schonberg, Fritz Mauthner, Robert Musil, and Oskar Kokoschka. The wealthy Wittgenstein family patronized some of these figures and took an interest in all the arts, especially music. This rich cultural background clearly influenced Wittgenstein’s thinking about culture and language, although exactly how is hard to say with both precision and confidence (Richter, 2014, p. 230).

<sup>25</sup> Ophiuchus, Latin: “Serpent Bearer”.

**R:** this letter key does not provoke any changes on the screenic surface.

**T:** letter key T activates yellow and white stars on the surface of the screen (colour as semiotic substance).

**Y:** letter key Y activates two things, the silhouette of a grand piano and the silhouette of the *Haus Wittgenstein*, a house the philosopher designed for his sister Margaret S. Wittgenstein in 1925<sup>26</sup>. The images appear once and again by pressing on the Y key. This is an example of the figure of manipulation, interfacial involution because “the manipulation gesture is invariably followed by the same effect” (Saemmer, 2010a, p. 170). Interfacial involution may represent intertextuality of memories or repetition of events. It can also be an example of the aesthetics of re-enchantment because the reader might have previously experienced constellation 44 Sagittarius (*Kundmannngasse* House), and the image of the *Haus Wittgenstein* simply reminds her/him of that (intertextual stars).

**U:** letter key U activates white bubbles that may resemble rockets. These burst on the screen one time after another, and can be activated precisely when the narrative voice says, “Let me get to the point”. Echoing the animation found on letter Y (grand piano or *Haus Wittgenstein*), this is an example of the figure of manipulation, interfacial involution (Saemmer, 2008b, p. 12) (Table 2) for the effect is repeated every time the reader presses the letter key U. If continuously click, the SUM (“*activer-appuyer*”) gives the reader the impression of bursting rockets on the sky (pyrotechnic rhetoric).

**I:** letter key I has no activated media but it might be used to stop the media activated by other letter keys.

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<sup>26</sup> Architecture. Wittgenstein’s interest in architecture was both directly practical and more theoretical. With Paul Engelmann, he designed a house for his sister Gretl, but he also reflected on the nature of architecture in his notebooks and in his lectures on aesthetics. In *Culture and Value* Wittgenstein says that “Working in philosophy —like work in architecture in many respects— is really more a working on oneself” (p. 16e). Work in architecture is also like work in philosophy, which Wittgenstein conceives of as grammatical investigation, because architecture is like Language (Richter, 2014, p. 27).

**O:** this letter key does not provoke any changes on the screenic surface.

**P:** this letter key does not provoke any changes on the screenic surface.

**A:** letter key A activates light on the screenic surface resembling the light in the sky on the reader's mind. This light remains until is deactivated by using the letter keys, S and D.

**S:** letter key S deactivates letter key A.

**D:** letter key D deactivates letter key A.

**F:** letter key F activates on the screen the linguistic text: "Constellations" (*pseudo-time* and *reading time* must be considered). Resembling letter key U, this can be activated precisely when the narrative voice says, "Let me get to the point". The linguistic text stays but if the reader presses the letter key F again, it re-appears again and again. Yet this is another example of the figure of manipulation, interfacial involution (Saemmer, 2008b, p. 12) (Table 2). Likewise, it can stand as an example of **peritextual interfacial involution** that is used for the visual re-appearance of titles, subtitles, and prefaces throughout the EL work (Figure 13a).

**G:** letter key G activates sound and images. Squares multiply on the screenic surface producing a repetition of the same sound. These squares gradually occupy the screen; however, the screen is not completely populated by them; by pressing on the letter key G it is possible for the reader to intensify the sound. This is an example of interfacial sporulation (Saemmer, 2008b, p. 12) (Table 2) because there is a pop-up invasion of squares, and by pressing over and over again the action intensifies both the sound and the squares. Moreover, from a different perspective this is an example of a visually "busy" and "typographically" dense aesthetic referred by Engberg (2010) as "aesthetic of visual noise" (cf. III. 2.3.2).

**H:** letter key H activates a second title: "Constellations. 88 Constellations for Wittgenstein". This letter key resembles letter key F (twin functions) for the two following reasons. In the first

place, it can be activated precisely when the voice says, “let me get to the point”. In fact, if the reader activates it when the narrative voice says, “These vectors make pictures; as above, as below or vice versa.” It creates a better association between what is being said and what is being shown. In the second place, it is an example of **peritextual interfacial involution** that is used for the visual re-appearance of titles, subtitles, and prefaces throughout the EL work.

**J:** letter key Q can be used as a controller deactivator of SUM that have been already activated by other letter keys.

**K:** this letter key does not provoke any changes on the screenic surface.

**L:** this letter key does not provoke any changes on the screenic surface.

**Ñ:** this letter key does not provoke any changes on the screenic surface (Spanish QWERTY keyboard).

**Z:** letter key Z needs a background to be displayed. Once a background is activated, for instance, letter key C (Wittgenstein’s silhouette), a silhouette of a man holding a child appears on the screenic surface.

**X:** letter key X activates a background that might suggests the idea of code, path, node, connection point, and bytes, or even better the code aesthetics behind the creation of 88C. By pressing J and N fade-in fade-out effects are produced (emergence and eclipse). Resembling letters F and H, letter key X can be activated precisely when the narrative voice says, “Let me get to the point” which will make this line the starting point of the manipulation.

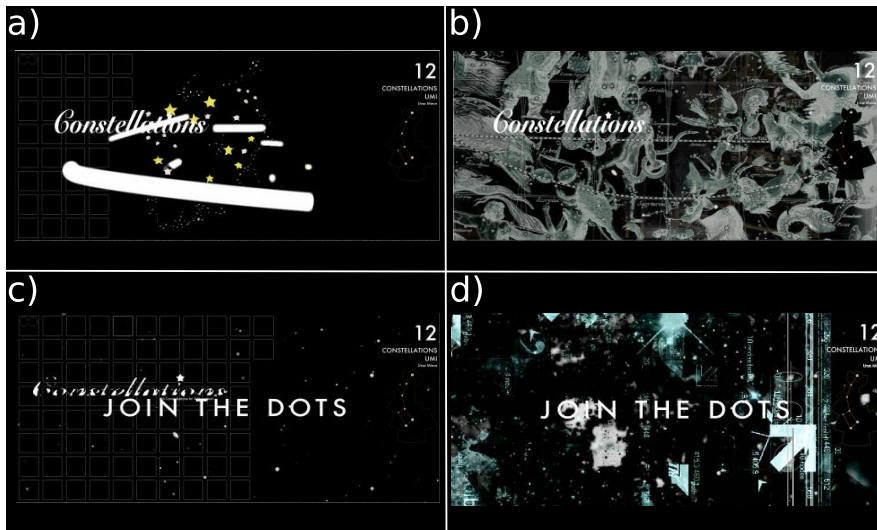
**C:** letter key C displays Wittgenstein silhouette (intertextuality of images).

**V:** letter key V activates a rain of circles (bubbles) that can be stopped with letter key N. This may be an example of interfacial sporulation.

**B:** letter B activates the silhouette of a man most probably Wittgenstein (intertextuality of images).

**N:** letter key N can be used as a controller deactivator.

**M:** letter key M can be used as a controller deactivator.



**Figure 13.** Screen captures of constellation 12 Ursa Minor (UMI) showing a) peritextual interfacial involution, b) interfacial incubation, c) aesthetics of re-enchantment, d) interfacial retroprojection, 88C.

The fact that a computer keyboard is associated to the creation of melodies (visual music) on a piano keyboard stands as an example of interfacial retroprojection because there is a metaphorical relationship between the interactive gesture (pressing/playing the keys), the activable media content (surprising musical semiotic elements under the keys) and the activated media content (image, sound, linguistic text, video) (Saemmer, 2008b) (Table 2). By developing flexibility and suppleness in the hands of the reader, this beautiful composition (proposition) rapidly changes patterns on the screenic surface, creating different SUM melodies (memories) and passages where the aesthetics of the ephemeral and the aesthetics of re-enchantment highly coexist.

In such ephemeral reading context, time, memory and transformation play an important role. If as proposed by Bouchardon and Heckman (2012, Introduction), “the *figure*



concerns the manipulation of a semiotic form, the *grasp* involves the manipulation of the interface, and the *memory* concerns the manipulation of the whole creation for preservation purposes” (original emphasis). Then one can ask how much can the reader bring back from visual and aural memory (e.g. intertextuality of images and sounds) to keep grasping meaning? How much must s/he consciously and unconsciously memorize through her/his journey to construct meaning? (gestural memory, anamnesis effect, SUM, TSU)

After playing the piano with the Left Hand for a few minutes, the reader is left with a piano-drawing feeling. For in such contexts, as proposed by Simanowski (2011, p. ix), we “think” much more directly through the body and feel the meaning of the work at hand (my emphasis). The figures of animation and manipulation that populate the screen can be multiplied as long as the reader wishes to keep playing the **88** piano keys on his keyboard. This effect manipulates in a way the *system time* and *discourse time* by prolonging the experience (cf. V.5.2). In the end, in some cases, the re-enchantment of remembrance evaporates in the ephemeral of the surface since all the figures created by the reader cannot be saved by the system (aesthetics of the ephemeral, temporally evolving texts); therefore, they will only remain on the reader’s visual and aural memory (aesthetics of re-enchantment) until the next reading experience through 88C begins.

Lastly, the visual music produced by the secret of the Left Hand, whose notes (piano keys) are the gestural enunciation of different discourses and diverse thematic, expose the potential intermedial literary characteristics of the text. The analytical approach has demonstrated how visual music creates true examples of literariness, unveils filmic techniques and composes figures of animation and figures of manipulation.

## 5.4 Mind the Gap

As presented in the previous constellation Cassiopeia (cf. IV.4), in order to analyse temporality in 88C, I follow Koskimaa (2010a, pp. 135–136) classification of “temporal possibilities in programmed

texts” (limiting reading time, delaying reading time, limiting the reading possibilities, temporally evolving texts), and “temporal levels for cybertexts with narrative content” (user time, discourse time: pseudo-time and true time, story time, system time).

The study of UMI is different because, as underlined at the beginning of the present analysis, there is no story within the constellation. The passage is constructed by means of statements, of facts. Most of the information is expressed in delocutive mode (Charaudeau, 1992, p. 575); in other words, the speaker removes himself from the enunciative act by using the impersonal form (e.g. predominance of *It*). This means that the messages are presented as assertions of a fact, or as it is the case in UMI, as a set of postulations.

Therefore, this indicates that it will not be possible to analyse *story time* because there are not narrated events in UMI for Koskimaa (2010a, pp. 135–136) clearly refers to “temporal levels for cybertexts with narrative content” (my emphasis). I consider that in terms of temporality analysis, this gap is truly important. In the first place, the absence of *story time* together with the high presence of TSU and SUM discussed in the previous section, adds exceptionality and complexity to UMI as reorganization of temporal levels might take place. And, in the second place, the absence of *story time* might affect other temporal levels producing worth-studying consequences. For instance, one may ask what would happen if this “narrative content” were not present in the constellation itself but could be added by means of SUM (hidden *pseudo-time*)? Would this content be considered as a *pseudo-time* of the narrative discourse?

Regarding *limiting reading time*, there are few linguistic texts, “point, point, fact”, all of them appear on the screen as the voice enunciates the same words, “point, point, fact” (Figure 11c); to underline and emphasise what the narrative voice is saying via coherent couplings (audio-image). There is no difficulty in making this association; in fact, the point is to make this association. Another example of *limiting reading time* is the linguistic texts “Constellations” and “Constellations. 88 Constellations for Wittgenstein” that can be added via the SUM letter key F and H as an example of **peritextual interfacial involution** (Figure 13a-c).

Since they appear unexpectedly it might be difficult for the reader to grasp them completely in a first glance. However, as previously mentioned due to involution the effect will be repeated as many times as the reader presses the letters F and H.

There is another association between *limiting reading time* and *delaying reading time* in UMI because depending on the computer (mimetic aesthetics) uploading the contents might take some time; in my reading experience, it took eighteen seconds (18''). However, the interesting fact is that while waiting for the constellation to upload, a quotation from the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* appeared on the screen, "There is indeed the inexpressible. This shows itself; it is the mystical" (6.522). Although the quotation is there to be read, there is *limiting reading time* to accurately read it. This means that mimetic aesthetics (Saemmer, 2009a) may lead to the (non-intentional or intentional) creation of **paratextual techniques of loading time** (Figure 11a).

It seems to me that Clark has intentionally put that quotation inside the uploading time so that ideally the reader might read it (mimetic aesthetics); however, the instability of the electronic device can alter its display. That is to say, either the quotation can be misread or not noticed at all by cause of the computer's settings and speed. In some cases, readers might not even see it (I have tested that myself a few times in different devices getting different results). In other words, there are two options, either the quotation is forever lost to the sight of the reader due to mimetic aesthetics, or the quotation can be perfectly read and either have or not *limiting reading time* issues.

The quotation thus has another purpose or at least it has created an additional intertextual effect. Wittgenstein's proposition (paratext), "There is indeed the inexpressible. This shows itself; it is the mystical" (6.522) (my emphasis) creates a direct allusion to the definition of the aesthetics of re-enchantment, proposed by Saemmer (2009a, pt. 1), "the relationships between the animated words and images, between the sounds and gestures of manipulation in a digital artwork mystify in order to advocate the "unrepresentable"; to put it differently, something that words cannot describe and yet one can feel by experiencing the work. This definition may resemble the feeling the reader experiences when

manipulating SUM via *the secret of the Left Hand* in UMI. Considering the array of possibilities of figures of manipulation and animation, there is a moment in which the screen is so crowded with a variety of pluricode couplings that it becomes a challenge to decipher the meaning (e.g. aesthetics of visual noise). However, the reader's memory mystifies that which it has already seen, creating a process of re-enchantment which most of the *time* cannot certainly be expressed by words<sup>27</sup>.

Furthermore, resembling CAS, UMI can be experienced as many times as the reader wishes (unlimited, non-measurable) for it can be freely accessed online within the frame of *88C* via the *ELC2*. There are no *limiting reading opportunities*. The *user time* is unlimited and cannot be measured because the reader can spend as much time as s/he wants experiencing the work. It is important to mention at this point that the *reading time*, and therefore, the *user time* get expanded when the voice in the audio ceases to speak. This occurs because of the additional semiotic units that the reader can add by means of *the secret of the Left Hand* (e.g. sounds, moving images, moving text) (pluricode couplings). This manipulation gesture is an example of *ergodic time* since it is the reader who triggers the change and either expands or shortens her own *reading time* (*user time*), at the same time, s/he skilfully manipulates the *system time* by exploring figures of animation and manipulation.

*Discourse time* in UMI's spoken postulations has an approximate duration of 32 seconds (32''), this being the time measured until the voice ceases to speak. However, it is not a narrative discourse by itself but as explained before, "a set of postulations expressed in delocutive mode". It seems to me that the only way to conceive these postulations as *discourse time* is if one thinks of it as part of the whole narrative discourse of *88C*, and therefore as part of the *discourse time* of the digital work itself.

*True time* (screen time) has duration of 32 seconds (32''). However, the time it takes until the last linguistic text (peritext), "Join the Dots" appears on the screen is 59 seconds (59''). After "Join the Dots" appears on the screen, the experience of exploring the figures of animation and manipulation cannot be measured for it all

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<sup>27</sup> David Clark refers to this sensation as "narrative vertigo".

depends on how much time (*user time*) the reader spends playing the keyboard with *the secret of the Left Hand*.

Finally, in terms of *story time* since there is no story: there is no *story time*, because there are not narrated events. And consequently, no comparison can be made with *discourse time*. A detachment is produced among the four categories (user time, discourse time, story time, system time). Though, at the beginning, *user time* and *system time* were added to *discourse time* and *story time* to better understand the analytical frame of temporality in digital texts with narrative content; in our selected corpus, *story time* detaches itself from the four categories, and, as a result *ergodic time* is introduced and widely used. The results found in UMI show that each constellation has its own chronotopic characteristics, accentuating the variety of spatio-temporal settings that the reader can find, not only throughout 88C, but also within the reading practice of digital works in general.



## 6. HYDRA 59 (*THE LIMITS OF LANGUAGE*)

### 6.1 “There is Nothing Outside of the Text”

Signifying water snake and representing the largest of the **88** constellations in the sky, the constellation Hydra<sup>28</sup> hosts a scenario of philosophy. A café, a couple talking about human existence, quotations by Ludwig Wittgenstein and Jacques Derrida<sup>29</sup> being uttered, allusions to French film director Jean-Luc Godard<sup>30</sup>, a coffee cup soliloquy, a universe of meaning squeezed into a dark void; these are the elements that construct the intertwined ideas that brightly compose the stars of Hydra (*The Limits of Language*) (HYA).

Echoing constellation number 18 Cassiopeia (*Cassiopeia*), the reader experiences Hydra (*The Limits of Language*) through a spoken narrative. The story possesses a homodiegetic narrator that also features as an autodiegetic narrator who recalls a philosophical conversation he had in a café with a woman. The discourse (as a product of interdiscourse) is mainly constructed through a dialogue, where at different narrative discourse’s levels, the voices of Wittgenstein, Derrida, Godard, the woman, and the narrator himself, intellectually converse.

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<sup>28</sup> Hydra. In Greek legend, the offspring of Typhon and Echidna (according to the early Greek poet Hesiod’s *Theogony*), a gigantic monster with nine heads (the number varies), the center one immortal. The monster’s haunt was the marshes of Lerna near Argos. The destruction of Hydra was one of the 12 Labours of Heracles, which he accomplished with the assistance of Iolaus. 26. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/278114/Hydra>.

<sup>29</sup> Jacques Derrida, (born July 15, 1930, El Biar, Algeria—died October 8, 2004, Paris, France), French philosopher whose critique of Western philosophy and analyses of the nature of language, writing, and meaning were highly controversial yet immensely influential in much of the intellectual world in the late 20th century. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/158661/Jacques-Derrida>.

<sup>30</sup> Jean-Luc Godard, (born December 3, 1930, Paris, France), French film director who came to prominence with the New Wave group in France during the late 1950s and the 60’s. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/236684/Jean-Luc-Godard>.

- (4) We were in a cafe drinking coffee together and talking about philosophy. And I said, “Wittgenstein said, ‘The limits of language are the limits of my world’”. And she said, “Derrida said, ‘There is nothing outside of the text’”. And I said, “The end of language is the beginning of existence”, and she said, “Isn’t that just another concept?” and I said, “Does existence exist before we existed?” and she said, “No”. Then there was a pause. The cream in my hand was poised over the dark void of my coffee. And then I said, “Did you see that Godard film, the one with the coffee cup?” And she said, “Yes, where we see the milk folding into the dark expense of his coffee cup, and in that cup of coffee there is a whole universe of meaning”. What does he say? “The limits of language are the limits of my world, and by speaking I limit the world: that is Wittgenstein”. Yes, Wittgenstein also said “Our words would only express facts as a teacup would hold a teacup full of water even if I were to pour out a gallon over it”. And then she laughed. She laughed out loud and she said, “Laughter is the limits of language. We laugh when the absurdity of language becomes apparent, when it tricks us into believing in a thing called meaning” and I said, “We never arrived at fundamental propositions in the course of our investigations; we only get to the boundary of language that stops us from asking further questions”.

The story opens through memory, a recollection of a conversation the narrator had with a woman. The reader finds her/himself in the extradiegetic level of the narrative where by means of narrativized speech the homodiegetic narrator (also autodiegetic narrator) frames the setting and the subject of Hydra (*The Limits of Language*), “We were in a cafe drinking coffee together and talking about philosophy” (my emphasis). The dialogue begins when the narrator himself quotes Wittgenstein for the first time, “And I said, Wittgenstein said, ‘The limits of language are the limits of my world’” (my emphasis). Here, two aspects must be noted; in the first place, the narrator’s use of reported speech in direct style to report his own speech; and, in the second place, the narrator’s use of reported speech in direct style to quote Wittgenstein’s speech within his own speech.



By uttering, “The limits of language are the limits of my world”, a phrase that will be quoted twice in the conversation, the narrator rephrases a literary reference found in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 1961) [1921], “*The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.*” (5.6) (original emphasis)<sup>31</sup>. However, it must be noted that the uttered quotation and the literary reference are not identical, nor are the different semiotic systems that visually represent them through the digital work. That is to say, the background wallpaper, which hosts a faithful representation of postulation 5.6 of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 1961) [1921], “*The limits of my language mean the limits of my world*”; does not correspond to the narrator’s uttered quotation of Wittgenstein, “The limits of language are the limits of my world” (cf. IV.6.2). The main difference is that, in the first one, “the limits” refer to the language one possesses, and in the second one, “the limits” refer to language in its totality.

The following example of intertextuality presents similar characteristics in terms of discourse and interdiscourse. On the one hand, the use of reported speech in direct style employed by the narrator in order to report the woman’s speech; and on the other hand, the use of reported speech in direct style also employed by the narrator in order to quote Derrida within the woman’s speech. However, in this case, the literary reference appears intact, “And she said, ‘Derrida said, «There is nothing outside of the text»” (my emphasis). This example of intertextuality is illustrated by Derrida’s renowned phrase, “*il n’y a pas de hors-texte*” that appears on his book *De la grammatologie* (Derrida, 1967, p. 158). The phrase is precisely found in an essay Derrida wrote on Jean-Jacques Rousseau<sup>32</sup>.

As proposed by Derrida (1989, p. 841) in “Biodegradables Seven Diary Fragments”, the reader will discover that the concept of

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<sup>31</sup> “*Die Grenzen meiner Sprache bedeuten die Grenzen meiner Welt*”. (*Logisch-philosophische Abhandlung*, 1921) (5.6). (Original writing as it appears in the German version)

<sup>32</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, (born June 28, 1712, Geneva, Switzerland —died July 2, 1778, Ermenonville, France), Swiss-born philosopher, writer, and political theorist whose treatises and novels inspired the leaders of the French Revolution and the Romantic generation. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/510932/Jean-Jacques-Rousseau>.

deconstruction<sup>33</sup> begins by the deconstruction of the ‘verbal’ limits set on the text and the context. In other words, states the philosopher:

‘There is no outside-the-text’ signifies that one never accedes to a text without some relation to its contextual opening [...] if one does not understand the initial transformation of the concepts of text, trace, writing, signature, event, context, one understands nothing about nothing of aforesaid deconstruction.

The peculiarity of these two intertextual examples is the narrator’s use of another individual’s discourse (Authier-Revuz, 1984; Bakhtin, 1981; Ducrot, 1984), in this case Wittgenstein and Derrida to express his ideas and the ideas of the woman with whom he is conversing. This is an example of interdiscourse and enunciative polyphony in the dialogue. The discourse intentions of the man and the woman are dominated by their interdiscourse (their own *encyclopedia* of knowledge). In the dialogue the enunciators deal with a linguistic battle among them in order to obtain their communication goals; the homodiegetic narrator utters the voice of Wittgenstein and the voice of Derrida is uttered by the woman, but also reported by the homodiegetic narrator.

Additionally, it is must be underlined that four different contexts: Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 1961) [1921]; Wittgenstein’s “A Lecture on Ethics”, (Wittgenstein, 1993) [1929]; Derrida’s *Of Grammatology* (1976) [1967]; and Godard’s *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d’elle* (1967), are brought together in order to create a new context (the conversation in the cafe), which, on the one hand, emphasises Derrida’s idea that “*il n’y a pas de hors-texte*”; for every [text] is a [text] with in a [text] (*mise en abyme*); and on the other hand, stresses the different temporal possibilities that these [texts] embrace within HYA’s narrative

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<sup>33</sup> Deconstruction. Form of philosophical and literary analysis, derived mainly from work begun in the 1960s by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, who questions the fundamental conceptual distinctions, or “oppositions,” in Western philosophy through a close examination of the language and logic of philosophical and literary texts. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/155306/deconstruction>.

discourse, as it shall be shown in the temporality analysis section (cf. IV.6.3).

### 6.1.1 Deconstruction

The interchange of ideas and points of view intensifies as the dialogue continues; a door to Existentialism<sup>34</sup> is opened by means of reported speech in direct style, “And I said, ‘The end of language is the beginning of existence’, and she said, ‘Isn’t that just another concept?’ and I said, ‘Does existence exist before we existed?’ and she said, ‘No’” (my emphasis). It can be suggested that the intellectual speech created by the homodiegetic narrator and the woman depict their cultural level, literary interests, and ideology, which consequently frames the conversation in philosophical-artistic terms. To put it differently, by analysing their speech their characterization is deconstructed (characterization techniques in EL). This fact not only adds meaning and complexity to the conversation, given that new artistic associations begin to emerge amongst philosophy, film and literature; but also, demands the inclusion of a novel repertoire of aesthetic techniques (joining modes through media) to express different concepts (cf. IV.6.2).

Furthermore, a pause in the narrative discourse introduces a brief but evocative description of a coffee cup, “Then there was a pause. The cream in my hand was poised over the dark void of my coffee”. By describing the action of putting cream on his coffee, the narrator activates memory through the intertextuality of images, which additionally creates an **intertextual anamnesis effect** and fantastic associations among them. The recollection of a specific scene in Godard’s Film, “Two or three things that I know about her”, *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d’elle* (Godard, 1967) is presented. The coffee cup scene stands as a journey within the film itself, a detachment from reality, and a door to memory, “And then I said, ‘Did you see that Godard film, the one with the coffee cup?’ And

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<sup>34</sup> “Existentialism”, therefore, may be defined as the philosophical theory, which holds that a further set of categories, governed by the norm of *authenticity*, is necessary to grasp human existence. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/existentialism/>

she said, ‘Yes, where we see the milk folding into the dark expanse of his coffee cup, and in that cup of coffee there is a whole universe of meaning’”. It seems to me that the homodiegetic narrator were not only reporting his own speech, but also as if he were asking straightforwardly to the reader if s/he has previously seen Godard’s film, inviting her/him to recollect coffee cup images in her/his (visual) memory. Moreover, it should be noted that the simplicity and complexity of the words that swirl poetically in the coffee cup become the *visual motif* of the conversation given that by combining Existentialism and film; new philosophic and filmic layers are added not only to the conversation but also to the digital work in its totality. Clark merges filmic techniques and philosophy to submerge the reader into the [∞∞] possibilities of interpretation within the universe folding into the dark expanse of a coffee cup.

Likewise, it is useful to acknowledge that within 88C there is a constellation (Sextants, number 83) that is exclusively devoted to Godard’s film. On the one hand, it takes the same name as the film, “2 or 3 things I know about her”; and, on the other hand, it hosts a replica of a few images used in HYA (Godard’s silhouette, the coffee cup’s image both the graphic representation and the original one, and Wittgenstein’s frequently referred quotation, “The limits of my language are the limits of my world”). As previously mentioned in the “Intertextual Stars” section, this fact stands as an example of semiotic and linguistic intertextuality within the constellations themselves (cf. IV.5.1.1)

Now, focusing on the film, it is important to mention that on this specific scene of “Two or three things that I know about her” (Godard, 1967), the director directly inserts in the coffee cup soliloquy literary references from Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 1961) [1921]. In other words, there is an intertextuality mirror effect (reverse process of expression) since the same literary reference quoted twice by the homodiegetic narrator in HYA, “The limits of language are the limits of my world”, is uttered by the voice-over (Godard himself) when narrating the coffee cup scene in the film.

*Où commence, mais où commence quoi ? Dieu créa les cieux et la terre bien sûr, mais c’est un peu lâche et facile. On doit pouvoir dire mieux : dire que les limites du langage*

*sont celles du monde, que les limites de mon langage sont celles de mon monde, et qu'en parlant je limite le monde, je le termine. Et que la mort un jour logique et mystérieux viendra polir cette limite, et qu'il n'y aura ni question ni réponse, tout sera flou. Mais si par hasard les choses redeviennent nettes, ce ne peut être qu'avec l'apparition de la conscience, ensuite tout s'enchaîne. Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle, (Godard, 1967)<sup>35</sup> (my emphasis).*

This intertextual effect shows how EL hosts within its aesthetic realms different inspiring arts such as film. In other words, it is an example of how certain filmic figures are inspired by the rhetoric of writing, which underlines EL's reliance on other potential modes of expression<sup>36</sup> (cf. IV.6.2). Likewise, it can be said that similarly to the representation of Hydra's twisting snake in the sky, the reader is caught in the twists of language that revolve within HYA, the constellation. It is through the process of "deconstructing" HYA that the voices of Wittgenstein, Derrida, Godard, the woman, and the narrator, not only depict the high degree of enunciative polyphony of the text, but also introduce the plurality of contexts that the "(digital) text as world" and the "(digital) world as text" have to offer to the present study (cf. V.7.1).

As the story continues, the narrative voice addresses the reader for the first time to underline Wittgenstein's most quoted phrase, "What does he say? 'The limits of language are the limits of my world, and by speaking I limit the world': that is Wittgenstein". It seems to me as if Clark wanted to make sure that the reader of 88C searched for

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<sup>35</sup> This specific scene of *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle* can be seen on the following hyperlink: <http://vimeo.com/6308715>

<sup>36</sup> It is important to point out that traces of Charles Baudelaire's poetry were found through the analysis of Godard's film scene. The poem "Au lecteur" (*Les Fleurs du mal* (Baudelaire, 1857): "*C'est l'Ennui! -l'œil chargé d'un pleur involontaire, / Il rêve d'échafauds en fumant son houka. / Tu le connais, lecteur, ce monstre délicat, / -Hypocrite lecteur, -mon semblable, -mon frère!*" (my emphasis), is alluded two times by Godard's narrating voice-over in *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle* (Godard, 1967), "*Puisque, puisque je ne peut pas m'arracher à l'objectivité qui m'écrase, ni à la subjectivité qui m'exile, puisqu'il ne m'est pas permis ni de m'élever jusqu'à l'être, ni de tomber dans le néant, il faut que j'écoute, il faut que je regarde autour de moi plus que jamais, le monde, mon semblable, mon frère*" (my emphasis).

this specific sentence in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 1961) [1921]; so as to comprehend the context and meaning of the phrase. Based on what is written before, “If I cannot give elementary propositions a priori then it must lead to obvious nonsense to try to give them” (5.5557); and on what is written after, “Logic fills the world: the limits of the world are also its limits. We cannot therefore say in logic: This and this there is in the world, that there is not” (5.61). It seems to me that from such quotations the reader can infer that the centre of Wittgenstein’s statements is based on that which can be explained by means of language and that which cannot. It highlights the connection between language and reality; in other words, the (im)possibility to express by means of language, that which does (not) exist in the world (the power of imagination and creation), and the (im)possibility to express from *time to time* the reality that surrounds us.

As the “deconstruction” of HYA continues, new voices emerge. Still in the extradiegetic level of the narrative, the homodiegetic narrator presents by means of reported speech the last literary reference; in this occasion belonging to Wittgenstein’s essay, “A Lecture on Ethics” (Wittgenstein, 1993) [1929]. In his work, “Wittgenstein explores similar ideas within a similar framework of views about truth, necessity, and meaning, though here he is much more willing to exemplify ethical utterance, rather than just to talk about it” (Harcourt, 2013). However, the peculiarity of this new literary reference is once more the intertextuality of images created by fantastic associations (cf. IV.6.2). Interestingly, this time the visual motif it is no longer a coffee cup but a cup of tea<sup>37</sup>.

Nonetheless, the main subject is still language, “Yes, Wittgenstein also said, “Our words would only express facts as a teacup would hold a teacup full of water even if I were to pour out a gallon over

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<sup>37</sup> cf. “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (Eliot, 1915). “For I have known them all already, known them all: Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons, / I have measured out my life with coffee spoons; / I know the voices dying with a dying fall / Beneath the music from a farther room. / So how should I presume? [...] And would it have been worth it, after all, / After the cups, the marmalade, the tea, / Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me, / Would it have been worthwhile, / To have bitten off the matter with a smile, / To have squeezed the universe into a ball / To roll it towards some overwhelming question [...] (my emphasis)

it”.<sup>38</sup> As the quote suggests, it is right here where language turns into water, and human utterance shapes into a coffee cup; to put it differently, one can only express through language that which is within the limits of the world one sees (imagines). However, if one’s visual field is limitless, as formerly suggested by Wittgenstein, “Our life has no end in just the way in which our visual field has no limits” (6.4311); thenceforth, the same can be said about the infinite modes of expression, navigation and interpretation of 88C or other similar digital works<sup>39</sup>.

Lastly, the cafe conversation closes the constellation when the homodiegetic narrator and the woman conclude that if there is a limit to language that is laughter. That is, when the limits of linguistic expression are reached, laughter comes into being, as a way, to overexpress that which cannot be expressed by words, “Laughter is the limits of language. We laugh when the absurdity of language becomes apparent, when it tricks us into believing in a thing called meaning”. Therefore, laughter becomes a mysterious dynamic sound that can either signify nothing or signify it all. In this sense, laughter is a release *from* language and a reaction *to* language. The reader realizes that the homodiegetic narrator’s argument is based on the fact that words cannot capture it all, nor explained it all; they cannot critically nor linguistically apprehend the total visual imagery of the constellations, as wisely expressed by the narrator himself, “We never arrived at fundamental propositions in the course of our investigations; we only get to the boundary of language that stops us from asking further questions”. That said, perhaps such concepts as laughter, language, literature, and film have found in HYA’s universe of TSU not only the space to exploit different modes of representation but also the space to *highlight* their aesthetical and digital wildness.

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<sup>38</sup> The exact quotation reads: “Ethics, this book would, with an explosion, destroy all the other books in the world. Our words used as we use them in science, are vessels capable only of containing and conveying meaning and sense, natural meaning and sense. Ethics, if it is anything, is supernatural and our words will only express facts; as a teacup will only hold a teacup full of water and if I were to pour out a gallon over it.” “A Lecture on Ethics” (Wittgenstein, 1993, p. 40) [1929] (my emphasis).

<sup>39</sup> See Jason Nelson’s “Surrounded by Boxes of Dangerous Creatures”.  
<http://www.secrettechnology.com/dangerous/>



## 6.2 The Coffee Cup Soliloquy

To begin, it should be noted that HYA does not host within its explorative stars as much examples of figures of animation and figures of manipulation as Cassiopeia (*Cassiopeia*) or Ursa Minor (*Constellations*) do. The effect of *the secret of the Left Hand* does not appear at all while experiencing the constellation. Therefore, it is not possible to add new semiotic systems through interaction or manipulation; as for example, in UMI, where these elements are the core of the reading experience (cf. IV.5.3). Notwithstanding, as each explorative star has its own unique features, the peculiarity of HYA is centred on the high philosophic and filmic tinges that construct it, which skilfully turn HYA into a thought provoking and “fortune-cookie” twinkling passage.

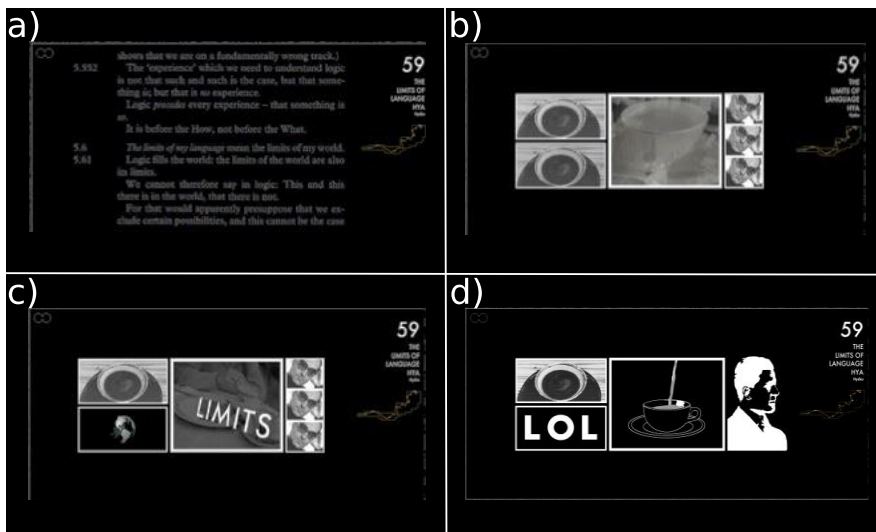
The first image to appear on the screen when experiencing HYA is a book page that belongs to the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 1961) [1921], which displays propositions number 5.552, 5.6 (“*The limits of my language mean the limits of my world*”), and 5.61. The image becomes for an instant the wallpaper of the spoken narrative; however, the image quickly vanishes in the screenic surface (Figure 14a). This is an example of degraded images in HYA. According to Saemmer (2010a, p. 174), in such figures of animation as “emergence and eclipse” additional meaning is added to the spoken narrative by means of fade-in and fade-out effects. In this case, the appearance and disappearance of the text make the reader wonder two things; firstly, the importance and mystery of what is written on it, and secondly, the book source to which it belongs (at this point the reader is already familiar with Wittgenstein’s bibliography within 88C). Nonetheless, as it shall be seen in the temporality analysis section (cf. IV.6.3), the *reading time* is not enough to grasp the meaning of what is written, which, following Saemmer (2010a) previously mentioned theory, might produce a catachretic animation effect<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> Saemmer (2010a, pp. 174–175) states that other examples of catachretic effects can be “the emergence and the eclipse” of the words when they point out the title of a poem; or the “the emergence and the eclipse” of scrolling names at the end of films.



As the book page vanishes, a screen within the main screen appears showing two different cafe settings. Although they both have as visual motif “the plurality of the coffee cup”; it is clear that the scenes belong to two different filmmaking sources. In the first one, the camera focuses on the concept of “a cafe” as a place; and in the second one, the camera focuses on the “coffee cup” as an object. Even though both settings slightly foretell Godard’s coffee cup scene in “Two or three things that I know about her” (Godard, 1967); it should be pointed out that, up to now, the images do not correspond to Godard’s original scene in the film nor the name Godard has been mentioned at all. As noted before, this association will only be made through intertextuality of images (within HYA) and intertextuality of stars (within 88C).



**Figure 14.** Screen captures of Hydra (HYA) showing a) TLP book page, b) intertextual anamnesis effect, c) gyrotory linguistic text: Limits of Language, d) visual puns LOL, 88C.

Subsequently, the main screen is divided in three small screens as if it were a negative filmstrip. The first example of coherent coupling (audio is coupled with image) is presented when the image of a man’s hand swirling milk into a coffee cup appears on the main screen as the narrative voice says, “The cream in my hand was poised over the dark void of my coffee”. This is followed by the appearance of a triple Jean-Luc Godard’s image on the right screen, whose appearance is parallel to the enunciation, “Did you see that

Godard film?” (audio is coupled with image); successively, the previous images of the “cafe” and the “coffee cup” return to the middle screen creating an image-recollection effect (**intertextual anamnesis effect**) (Figure 14b). A few seconds later, the same coherent coupling can be appreciated, as a double representation of Godard’s original coffee cup image appears on the left screen, in this occasion accompanied by the enunciation, “The one with the coffee cup”; which clearly stands as an example of intertextuality and direct allusion to Godard’s “Two or three things that I know about her” (Godard, 1967). This effect can be an example of what Saemmer (2010a, p. 177) calls kinetic allegory given that Godard’s film is represented through the animated image of “another thought”, and in this case, that other thought (the double representation of Godard’s original coffee cup image), “incites the reader to interpret a “story” that the content of words alone does not tell”; in HYA these “content of words” refers specifically to the alternative imaginaries of the spoken narrative.

Moreover, the most quoted phrase of the conversation, “What does he say? ‘The limits of language are the limits of my world, and by speaking I limit the world’: that is Wittgenstein” (my emphasis), is reinforced by two additional semiotic systems (TSU). On the one hand, a gyratory linguistic text showing word by word, “The Limits of Language” in the middle of the screen (Figure 14c); and, on the other hand, an image of a globe rotating at the bottom left of the screen (iconic movement), the upper left is occupied by Godard’s coffee cup.

Yet, this multi-thematic and multi-materiality filmstrip is immediately followed by the last example of intertextuality, “Wittgenstein also said ‘Our words would only express facts as a teacup would hold a teacup full of water even if I were to pour out a gallon over it’” “A Lecture on Ethics” (Wittgenstein, 1993, p. 40) [1929]. To strengthen the literary quotation, two more images are added to the reader’s vision, the first one corresponding to Wittgenstein’s black and white silhouette (right screen), and the second corresponding to a coffee cup overflowing with water (middle screen) (Figure 14d).

Lastly, to complement the above-mentioned multi-thematic filmstrip effect, the linguistic text “LOL” is simultaneously shown

(bottom left screen) as the narrative voice says, “she laughed out loud”. Thus, one possible reading is that “LOL” can either signify **L**aughing **O**ut **L**oud or **L**imits **o**f **L**anguage, which clearly accentuates 88C’s creation of visual puns through visual vocabulary (Figure 14d). For the reader must not forget the ideas behind Wittgenstein’s well known “Picture Theory”, “We make to ourselves pictures of facts” (2.1); “The picture is a model of reality” (2.12); “The picture is a fact” (2.141); “The picture can represent every reality whose form it has” (2.171) (my emphasis); therefore, as previously pointed out, in CAS semiotic riddles, in the visual field of representation, “It all depends on how you look at it. It depends on your point of view” (cf. IV.4.2).

### 6.3 The Limits of Time

Resembling CAS and UMI, Hydra (*The Limits of Language*) is presented by means of a Flash vignette, which suggests from the start that time is controlled by the system (transient texts). It is important to mention that HYA’s spoken narrative time within the Flash video has an estimated duration of one minute forty-six seconds (1’46’’) (*system time*) (mimetic aesthetics). However, in this case, the Flash video repeats itself endlessly without any manipulation performed by the reader; there is no need to click on the constellation map or on HYA’s image to restart the video. On the contrary, when the narrative voice ceases to speak the Flash video automatically restarts (time loop), retelling the story for an unlimited number of times. This feature is particularly associated to HYA and is dissimilar to what is found in CAS and UMI. As previously mentioned, in constellations number 18 and 12, the Flash video continues (non-stoppable) until the reader decides to explore a new star (cf. IV.4.3; IV.5.4).

That said, a suitable example of *limiting reading time* is the reading difficulty that the appearance of a book page belonging to the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 1961) [1921] presents to the reader. In the first place, it must be pointed out that the reader might not know that the book page belongs to this specific work, and even if s/he tries to read it, the image instantly fades away before the reader is capable of such action (figure of

animation, “emergence and eclipse”). In the second place, in comparison to CAS, HYA has fewer examples in which “what you read” corresponds to “what you hear” (syncretic assembling). One of them is when the narrative voice pronounces, “The limits of language”; here, the reader succeeds on grasping the gyratory linguistic text and listening to the narrative voice; in other words, s/he has enough time to read and associate TSU. The other example is the second linguistic text, “LOL” (**L**Laughing **O**ut **L**oud or **L**imits of **L**anguage); even though the linguistic text is short and lacks movement (sometimes movement can be a reading barrier) the *reading time* is enough for the reader to comprehend and grasp its meaning.

In terms of *delaying reading time*, since all constellations are accessed, either through the constellation map (by clicking on the specific name) or through a connected constellation (story) formerly experienced by the reader; it is likely that the reader will experience a screenic *delay* in the *reading time* since these changes (transitions from screen to screen) will indeed take *time*; what is more, at some point, s/he must have to wait for the video to get started or be charged, which is the case of most of the constellations. As noted before in such cases as UMI, *delaying reading time* may produce **paratextual techniques of loading time** that may surprise the reader’s expectations. In HYA the paratext is “Limits of Language” which is indeed the peritext of the constellation’s subtitle: Hydra, *The Limits of Language*.

As previously mentioned, the reader can also pause the electronic literary work by clicking on the icon of Hydra’s constellation (bottom right corner). The purpose of pausing HYA could be to reread (re-view) (re-visit) a specific element; for instance, the degraded image of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*’s book page (Wittgenstein, 1961) [1921]. However, even if the digital work is paused, the reading (vision) is blocked by the appearance of the constellation itself on the screenic surface (text superimposed by image). Consequently, even though *discourse time* is *delayed* by the reader’s gestural manipulation (*ergodic time*) (dynamic), in the end, a successful reading of the book page is not achieved. Such *reading times* may include the time travelling between the constellations that is understood as small time *fragments* of “*l’évanouissement du temps*”. These are blank moments within the *ergodic time*: space

and time abysses that cannot be truly time-measured but should be reading time-considered. As proposed by Walker (1999), the number of these visits should be taken narratologically into account [...] The number of visits also varies in different readings or sessions with the text, from one reader to the next, and according to the reader's goals, interests, ergodic skills, and strategies (Eskelinen (2012, p. 147) quoting Walker (1999)).

Furthermore, when exploring the category *limiting the reading opportunities*, similar to CAS, HYA can be experienced as many times as the reader wishes (limitless reading times). For it can be accessed unlimitedly in the *ELC2*. As previously discussed in the section devoted to the Pragmatic Characteristics of the *ELC2* (cf. IV.2.1), there is low risk that *88C* will disappear or be non-accessible on the web. On the one hand, the digital work has been archived and preserved within the *ELC2*; and on the other hand, it can be found in Clark's personal blog ("Chemical Pictures"). Lastly, HYA cannot be classified as a *temporally evolving text* because nothing can be added (nor by the reader nor by the author). In terms of gestural manipulation, in comparison to CAS or to UMI, in HYA there are not new semiotic systems to be added by means of "*the secret of the Left Hand*" (SUM). This option does not exist in HYA, which undoubtedly underlines the fact that as the present analysis evolves each constellation will unveil its uniqueness.

### 6.3.1 *Le Découpage du Temps*

Following the temporal levels for cybertexts with narrative content proposed by Koskimaa (2010a), the *user time* is the time the reader spends experiencing the text. Echoing CAS and UMI, in HYA this time is unlimited and non-measurable (cf. IV.4.3.1). The three constellations present the same features in terms of *user time* because it is impossible to count the number of times they are accessed by the reader, which leaves the door open to unlimited and immeasurable experiences.

Like CAS and UMI, HYA is part of the reading path I have chosen to explore in the present analysis: 18 Cassiopeia (*Cassiopeia*), 12 Ursa Minor (*Constellations*), 59 Hydra (*Limits of Language*).

Therefore, if the reader were to consider the total *user time*, it is important that s/he also considers the time spent before reaching Hydra (Presentation: Antechamber of 88C: Constellation Map: Cassiopeia: Ursa Minor). It is important to bear in mind that the uniqueness of each constellation depicts that the *system time* will unquestionably vary from one explorative star to another; for it has been found that the *system time* within the constellations can either be *static* or *dynamic* (i.e. its settings either change or they don't) (Eskelinen, 2012, p. 159).

Therefore, the peculiarity of HYA relies on the fact that the spoken narrative stops at the same *time* as the Flash video. Even if the story is retold many times, the *system time* (1'46'') designated to the spoken narrative cannot be altered, which makes the effect of "*the secret of the Left Hand*" none existent (cf. IV.3.3.2). There are not piano keys to be played. Gestural manipulation through SUM is not part of the experience. It seems to me that this has an impact on both *story time* and *discourse time*. First, the reader must remember that what builds up the narrative discourse of the constellation is a dialogue rich in intertextuality and polyphony. That said, if it is considered that the dialogue takes place in *real time*; then it should be underlined that *discourse time* is the same as *system time* (text-controlled time), and consequently as *true time* (screen time). To put it in a different way, the narrative voice speaks for 1'46'', showing on the screen a video that lasts 1'46'' within a *system time* that has been programmed to run for exactly 1'46'' (*static time*).

There is no *pseudo-time* in HYA since, as formerly pointed out, the constellation is presented by means of a spoken narrative, the transcription provided above (16 lines) is only a reading support to better the reader's understanding of the story. Nevertheless, the lines found in the image of the book page *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 1961) [1921], propositions number 5.552, 5.6 "*The limits of my language mean the limits of my world*", and 5.61. contain a *pseudo-time* (spatial measure) of 13 lines; out of which, none of them are spoken by the narrative voice at the moment they appear on the screen (there is no syncretic assembling). Yet, in regards to this image, there is visual memory at play; to put it differently, the reader might associate that s/he has previously seen or read the phrase, "*The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.*" (5.6) (original emphasis); and

consequently, by the moment the narrative voice enunciates it, the reader might establish the connection, and resolve if s/he wants to reread the digital work in order to confirm the alluded information or not. This is an example of what Bouchardon & Heckman (2012) refer as the three elements of digital literary works, “figure, grasp and memory”. In other words, I see the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*’ book page through a fading away image (semiotic figure) (TSU); successively, I try to grasp its meaning by adding new semiotic systems (SUM) (Hydra’s superimposed image), as well as by manipulating (*time*); and finally, while constructing the meaning of the whole text, I make associations of the TSU (*temporal semiotic units*) that I have previously seen or read, through visual memory (**anamnesis effect- narrative vertigo**).

Furthermore, the reader might wonder how the *story time* of the conversation is connected to Wittgenstein’s life (“this **story** is about a man named Wittgenstein...”) for it is considered that HYA is not a story about Wittgenstein but a story in which the characters talk about him (enunciative polyphony in the dialogue). This example highlights the fact that not all the explorative stars within 88C depict a small piece of Wittgenstein’s life; on the contrary, they stand as a *mélange* of techniques to express Wittgenstein’s life through diverse *story times* (non-linearity), fields of knowledge and multi-materialities. For instance, when analysing the *story time* in HYA, the reader must bear in mind that the contents of the conversation: allusions to Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 1961) [1921]; Wittgenstein’s “A Lecture on Ethics” (Wittgenstein, 1993) [1929]; Derrida’s *Of Grammatology* (Derrida, 1976) [1967]; and Godard’s *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d’elle*, (Godard, 1967), are truly important when analysing the temporal levels of the conversation, as well as its temporal relation to present time.

It can be implied that the conversation took place later than 1967 because two of the works that are mentioned were released exactly on this year. Likewise, we should not lose sight of the fact that by means of polyphony and intertextuality, the characters are able to bring to the conversation (new imaginaries) *story times* from different contexts, “Wittgenstein’s postulations, Derrida’s philosophy, and Godard’s films”, which emphasise Derrida’s statement: “‘There is no outside-the-text’ signifies that one never

accedes to a text without some relation to its contextual opening[...]" (Derrida, 1989, p. 841).

Lastly, following the categories of narrative speed (pause, scene, summary, ellipsis) proposed by Genette (1980, p. 84); HYA could be an example of a scene because is depicted by a dialogue. In this sense, as pointed out by Genette (1980) the narrative time (*discourse time*) corresponds to the *story time*. The duration of the narrative corresponds to the story it tells. However, the slight difference in HYA is that the introductory line "We were in a cafe drinking coffee and talking philosophy" is part of the fixed *discourse time* and *true time* of the digital work (1'46''); and therefore, it cannot be detached from the *system time* (1'46''). To put it differently, the line cannot be separated from the *discourse time* of the digital work because everything is read in its totality; the line is not independent as it would be in the print medium. For this reason, the *story time* and the *discourse time* in HYA cannot be identical regardless of highly falling into Genette's category. According to Eskelinen (2012, p. 150), "The notable additions written digital narratives are capable of introducing into literary narratology is measurable and verifiable duration (i.e. duration in true time)"; in this sense, the task of exploring temporal levels within 88C's explorative stars demands for the reader to be aware that complex and intriguing results can occur by very simple means (Eskelinen & Koskimaa, 2001).



## 7. CONCLUSION

The analysis of 88 *Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)* implied to explore its digital presentation inside the *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two* (2011). Through the paratextual description of both scenarios, I have found that the creation of the *ELC2* is an example of a social and cultural practice where different media products constantly seek an agreement with the situation of communication to which they correspond. The different works in the *ELC2* bring with them a kaleidoscope of *distant paratextual memories* that reflects interesting research paths in terms of digital paratextual temporality. Moreover, the plurality of the electronic literary works found in the *ELC2* presents a challenge in terms of categorization for each work of EL shapes and creates a new (literary) identity when seen through the lens of the *illocutory force* of such digital compilations, e.g. *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two* (2011). This implies a cultural and social recontextualization that may lead to asymmetries of representation concerning genre and paratextual temporality.

The dynamics of the peritextual message open a field of negotiation where transmission of information and navigation within the *ELC2* are at stake. Factual paratextual messages have shown a first step to visual *categorization* of the selected digital works, which exposes the reader to a vocabulary and a terminology concerning EL. Moreover, peritextual absences such as, missing labels regarding authorship, underline the idea of the paratextual discourse as a negotiating field not only on the side of the editor's choice, but also on the side of the reader's horizon of expectations. The need to fulfil this space in between media products will certainly position the reader as a curator.

Paratextual digital temporality exposes temporal confrontations between *peritexts* and *epitexts* that lead to complications concerning authorship. The temporal confrontations concern date variations among *prior* paratexts, *original* paratexts, *posteriori* paratexts; which consequently have an impact on *authorial* paratexts and *publisher's* paratext. Interestingly, these confrontations raise further questions in terms of temporal and pragmatic characteristics. Yet the picture is more complex when one thinks that in some cases

*prior* paratexts become epitexts that may stand as *distant paratextual memories* of the works.

Innovations in the paratextual discourse confront possibilities of expression and functionality. For this reason, given the increasing production and expansion of digital works, paratexts bravely challenge different environments and consequently are reinvented into different dynamic natures (plurality of semiotic substances). A good example of such diverse textualities and multi-materialities is the interactive mosaic index of the *ELC2* (which is a materialized highly polyphonic narrative) that allows for pre-visualization of the digital works' scenes, authors, titles and subtitles. Additionally, it must be underlined that references to "exhibitions" interestingly stand as a new kind of *epitexts*. The referent implies performativity and therefore can be considered as a new sort of *performative* paratext. Exhibitions might be a new way to refer to the work *on stage*, in other words, *epitexts* might become virtual tours of specific digital works at a pointed exhibition. Finally, it can be suggested that "calls for works", which are needed to create such *Collections* or *Anthologies*, stand as first stone epitextual traces of such digital compilations.

The paratextual trial faced by digital works when included either in *Collections*, *Anthologies* or other digital (or non-digital) compilations underlines the importance of edition as a creative and research practice. At times the array of editing possibilities may lead to confrontations in the border between functionality, exhaustion, and culture. In my view, it is not only technical features put together but also conventional aesthetic relations being tested, broken and renewed (e.g. the spatial and temporal reorganization of *distant paratextual memories*). The new behaviours of the paratextual discourse found in the diversity and plurality of digital works lead to editorial debates and investigations, which underline the challenge of composition, creation, dissemination, and research that the rapidly growing field of EL imposes to its own self.

*88C for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)* (2008) is an example of how philosophy tests the possibilities of representation in a digital scenario where constellations can be read as philosophical intriguing puzzles occasionally represented by rhetorical riddles. Literariness is shown through intertextuality in

Cassiopeia (CAS) and Hydra (HYA), where is represented by literary quotations and allusions that appear at different narrative discourse and narrative distance levels. Interestingly, in CAS and HYA literary quotations trigger meta-literary quotations and meta-literary allusions through interfacial media figures (**interfacial anamnesis**) and intermedial practices; and at times, the same referred literary quotations are mirrored in the discourse of other alluded artistic contexts (e.g. Wittgenstein's *TLP* inside Godard's film; and Godard's film inside HYA). On the one hand, this shows that EL establishes relations and finds inspiration on different fine arts such as film and printed-literature; and, on the other hand, this suggests that once in the digital scenario such "borrowings" experience a reverse process of expression. That is, works experience new cycles of aesthetic appreciation owing to recontextualization through intermedial practices.

With respect to polyphony, voices shape to produce a sort of **intertextual** and **polyphonic anamnesis**. The representation of polyphony relies not only on making the transition from an anecdote-recollection (CAS) to a dialogue-recollection (HYA), to the work's own-recollection (UMI), but also on studying how these voices spatially and temporally recall and evoke such events, specifically how voices construct their discursive memory. For instance, in HYA the polyphonic intersection of different points of view, registers, and discourses featuring from a variety of contexts enhances the textuality of the narrative discourse's story of speech, whereas in CAS the narrative discourse is a representation of embedded narratives.

It seems to me that the literary quotations found in CAS and HYA are frequently intended as visual philosophical riddles. This produces a high presence of intertextuality of images strictly interrelated to TSU and at times to SUM. In fact, in UMI and HYA literary quotations allow for intertextuality within the constellations themselves depicting each constellation as a chapter of philosophical propositions. This proposes a labyrinth-like poetic of navigation based on a highly intellectual dialogism of media. Remarkably, intertextual recollections among constellations lead to the creation of new interfacial figures that are mainly associated to acts of memory, memorization, and oblivion (e.g. **intertextual** or **polyphonic anamnesis**).

That said, the connection between intertextuality, polyphony, and the rhetorical enunciation of the works goes to a further degree if one considers that in CAS and HYA intertextuality and polyphony are not only activated but also re-created by means of figures of animation (e.g. ciné-gramme, catachretic animation effects, animated hyperbole). In other words, in 88C literary quotations and allusions seek for new techniques of literary representation by creating diverse forms and emotions through digital rhetoric structures (figures of animation). These figures filter into the mind of the reader reviving not only past memories but also, and most importantly, past gestural sensations where body, mind and materiality are essential components. For instance, there are catachretic animation effects that may represent oblivion or flashbacks (retrospections) (CAS); degraded images and effects of emergence and eclipse that might symbolise the erosion of memory over time (HYA, UMI); interfacial involution that may represent intertextuality of memories or repetition of events (CAS, HYA, UMI); interfacial incubation that might symbolise intertextual recollections of events or objects which emphasises the importance of visual memory (CAS, HYA, UMI); interfacial (animated) sporulation that may represent the act of remembering multiple times the same sights, sounds, and sensations (CAS, HYA, UMI); and a mingling between the aesthetics of the ephemeral and the aesthetics of re-enchantment that might symbolise the ephemerality of recollections and the indescribable sensation of digital *madeleine* effects (CAS, HYA, UMI).

Lastly, in UMI the effect of interfacial retroprojection occupies an exceptional position in the analysis of 88C given that the *illocutory force* of the peritext “to be played with the Left Hand” activates the SUM (*activer-appuyer sur une touche du clavier*) as it triggers the iconicity trait of playing the piano. This shows that UMI is an exception not only in terms of gestural manipulation activity (for several piano keys trigger different figures of manipulation) but also in terms of temporal dynamics. In Cassiopeia TSU cleverly store time in visual forms (e.g. WWI); in Hydra *discourse time* and *story time* present interesting parallelisms (scene); and in Ursa Minor the absence of *story time* contrasts with the high presence of *ergodic time* that is accompanied by a high presence of SUM. Similarly, to UMI, in CAS, *ergodic time* allows the reader to manipulate *system time*, *reading time*, *discourse time*, and *true time* by exploring SUM

and figures of manipulation. In both constellations *user time* tends to be unlimited and non-measurable; for this reason, CAS and UMI are likely to end their narratives through the aesthetics of the ephemeral if not manipulated by the reader.

HYA presents a peculiar ending because *system time* controls *reading time* (syncretic assembling); therefore, when the narrative voice ceases to speak *discourse time* ends by a new beginning, which interestingly gives place to a new *meta-discourse time*. Other peculiarities found in HYA are the absence of SUM in the construction of meaning, and the fact that though in HYA the narrative time (*discourse time*) may seem to be the same as the *story time* (scene); the first line of the *pseudo-time* stands as a linguistic text boundary between the two. In regards to *story time*, the constellations present rich *story times* (diverse imaginaries) due to the high presence of intertextuality and polyphony found in the narrative discourse (*pseudo-time*). This shows that embedded narratives break the constellations' narrative boundaries and interlace through TSU and SUM composing intermedial bridges of discursive memory. As previously mentioned, unexpectedly UMI presents no *story time*, therefore a comparison between *story time* and *discourse time* cannot be made. This produces a gap in the four-level temporal analysis used in our methodology of interpretation; however, the possibility that by means of SUM, linguistic texts may be added to UMI's *discourse time* is always opened to experimentation. If so the linguistic texts will be thus considered as a part of the *pseudo-time* of the constellation's narrative discourse and consequently affect the other temporal levels.

In UMI and HYA, *delaying reading time* (produced by mimetic aesthetics) together with *limiting reading time* may lead to the (non-intentional) creation of **paratextual techniques of loading time**. Interestingly, the visual forms of such paratextual techniques are literary quotations from the *TLP* (UMI) and the paratext, "Limits of Language" which is indeed the peritext of HYA's subtitle. Likewise, the analysis shows that catachretic animation effects and interfacial involution produce *limiting reading time* (CAS, UMI); and, lastly, that interfacial involution produces the novelty of **peritextual interfacial involution** (UMI) creating *limiting reading time* situations. In this last example, the visual forms are the

unexpected repetition of the title and subtitle of the digital work, 88 *Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)*.

CAS, UMI and HYA show that the discursive constructs of memory through the mingling aesthetics of philosophy, music, film, and literature is an open research path in 88C. The examples found in the analysis present an anecdote-recollection (CAS), a dialogue-recollection (HYA), and the work's own semiotic recollection (UMI) through SUM and visual music. This suggests how certain constellations within 88C weave a discursive memory through semiotic forms that can only be located in the interstices and interfaces of mediated discourse and intermedial bridges. I consider that by discovering unexplored paths and creative unknowns the reader encounters examples of gestural melodic manipulation that will consequently lead to the creation of visual music. Therefore, the visual music produced by the secret of the Left Hand, whose notes (piano keys) are the gestural enunciation of different artistic discourses, exposes the potential intermedial literary characteristics of the text which accentuates that figures can in fact take place in between media.

# CHAPTER V. ANALYSIS OF *DÉPRISE* (2010) BY SERGE BOUCHARDON AND VINCENT VOLCKAERT

## 1. DP: GENERAL OVERVIEW

The present analysis is intended to be a guide for the artisan reader of *Déprise* (Bouchardon & Volckaert, 2010) (*DP*). The interactive narrative belongs to a trilogy called *Hyper-tensions*<sup>1</sup> which includes three works: *Déprise* (Bouchardon & Volckaert, 2010), *Opacité* (Bouchardon, Volckaert, Dumas, & Zénouda, 2012), and *Détrace* (Bouchardon et al., 2016). On an introductory level, through six scenes the narrative voice portrays the mindscapes of a man who gradually loses grasp of the poetic and dramatic nodes that tie his life together. Likewise, the work creatively challenges the reader to decipher the relationship between the computer's interfacial imaginaries and her/his own self.

Like 88C, the analysis of *DP* is divided in three parts. The first part describes the paratextual elements (peritext and epitext) of two interrelated settings: the online presentation of the *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature* (2012); and the presentation of *DP* within the *AEEL*. By paratextual description, as previously presented, I refer to the spatial, temporal, substantial, pragmatic, and functional characteristics of the paratextual message (Genette, 1997b).

The second part focuses on two subjects: on the one hand, the variability of the text composition in regards to the mélange of semiotic systems that are activated and interweaved as the reader interacts and manipulates the digital work. And, on the other hand,

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<sup>1</sup> cf. Serge Bouchardon, et al. (2010-2016) *Hyper-tensions*. Artists Statement (EN): *Hyper-tensions* is a creation in three parts, in the form of three interactive narratives. Each part depicts an example of tension. We think that we want to keep things under control, to yearn for transparency, to leave a trace. As a matter of fact it turns out that we may very well experience an ambiguous pleasure in the loss of grasp, in the desire for opacity, in the fascination for the trace that fades away. <http://www.utc.fr/~bouchard/works/Hypertensions.html>

the polyphony and intertextuality within the interactive narrative discourse that emerge from the manipulation of time and space in the digital medium. I am specifically interested in the topological analysis of the work; in other words, I focus on how by evoking a surprising or incongruous effect on the reader, the combinations between text, movement and manipulation may create figures of animation and figures of manipulation.

Finally, the third part is centred on the analysis of the new theoretical propositions being currently used to understand the temporal dynamics of digital texts; as well as on the appearance of new aspects and dimensions of time due to the dynamic nature of the text. Additionally, all the parts have subdivisions that portray in detail each of the above-mentioned subjects, which, to my understanding are necessary to provide the reader with a better comprehension of the exploration of Bouchardon's, and Volckaert's thought-provoking interactive narrative.

I have decided to work with the original French version of *Déprise* (it must be noted that *DP* has been translated into English, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese since its creation in 2010). Furthermore, in order to construct the present analysis, I have explored the digital work in the following way. Mirroring the analysis of *88C*, I have chosen to refer to each screen capture by labelling it with a number following the last referred [Figure 14](#) (e.g. [Figure 15](#), [Figure 16](#), [Figure 17](#), etc.) In addition, the electronic address that corresponds to the exact screen capture being discussed is provided at the caption of each figure (e.g. [Figure 18: \*Déprise\*: <http://lossofgrasp.com>](#)).

As it was done for the analysis of *88C*, I will use abbreviations throughout the analysis of *Déprise*; therefore, when referring to the *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature* (2012), I will use “*AEEL*”; when referring to *Déprise* (2010), I will use, “*DP*”; and finally, when referring to *DP*'s six-scene sequence, I will use, S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6. For instance, the study concerning the presentation of the “*AEEL*” and “*DP*” makes reference to [Figure 15](#), [Figure 16](#), [Figure 17](#), and [Figure 18](#); and so forth for each subsequent section. The audio and video transcriptions that compose each of the six scenes that construct *DP* are also provided; finally, along the analysis, a parenthesis indicating the number of



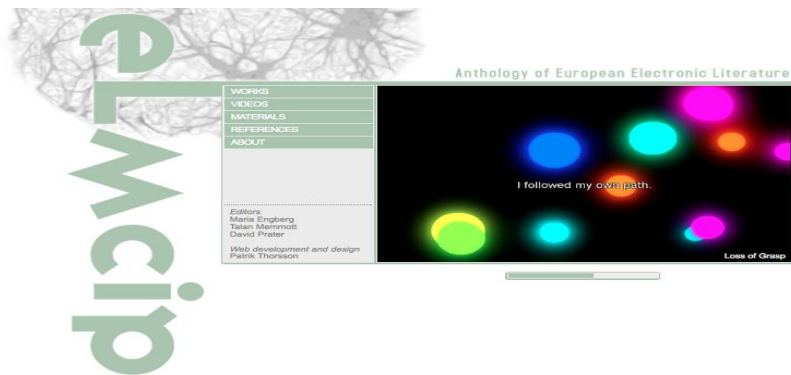
the corresponding transcription is placed on the left side of the citation.

Lastly, it must be noted that the present analysis is based on the online access of the *AEEL* (<http://anthology.elmcip.net/works.html>). The reader must know that there are not USB flash drive publications available. In my view, it is important to bring this information to the reader's attention since, as previously explained in the theoretical framework, the results of the analysis could vary depending on the fragility of reading medium (cf. III.1.5; cf. III.2.3.2). For the individual features of the reading medium are a pre-condition of interpretation.



## 2. PARATEXTUAL DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Presentation of the *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature (AEEL)*



**Figure 15.** *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature*: <http://anthology.elmcip.net/index.html>.

Spatial characteristics. The following peritextual spatial description has been made from top to bottom based on the screen capture of [Figure 15](#). In terms of paratextual spatial categories (peritext and epitext), the examples found in [Figure 15](#) are mainly represented by peritexts. From the first glimpse at the *AEEL* (original text), the reader can perceive the following peritexts; the title, *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature*, the iconic-logo of ELMCIP (Electronic Literature as a Model of Creativity and Innovation in Practice) (cf. [II.2.4](#)), which also appears at the bottom of the page along with editorial and grant references. It is important to note that there is no an existing epitext that redirects the reader to the database in the main page of the ELMCIP (at least in the presentation of the main page). This can cause a rupture in the expectations of the reader given that most probably his/her iconographic-clicking memory will expect to be redirected to the ELMCIP website; however, this function is unavailable.

On the upper left, the reader will find shadowed in green the following linguistic texts: “WORKS”, “VIDEOS”, “MATERIALS”, “REFERENCES”, “ABOUT”; all of them possess a link that redirects the reader to that specific section of the *AEEL*. These linguistic texts are highlighted in white as the reader mouses-over them. On the same side, the names of the editors (Maria Engberg, Talan Memmott, David Prater) are also shown; these paratexts are followed by the credits of the web development and design made by Patrik Thorsson. I find innovative and informative that the index is shown as a slide gallery that randomly displays an image of every work compiled on the *AEEL*. This echoes the innovative sixty-three electronic literary works’ main mosaic index in the *ELC2* and underlines new propositions to present an index. This technique can be read as small pre-visualizations of the works, a new way for the reader to choose which work to read before departure. Such pre-visualizations are accompanied by the title of the work but not by the name of the author. In my opinion, the name of the author must be compulsory included to complete the peritextual presentation of the digital work. Furthermore, in the event that one of the displayed images captures the attention of the reader, a click on the image will redirect her/him to the presentation (antechamber) of the work within the *AEEL*. This way of browsing through the works is accompanied by the presence of a loading bar indicating the change of display from one digital work to another. No records of **paratextual techniques of loading time** are found.

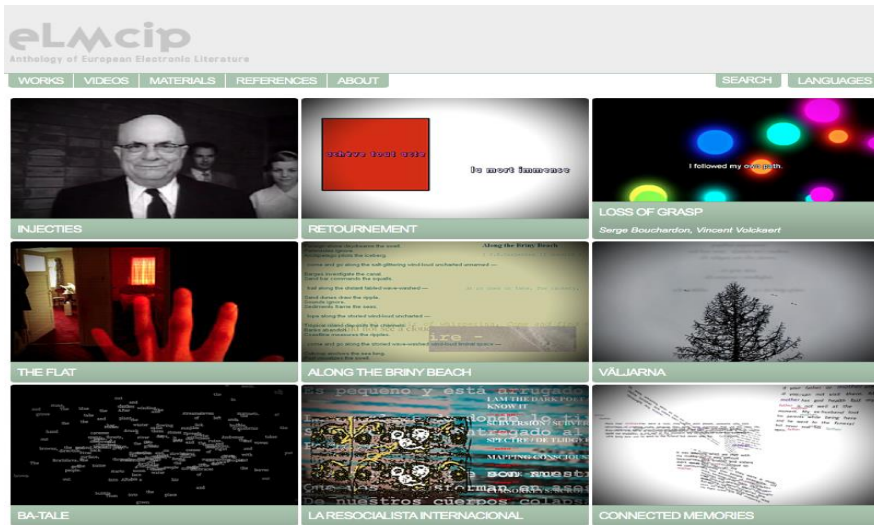


Figure 16. Display 1 of Digital Works within *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature*: <https://anthology.elmcip.net/works.html>.

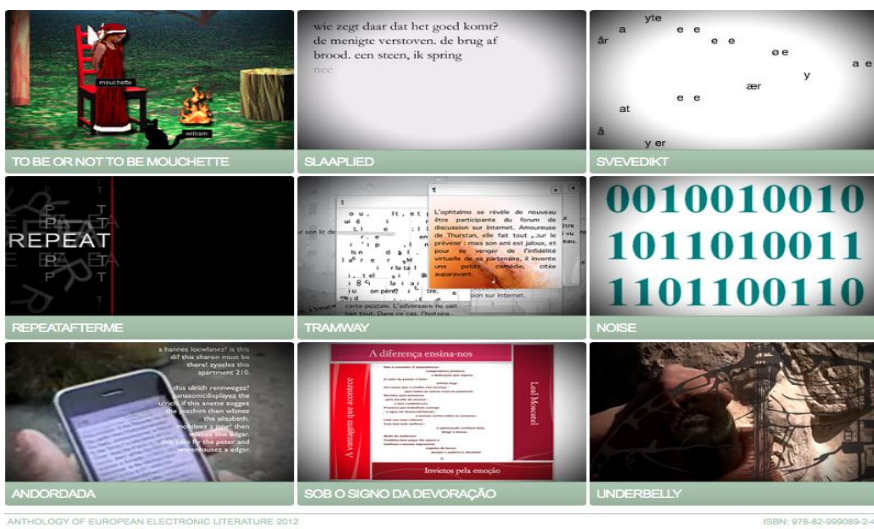


Figure 17. Display 2 of Digital Works within *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature*: <https://anthology.elmcip.net/works.html>.

Temporal characteristics. The *AEEL* was published in 2012; therefore, all the corresponding peritexts to which I have referred in the spatial description of [Figure 15](#) date from 2012, which is the year the *AEEL* was assembled. Nevertheless, the reader must bear in mind that the digital works were not necessarily created in 2012 but

compiled and collected in 2012 after the call for works (*prior* paratexts) was launch by the ELMCIP. Therefore, each digital work has its own date of creation or previous publication e.g. *Tramway* (Saemmer, 2009b); *Svevedikt* (Ormstad, 2006); *Connected Memories* (Mencía, 2009).

Another example of *prior* paratexts (*distant paratextual memories*) are all the videos belonging to the “Karlskrona Pedagogy Workshop and Seminar” which are assembled in the section “VIDEOS” of the *AEEL*. The section “MATERIALS” is also a good example of *prior* paratexts since all the documents in the syllabi, exercises and assignments, essays and presentations, have different dates of publication and creation. Lastly, the same thing could be said about the section “REFERENCES” since for each author, work, and workshop reference there is a link to the ELMCIP database. However, it must be underlined that each of these entries was registered at different times and dates in relation to the publication of the *AEEL* in 2012.

Similar to the *ELC2*, this means that the above-mentioned peritexts are considered as the *original* paratexts of the *AEEL*. Finally, it is interesting to add that in the event of future editions of the *AEEL* it could be possible to speak of *posteriori* paratexts; for example, adjustments (additions or subtractions of information) on the *AEEL*'s current content, or an editorial reference to the *AEEL* as *AEEL Volume 1*. However, up to this date 2015, record of such fact has not been found; though it is of my true interest to be aware if it occurs.

Substantial characteristics. The materiality and textuality of the peritexts that inhabit the *AEEL* have diverse compositions, among which there are texts, icons, varied making material, and factual messages. If context can be considered as a paratext, as stated by Genette (1997b), the complexity of archiving and preserving electronic proves to be a terrain to test the functionality of the *AEEL* textuality and materiality. In other words, the online support of the *AEEL* not only enriches the variability of the Anthology but also adds temporal reorganization issues and complexity to the way in which the paratextual messages are performed, sent and received. In terms of linguistic text, the peritexts, “WORKS”, “VIDEOS”, “MATERIALS”, “REFERENCES”, “ABOUT”, underline that

hyperlinks are a recurring substantial characteristic that redirect the reader to those specific sections of the *AEEL*. In terms of iconic representations, a suitable and innovative example is the index, shown as a slide gallery that randomly displays an image of every work in the *AEEL* (though as abovementioned the title of the author is missing in the paratextual presentation). This is an example of an iconic substantial characteristic because it proposes a novel way to present an index of digital works. In addition, there is no action needed to be performed by the reader, the slide gallery is already programmed featuring a carousel slide projector that can only be stopped if the reader chooses to traverse a specific work.

Like the *ELC2*, the second iconic representation is illustrated by the logo of the Electronic Literature as a Model of Creativity and Innovation in Practice (ELMCIP) (cf. II.2.4). However, it should be noted that the icon in the presentation page does not possess a link that will redirect the reader to the ELMCIP database. It only gets activated as the reader explores the different sections of the *AEEL*. Its main function is to take the reader back to the presentation page as a reference backwards link.

Another example of iconic substantial characteristic is the way in which the section “VIDEOS” is presented. The capture image of the presenter along with the title of the presentation is displayed in a mousing-over mosaic index. This typographic feature is used twice in the representation of the *AEEL*. Though not all of the presenters are the same authors of the section “WORKS”, the fact that in some cases there is a video in which one can meet the author, and listen to a specific talk on EL is helpful and pedagogical, as well as an invitation to discover different research subjects. These videos were taken at the “Karlskrona Pedagogy Workshop and Seminar” that took place in June 2011 at the Blekinge Institute of Technology, in Sweden; which as previously mentioned makes all of them *prior* paratexts.

In terms of factual messages, the question is why the *ELC2* is labelled a “Collection” and the *AEEL* is labelled an “Anthology”. To choose the title of a gathering of works, or pieces of writing, implies to deliver a message to the public you are addressing, to create a contract of communication. For this reason, I want to bring back to the reader’s mind the origins of the word “Anthology”,

which springs from the Greek *anthologia*, from *anthos* ‘flower’, and *logia* ‘collection’ (from *legein* ‘gather’). In Greek, the word originally denoted a collection of the ‘flowers’ of verse by various authors. Therefore, the idea of ‘collection’ or gathering things together is included within the word ‘Anthology’. I address this information because the factual paratextual messages, in this case, the title of the work (*ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature*), besides being the first paratext that the reader encounters, it specifies the reading scenario: “you are about to read an: *Anthology*”. The whole process of creating the *AEEL* speaks and stands as an ongoing research of presenting and distributing works of EL to a potential reading public.

Pragmatic characteristics. As explained above, the pragmatic characteristics of the paratextual message refer to the “characteristics of the situation of communication”; that is to say, to the sender and the addressee (Genette, 1997b)<sup>2</sup> (cf. III.1.6.3). The ELMCIP is the official sender (*publisher’s paratext*) because as shown in the main presentation page it represents the publishing house of the *AEEL* and besides it is included in its official name: the *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature*. Echoing the *ELC2*, all the specific (indirect) senders of the spatial, temporal, substantial, pragmatic, and functional characteristics of the paratextual messages (*public paratexts*) within the *AEEL* are the editors in charge (Maria Engberg, Talan Memmott, David Prater); since they are the editing scholars who designed the way in which the *AEEL* is visually presented to the readers on the online edition (*publisher’s paratext* and *authorial paratext*).

It must be stressed that the *AEEL* is referred as a whole text, not as individual works, and therefore, individual senders; in other words, the authors of each one of the digital works. As presented in the *ELC2*, one possibility is that the public who reaches the *AEEL* are individuals that in one way or the other are related to the EL community, and therefore familiar with the *AEEL*. In this case, they

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<sup>2</sup> From a different perspective, as noted by Charaudeau (2006, pt. 1), the elements that composed the situation of communication are the following, i.e., the identity of the exchange partners, the purpose of the exchange, the content at stake, and the material circumstances that surround it. (cf. III.1.4.1).



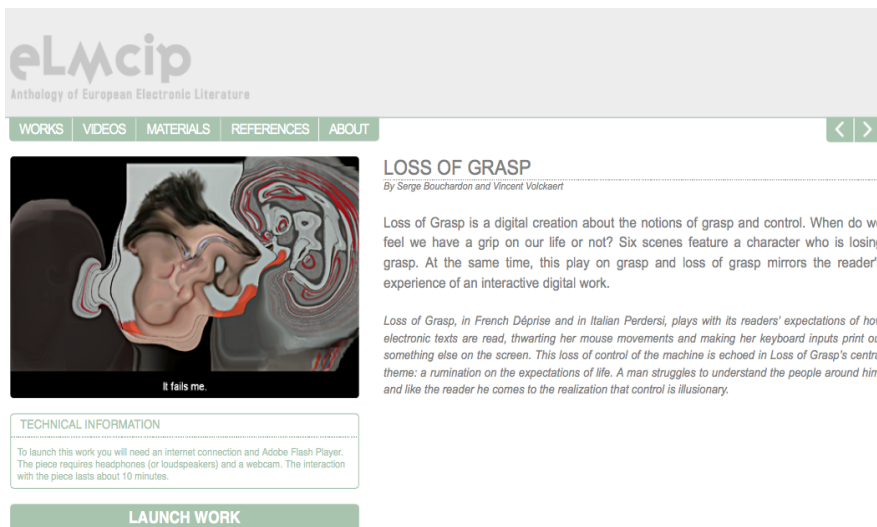
could have come across the *AEEL* via the ELMCIP website (that is via the *peritext* “Anthology” found in the ELMCIP website). Another possibility is that they could be individuals that knew neither about the *AEEL* nor about the field of EL, and came across it by different navigating circumstances (*epitexts*), or by truly poetic chance.

Following Genette’s categories, the *illocutory force* of the sender’s message: *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature* is informative. The title tells the public that this gathering or works of EL has been labelled an Anthology, was edited by the ELMCIP, and that it gathers specifically European works of EL. As the “ABOUT” section specifies when speaking of the *AEEL*, “the Anthology is intended to provide educators, students and the general public with a free curricular resource of electronic literary works produced in Europe” (*AEEL*, 2012). Additionally, the editors underline that “the language used is predominately English, but several works are produced in other languages” (*AEEL*, 2012). However, the title’s *illocutory force* does not specify if we are exploring volume number 1 of the *AEEL*; as for example in the case of the *Electronic Literature Collection, Volume 1* (2006); *Volume Two* (2011); *Volume 3* (2016). This fact raises the question if, as a future project, the ELMCIP or other adventurous publisher will work on such gathering of works as, “*Anthology of Latin American Electronic Literature*”, “*Anthology of Asian Electronic Literature*”, “*Anthology of African Electronic Literature*”, “*Anthology of Nordic Electronic Literature*”, to suggest a few. As previously said, at this moment there is no information or record regarding the subject though it would be of my interest if that occurs.

Functional characteristics. The paratextual messages of the *AEEL* are mainly directed by *peritexts*. Throughout the navigation of the *AEEL* the *peritext* reveals different and innovative functionalities, a) they serve as hyperlinks that effectively re-direct the reader to specific sections of the *AEEL*: “WORKS”, “VIDEOS”, “MATERIALS”, REFERENCES”, “ABOUT”; b) they are compiled into an innovative gallery index that gradually shows each of the digital works that are assembled in the *AEEL*; c) they are presented as assembling units of additional research and pedagogical materials; such as video-conferences that certain authors lectured on specific EL research subjects. And finally, they

are presented as additional research materials (syllabi, exercises, assignments, essays, presentations); which stand as suggestions for further academic reference.

## 2.2 Presentation of DP within the AEEL



The screenshot shows the eLMcip website interface. At the top, the logo 'eLMcip' is displayed with the tagline 'Anthology of European Electronic Literature'. Below the logo is a navigation menu with tabs for 'WORKS', 'VIDEOS', 'MATERIALS', 'REFERENCES', and 'ABOUT'. The 'WORKS' tab is selected. The main content area features a large image of a man's face with a distorted, swirling pattern overlaid, and the text 'It fails me.' below it. To the right of the image, the title 'LOSS OF GRASP' is shown, followed by the authors 'By Serge Bouchardon and Vincent Volckaert'. Below the title is a paragraph of text describing the work. A 'TECHNICAL INFORMATION' box is located below the image, and a 'LAUNCH WORK' button is at the bottom of the page.

**LOSS OF GRASP**  
By Serge Bouchardon and Vincent Volckaert

Loss of Grasp is a digital creation about the notions of grasp and control. When do we feel we have a grip on our life or not? Six scenes feature a character who is losing grasp. At the same time, this play on grasp and loss of grasp mirrors the reader's experience of an interactive digital work.

*Loss of Grasp, in French Déprise and in Italian Perdersi, plays with its readers' expectations of how electronic texts are read, thwarting her mouse movements and making her keyboard inputs print out something else on the screen. This loss of control of the machine is echoed in Loss of Grasp's central theme: a rumination on the expectations of life. A man struggles to understand the people around him, and like the reader he comes to the realization that control is illusory.*

**TECHNICAL INFORMATION**

To launch this work you will need an internet connection and Adobe Flash Player. The piece requires headphones (or loudspeakers) and a webcam. The interaction with the piece lasts about 10 minutes.

**LAUNCH WORK**

**Figure 18.** *Loss of Grasp (Déprise)*: <http://anthology.elmcip.net/works/loss-of-grasp.html>.

Spatial characteristics. To access the presentation of *Loss of Grasp (LG) (Déprise)* within the AEEL the reader has two options, either to click on the linguistic text, “WORKS”, or to choose *LG (DP)* from the carousel-gallery slide projector presented in the main page of the AEEL (this option would imply that the reader spends some *reading time* appreciating the projection of the digital works before clicking on the chosen work). If s/he chooses the former, the option will redirect her/him to the presentation of all the works compiled in the AEEL. The AEEL hosts eighteen works. Each digital work is represented by an image of a specific scene of the work along with the name of the authors, e.g. *Loss of Grasp (EN)* Serge Bouchardon, Vincent Volckaert, it must be mentioned that the digital work has been compiled within the AEEL using the English translation and not the original French version. After selecting *Loss of Grasp LG*

(*DP*) the reader will be redirected to the presentation of *LG (DP)* within the *AEEL*.

It is important to underline that the following peritextual spatial description has been made from top to bottom based on the captured screen of [Figure 18](#). The first *peritext* that comes across the reader's eyes is "elmcip" followed by "*ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature*", the *peritext* hosts a hyperlink that by going from grey to green redirects the reader to the main page of the *AEEL* (the navigation starting point of the reader). Below this *peritext*, there are the following linguistic texts shadowed also in green, "WORKS", "VIDEOS", "MATERIALS", "REFERENCES", "ABOUT", all of them contain a hyperlink that redirects the reader to those specific sections of the *AEEL*. Additionally, there are two arrows that allow the reader to go forward or backwards when browsing through the works of the *AEEL*.

Like the *ELC2*, the electronic literary work's title and the authors' names are shown, "*Loss of Grasp (EN for Déprise)* by Serge Bouchardon and Vincent Volckaert". As each work in the *ELC2*, in *AEEL*, *LG (DP)* is accompanied by two descriptions; the first one, I assume is a description written by each of the selected authors included in the *AEEL* (as there is no specific reference about this), and the second one is a description written by the editors of the *AEEL*. It is significant to mention that both descriptions are not labelled by the words "author description" or "editors description" the only typographical texture that marks the difference is that one text is written in *italics* and the other one is not, leaving the reader free to interpret the source of the description of the works. It is significant to mention that in the *ELC2* the author's description is labelled by the words "author description", whereas the editors' description is also missing this label. I consider the inclusion of those *paratexts* to be necessary because it would avoid misunderstandings of future visitor-readers.

In the left side section, there is an image of *LG (DP)* accompanied by the linguistic text, "It fails me" which announces and alludes to S5 of *LG (EN)*. This is followed by the linguistic text "technical information" that explains the requirements to launch the work, such as, internet connection, Adobe Flash Player, headphones, loudspeakers, webcam, and a suggested approximate *reading time*

of 10 minutes (this “suggested reading time” will be considered when analysing Koskimaa’s (2010a) classification of “temporal possibilities in programmed texts” but as of now it is important to underline that the editors considered to highlight this information (cf. III.2.2.3).

As it shall be shown later, this “technical information” or “requirements” can be read as instructions or user’s manuals, which according to Eskelinen (2012, p. 51), “are the obvious contribution of digital and ergodic texts to the already recognized variety of paratexts, and the more complicated the strategies the user has to employ in order to transverse the text, the more important they become”. The fact of including “technical information” to guide the reader’s experience is a novelty in terms of *peritexts* “as instructions” found in the *ELC2* and the *AEEL*.

Finally, if the reader chooses to start the digital work, s/he should click on the *peritext*, “LAUNCH WORK”, that redirects the reader to the webpage *lossofgrasp.com*. It is important to note that the domain *deprise.fr* also exists and it is a gateway to the work as pointed out in the reader’s website (<http://www.sergebouchardon.com>). Even though the work is read outside the *AEEL*, it cannot be considered as an *epitext* because it is not an interview, a conversation, a letter or diaries describing the creation of the digital work. This feature shows that these *peritexts* though thought to be located around the text, and within the book, need to be “launched” outside the *AEEL* and not within the *AEEL* to be experienced.

Temporal characteristics. *LG (DP)* was published in 2010 in line with the information provided in the author’s website. Therefore, all the corresponding *peritexts* (*original* paratexts) that I have referred in the description of the spatial peritextual characteristics of [Figure 18](#) date from 2012, which is the year the *AEEL* was compiled and opened to online access. This does not mean that both provided descriptions were published that same year (2012). This means that they were put together as part of the presentation of the work within the *AEEL* in 2012 and that they might have originated as *distant paratextual memories* in other contexts.

It seems that examples of *epitexts* are frequently found in the author’s personal websites. For instance, a clear example of *prior*

*paratexts* is Bouchardon's description of *LG* (EN) on his own website (<http://www.sergebouchardon.com>); which hosts the exact description that is given by the *AEEL*, "Loss of Grasp is a digital creation about the notions of grasp and control..." (Presentation of *LG*, 2010, in the *AEEL*, 2012). This description (*authorial paratext*) is given in four different languages on the website of the work itself. In this same scenario, Bouchardon also includes an image of the digital work (in this case alluding to *S2*), followed by the presentation of the digital work in 4 different languages (English, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese), a list of official selections on exhibitions (Art Exhibition of ICIDS, Los Angeles California, 2016; Paraules Pixelades, Barcelona, 2016; Escenarios de la literatura electronica, Ciudad de México, 2015, Ars Electronica, Linz, Austria, 2015), a list of reviews: Rettberg (2011); Heckman (2011) and Flores (2011b); the databases where it can be found (Electronic Literature Directory, ELMCIP knowledge Base, NT2), and finally, the awarded prizes the digital work has obtained (*New Media Writing Prize*, 2011).

As pointed out in the presentation of *88C* within the *ELC2*, it can be suggested that the examples of *posteriori* paratexts of *DP* are indeed the *original* paratexts of *LG* (*DP*) within the *AEEL*. The text's original date of publication is 2010, and the official publication of the *AEEL* is 2012; then the whole edition and arranging of Bouchardon's digital work within the *AEEL* becomes a *posteriori* paratext of the original work. Furthermore, another example of *posteriori* paratexts, in this case represented by *epitexts*, are the articles and reviews written about Bouchardon and Volckaert's work. The reader can find examples of such critical writing in the ELMCIP knowledge database: Bouchardon & López-Varela (2011); Ormstad (2012) and Heckman (2014); as well as in Bouchardon's personal website: Rettberg (2011); Heckman (2011) and Flores (2011b).

Substantial characteristics. In terms of linguistic texts with no hyperlink features, the study shows that these features are illustrated by the following *peritexts*: the title of the digital work, the name of the authors, the authors' description of the digital work, the editor's review of the digital work, the set of instructions provided under the frame of "technical information". In this case, there is no reference

or mention to previous exhibitions or publications made by the editors of the *AEEL* in comparison to the *ELC2*.

Moreover, the examples of linguistic texts with hyperlinking features are illustrated by the following peritexts: the ELMCIP logo, which redirects to the main presentation page of the *AEEL* but not to the ELMCIP database. The different navigation options, “WORKS”, “VIDEOS”, “MATERIALS”, “REFERENCES”, “ABOUT” which redirect the reader to the different sections of the *AEEL*. The iconic arrows in the right upper corner that by slightly mousing over them allow the reader to learn the name of the previous, and next digital work in this case, *Retournement* (1991) by P. Bootz, and *The Flat* (2005) by A. Campbell. And finally, at the bottom of the page, the reader can find the inscription, *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature 2012* with the ISBN number. This inscription is found at the bottom of each section of the *AEEL* except in the main presentation page.

Additionally, in terms of iconic representations, there are three main examples of *peritexts*; the first one is illustrated by the ELMCIP logo (also considered as a linguistic text), which is a hyperlink that allows the reader to go back to the main presentation of the *AEEL*. The second example is depicted by an icon that previews S5 of *LG* (EN); lastly, there is the iconic representation, “LAUNCH WORK”; that immediately redirects the reader to the presentation page of *LG* (EN) (<http://lossofgrasp.com>). To my understanding, these iconic representations are a way to announce (an image), activate (a button), and navigate from one digital work to another (arrows).

In terms of factual paratextual messages, it is understood that *DP* is a work of EL because it is part of *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature* (my emphasis). In this case, there is no such categorization by means of “keywords” as it can be found in the *ELC2*. It is important to mention that this information calls for a further comparative spatial analysis, while it underlines the importance of another factual paratextual message: categorization. In the “references” section, information regarding “authors”, “works by title”, and the “karlskrona workshop” participants, is provided; however, there is no such thing as a “keywords” section. Now, if the reader searches for factual paratextual messages within the two main descriptions provided by the editors and the author,

s/he will find that Bouchardon and Volckaert address the work as an “interactive digital work”, and the editors refer to it as a “digital creation”. This fact will present a problematic on how to refer to the work, a problematic of genres.

Finally, the presentation of *LG (DP)* within the *AEEL* can be accessed in different ways; for instance, the reader can venture its exploration via the carousel gallery index, via the paratext “WORKS”, via the preceding digital work or the succeeding digital work. Though one may think there is another access via the paratext “REFERENCES” by selecting “Serge Bouchardon” in the list of authors, or “*Loss of Grasp*” (*DP*) in the list of “works by title”; contrary to what is expected, these two options will redirect the reader to the author’s and the work’s specific archive in the ELMCIP website.

Pragmatic characteristics. As previously presented, the pragmatic characteristics of the paratextual message refer to the “characteristics of the situation of communication”; that is to say, to the sender and the addressee. In the presentation of *LG (DP)* within the *AEEL*, all the information provided by *AEEL* within [Figure 18](#), makes the ELMCIP the official sender (*publisher’s paratext*) because it represents the publishing house of the *AEEL*. Like the *ELC2*, all the specific senders of the paratextual messages (*public paratexts*) within the *AEEL* are the editors in charge (Maria Engberg, Talan Memmott, David Prater), since they are the ones who designed the way in which the *AEEL* is visually presented to the readers in the online edition (*publisher’s paratext* and *authorial paratext*).

It must be mentioned that the only additional (*authorial paratext*) is Bouchardon and Volckaert’s description of the work. This makes Bouchardon and Volckaert not only the authors of the text, but also the authors of the *authorial paratext* within the *AEEL*. Therefore, it is considered as a *prior paratext*, since there is record that the same description was presented by Bouchardon on his personal website most probably in 2010 (*prior paratext*). Lastly, “LAUNCH WORK” can be an example of *performative paratext* that is used in each digital work of the *AEEL*.

Functional characteristics. The innovations of the paratextual discourse found in the presentation of *LG (DP)* within the *AEEL* are depicted by the new tasks the reader is able to perform by means of *peritexts*: a) add information and depth to her/his reading experience by using explorative and interpretative hyperlinks, b) previously visualize what s/he can expect from experiencing the digital work, that is, by selecting the work from the slide carousel projector gallery of the front page; c) learn about the ways of archiving and presenting a digital work from experienced editors (after having experienced browsing through the *ELC2* and the *AEEL* the reader is able to find contrasts and parallelisms); d) experience a new way to explore a literary work by means of explorative and interpretative hyperlinks; e) receive instructions by the editors of the *AEEL* strictly about the computational programs that are needed in order to experience the electronic literary work; f) pay close attention to the instructions on how to navigate a digital work by reading the provided descriptions; g) realize about copyright requirements of the digital works of the *AEEL*; lastly, h) learn new ways to aesthetically distribute spatial features in order to create an effective presentation of a work of EL.



### 3. DP: VARIABILITY OF THE TEXT COMPOSITION

#### 3.1 Experiencing the Interactive Narrative within *DP*

The construction of meaning in Bouchardon and Volckaert's digital work is directly connected to the physical action and intervention of the reader. By physical action, I refer to the gestural manipulation and aesthetical engagement that via interactivity the reader experiences throughout the interactive narrative. In this case, *the variability of the text composition* is mainly unveiled through gestural manipulation. As the title of the digital work suggests, the central idea is to engage the reader into experiencing and losing, "*les notions de prise et de contrôle*", while gradually constructing the narrative (Presentation of *DP*, 2010).

In order to explore the relationship between the gestures of the reader and the events that are narrated in *DP*, I will follow the theoretical model "*Les cinq niveaux d'analyse de la manipulation*" proposed by Philippe Bootz, Serge Bouchardon, and Alexandra Saemmer: a) *Le gestème* (gesteme), b) *L'actème* (acteme), c) *L'unité sémiotique de manipulation* (USM) semiotic unit of manipulation (SUM), d) *Le couplage media* (media coupling), e) *Le discours interactif* (interactive discourse) (Bouchardon, 2011, pp. 39–40) (cf. III.2.3.3). Following this five-level model and linking it to enunciation theories, I aim at analysing the polyphony and intertextuality in *DP*; my goal is to link the semiotic units of manipulation (SUM) to the enunciation within the interactive discourse of each scene; so as to read this action as a **gestural enunciation**.

I am interested in exploring how polyphony is constructed in *DP*, bearing in mind the idea that "the text is not only a readable text, but also a text to manipulate. The re-writable text only exists in relation to gesture" (Bouchardon & López-Varela, 2011, p. 2). To analyse the enunciative polyphony features and interfacial media figures that construct the interactive discourse found in *DP*, I will depart from the following proposition, in which the reader's action is considered as "*un énoncé de gestes*" (Bouchardon, 2011, p. 39).

In other words, I will explore how the voices are unveiled and revealed through manipulation since these voices emerge as the reader makes her/himself present in the text. To put it in a different way, I find interesting to study how the reader her/himself artistically emerges through these voices. It seems to me that the presence and engagement of the reader is brought about by the enunciative polyphony of the work; the voice of the reader in the work are her/his gestures. In the following analysis of the scenes, I will underline the enunciative function of the above-mentioned, “*énoncé de gestes*”, and the displayed the semiotic materiality that takes place in the electronic device as it is later seen on the screen.

I think there might be an association in which specific semiotic units of manipulation (SUM) give birth to specific kinds of voices. I will explain in detail how the texture of the interactive narrative is triggered by gestural manipulation to create the interactive discourse from which these polyphonic features and rhetoric figures emerge. I will indicate specific examples of figures of manipulation, e.g. interfacial retroprojection, interfacial neantism, interfacial randomization, and interfacial antagonism (Saemmer, 2008b) (Table 2) (cf. III.2.3.6) Likewise, I will also point out at specific examples of semiotic units of manipulation that lead to the activation of the above-mentioned figures e.g. *activer (appuyer)*, *mouvoir (déplacer-survoler)*, *gratter (déplacer de façon répétitive)*, *tirer (faire glisser)*, *tirer-relâcher (faire glisser-relâcher)* (Bouchardon, 2011, p. 42) (Table 1) (cf. III.2.3.3). In this respect, my aim is to provide an analytical perspective on how to approach these emerging narrative forms such as *DP*, where the user’s participatory presence and input are fundamental not only for the construction of meaning but also for the construction of the text itself. Based on the results of the analysis, as a further research, I seek to begin a categorization of similar polyhydic interactive digital narratives sharing similar polyphonic and rhetoric components. For I consider that the constantly evolving field of EL and the non-stoppable brotherhood between narrativity and digital media highly demand it.

Moreover, in order to develop the sections on temporality; similarly to 88C, I will follow Koskimaa’s classification on “temporal possibilities in programmed texts” (limiting reading time, delaying reading time, limiting the reading possibilities, temporally evolving

texts) (cf. III.2.2.3); as well as his classification of “temporal levels for cybertexts with narrative content” (user time, discourse time: pseudo-time and true time, story time, system time) (cf. III.2.2.3) (Koskimaa, 2010a, pp. 135–136).

Therefore, in the first section assigned to temporality analysis, (cf. V.4.2), I will comment on the general “temporal possibilities in programmed texts” found in *DP* in its totality. I will give specific examples of these categories except for “*limiting reading time*”; which, for the purpose of the present analysis, I find more suitable to include in the subsequent sections assigned to “temporal levels for cybertexts with narrative content” (cf. V.5.2; V.6.2; V.7.2; V.8.2; V.9.2; V.10.2). As for these temporal levels, I will analyse each category (user time, discourse time: pseudo-time and true time, story time, system time) within each scene separately. For instance, in S1, “*Tout s’échappe*”; the corresponding section is “*Le temps me glisse entre les doigts*”; in S2, “*Rendez-vous des lettres*”; the corresponding section is “Time will Tell”; and so forth. Lastly, previously to the analysis of each scene, I have decided to include a brief and introductory section concerning *discourse time* and *story time* (cf. V.4.3), so it can function as a reference point for the reader when approaching the subsequent temporality sections.



## 4. LES AVANT-SCENES: “*CHARGEMENT EN COURS*”

### 4.1 The Antechamber of *DP*

The door to the antechamber opens by clicking on the *performative* peritext, “LAUNCH WORK” on the *AEEL*. Once on stage, the reader encounters a black and white scenario showing the original French version of *Loss of Grasp: Déprise (DP)*, along with four available translations (Italian, English, Spanish, Portuguese). This spatial representation of *DP* is composed of fourteen paratexts; ten peritexts corresponding to the title and presentation of the work (*Déprise, Perderse, Loss of Grasp, Perdersi, Perda de Controlo*); two peritexts corresponding to the presentation of the work in French and English; one peritext corresponding to the credits of the work, “Credits”; and lastly, one epitext labelled, “New Media Writing Prize 2011” that redirects the reader to the following page [http://newmediawritingprize.co.uk/?page\\_id=350](http://newmediawritingprize.co.uk/?page_id=350), where s/he will learn about the work’s winning award in 2011.

The screen is divided in six floating paratextual islands each one of them containing the title of the work along with a brief inviting-to-read description of the interactive narrative. Each translation is displayed by being softly lighted with an intense white that accompanies the reader as s/he mouses-over the title and the description. There is music in the background that resembles the singing of birds in a tropical environment. Once the reader has decided which version s/he wants to explore, the “*Chargement en cours*” of the digital work begins. It is important to note that the loading time of the digital work must be considered within the analysis of the *reading time, true time, and system time* (cf. III.2.2.3); given that it emphasises the mimetic aesthetics of the electronic device in the sense that each device may charge the digital work at a different speed; and therefore suggest different *reading time* possibilities (cf. III.1.5; III.2.3.2).

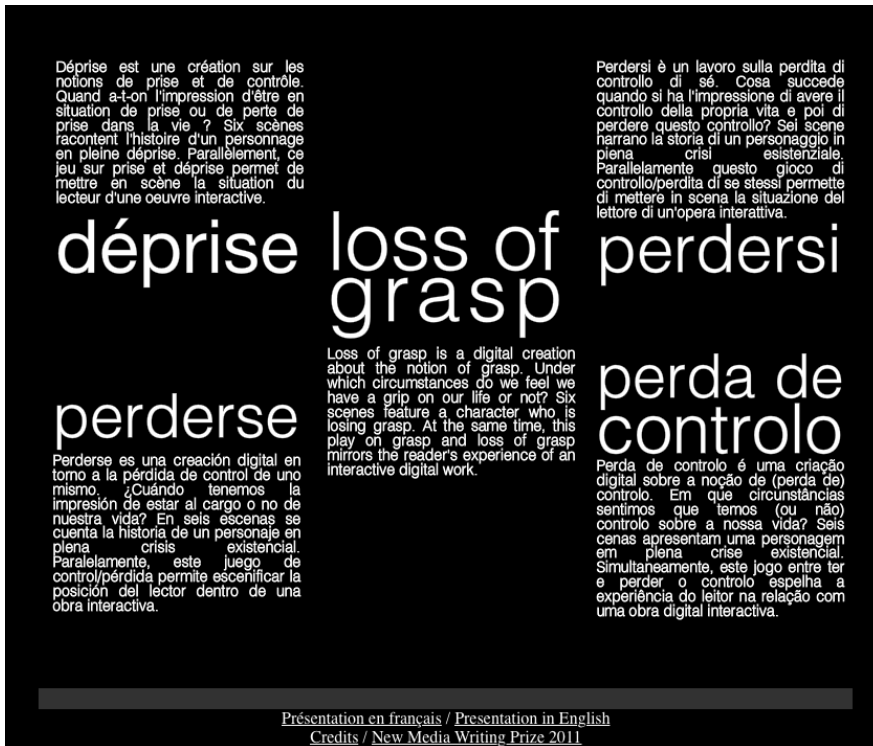


Figure 19. Presentation and credits of *Déprise* (2010) by Serge Bouchardon and Vincent Volckaert: <http://deprise.fr>.

As the linguistic text “*Chargement en cours*” emerges on the screen, the reader adventurously sails with the icon of the click between these words creating a discourse space for the message “*Soyez Patient*” to appear. The hidden messages that emerge during the reading/loading time are an example of the aesthetical events that take place in the horizon of expectations of the reader, which stand as an example of **paratextual techniques of loading time** (Figure 20b). A few seconds after, the linguistic text, “*Avez-vous pensé à allumer vos enceintes ?*” emerges on the screen, as if preparing the stage to reveal the digital work’s setting. This is the first voice the reader encounters, though it might be read as “instructions”; it is a peritext that asks a question of functionality by making sure the reader has all s/he needs to begin the journey. Seconds later, the linguistic text “1” comes to stage introducing the first out of six scenes that compose the interactive narrative.

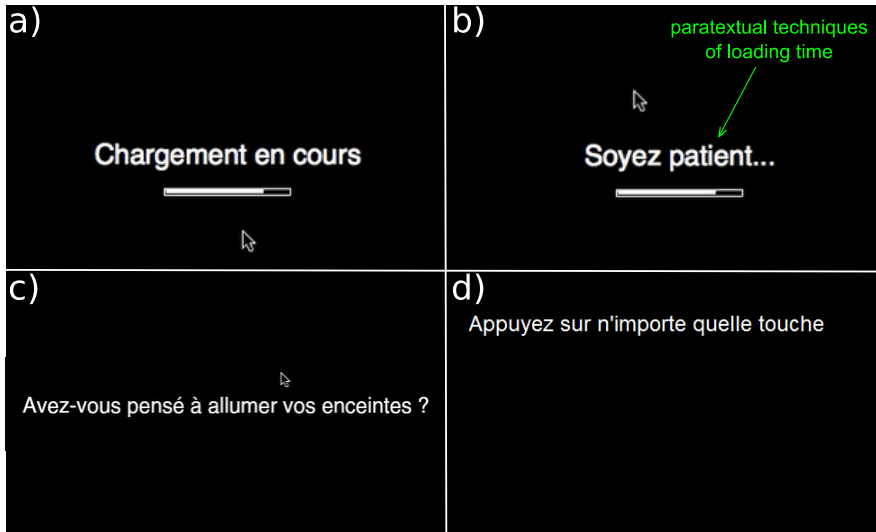


Figure 20. Screen captures from *Les avant-scènes* (AS) showing a) loading time, b) paratextual techniques of loading time, c) functionality peritext d) no-gestural action peritext, *DP*.

The presence of the first *locuteur angélique* (cf. III.1.4.2) is presented by the words, “*Bienvenue, appuyez sur la touche dièse*”. It can be said that the instructions given by the *locuteur angélique* set the point of departure of the interactive narrative. At this point, the reader makes a direct connection to the pound key on a telephone (#), creating not only an intertextuality of images but also an intertextuality of sounds. In other words, by listening to the word, “*dièse*”, the reader makes an association with the action of “pressing a key” (SUM, “*activer-appuyer*”); which, in my opinion, can lead to two interpretations. On the one hand, the strict connection to music for the pound sign closely resembles the sharp sign in music (#), which marks the beginning of a musical line in key signatures, and in the case of *DP*, it marks the beginning of the colourful symphony within the story itself. On the other hand, it is the first connection between music and painting; this connection will be emphasised not only by the activation and appearance of the palette of colours in the first scene (S1) but also by the feeling of touching musical keynotes as the reader advances in the narrative, creating her/his own literary-musical path and techniques (cf. IV.5.3).

To my view, this is an example of the complexity of representation that I have pointed out in the previous chapter devoted to *88C for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)* by David Clark. It makes me wonder, what does the reader truly see when s/he hears/sees/feels “*la touche dièse*”? What does it evoke? Which traits of iconicity are created? After the reader presses “*la touche dièse*”, the *locuteur angélique* makes a second appearance enunciating the word “*Bravo*”. In a way, the *locuteur angélique*, approves the action (gesture) of the reader by enthusiastically confirming her/his action, “*Bravo*”. However, if there is no gestural reaction by the reader, consequently another linguistic peritext appears on the screen, “*Appuyez sur n’importe quelle touche*” (Figure 20d). As it can be seen, the appearance of peritexts as linguistic texts and the presence of the *locuteur angélique* (up to now) stand as voices of guidance, instruction and clues for the artisan reader of *DP*.

## 4.2 Time Frames

*DP* was created in *Flash Action Script 3* which may suggest from the beginning that time is controlled by the system (transient texts). Nevertheless, as I shall explain and exemplify later, *system time* is found to be dynamic and static throughout the six scenes. In fact, in specific scenes, the reader can manipulate *reading time* as part of the interactive narrative features (*ergodic time*). In *les avant-scènes* (AS), the linguistic texts (peritexts) are fixed in the middle of the screen and in the upper left corner; which presents no *reading time* difficulties for the reader’s eye and comprehension.

In terms of *limiting reading time*, in the AS the reader does not have to listen (for example, to a voice-over), and read at the same time. The main activity is to read the linguistic texts that occupy the screen; as well as to be aware of the cleverly intervention of the *locuteur angélique*. There is no such feeling as “to force the reader to read on the edges of apprehension” (Koskimaa, 2010a, p. 135), as there was for example in some passages of *88C* (cf. IV.4.3.1). On the contrary, the linguistic texts of the AS can be truly appreciated, since it is the reader who controls the *reading time* causing the events and voices that compose the AS not to advance or appear if not being manipulated (*ergodic time*) by the reader.



In terms of *delaying reading time*, the reader ought to wait for the first instructions to emerge (paratexts) to start experiencing the interactive narrative. Interestingly, like 88C while the reader is waiting for the digital work to load, s/he is accompanied by veiled linguistic texts (cf. IV.5.4). In the case of the AS, as the reader waits and mouses-over, “*Chargement en cours*”, surprisingly a new linguistic text emerges, “*Soyez Patient*”. This effect will repeat itself during the *loading time* of each scene. There is a relation between the appearance of linguistic texts and the temporal possibility of *delaying reading time* in both works. Therefore, it seems to me that this effect can be read as a recurring **paratextual technique of loading time** most probably present in some other digital works (Figure 20b). As of now, I have found this effect in the present corpus: David Clark’s 88C (where it neatly appears via intertextuality) and Serge Bouchardon and Vincent Volckaert’s *DP*; however, it would be challenging to extend the search to other digital works as a future research objective.

Interestingly, there is another example of *delaying reading time*. That is, the appearance of a “navigation bar” at the bottom of *DP* which contains the number of each one of the six scenes (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6); along with a little window that gives the option to change the navigation to full screen. By using this navigation bar, the reader can delay the *reading time* of the scene by switching from one scene to another (which will certainly complexify the *discourse time* and *story time*). However, if the action is performed, the reader will not be able to return to the place where s/he left the interactive narrative; and consequently, when activating the option bar s/he must begin the interactive narrative of the desired scene once again.

In terms of *limiting the reading opportunities* of a programmed text, it can be pointed out that *DP* can be experienced as many times as the reader wishes (unlimited, non-measurable). *DP (LG)* can freely be accessed online within the literary frame of the *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature* (2012). Consequently, it is not a digital work that has a limited access time, nor a digital work that can be read only once, as it is the case of other digital works. *DP (LG)* has been archived and preserved within the *AEEL* (2012) to be accessed freely by general public without expiration time frames. For instance, another access path would be to visit directly the webpage of one of the authors

(<http://www.sergebouchardon.com>); however, as part of the paratextual description, I have decided to begin my analysis from the inclusion of *DP (LG)* in the *AEEL*. In other words, like *88C*, *DP* is not likely to disappear or become inaccessible to the reader, which occasionally might happen to some digital texts<sup>3</sup>.

*DP* cannot be classified within *temporally evolving texts* since as suggested by Koskimaa (2010a, p. 135) to fulfil this category it is needed to add something by the author or by the reader, or both. In *DP* if something can be altered or added in terms of text, image or sound it cannot be permanent (the system does not save the changes). Hence, it is important to mention that though the text might experience a quick change (additional music, sound or image distortion) by means of SUMs, when the reader switches to another scene, these changes are lost, and the text goes back to its organic digital state (Saemmer, 2009a) (cf. III.2.3.2).

Likewise, a fact worth mentioning occurs in *DP*'s S6; even though there is an *illusion* of authorial intrusion (a metaphorical semiotic memory), as I shall explain in the corresponding temporality section (cf.V.10.2); there are not permanent traces of this authorial intervention left on the work; it all vanishes on the screenic surface. Though one might wonder if the linguistic texts of passing readers are stored somewhere in the depth of the digital device.

In a recent creation by Bouchardon et al. (2016) called *Détrace (DT)*<sup>4</sup>, the authorial artistic intrusion of the reader (linguistic text and image) is saved by the system and shared with future passing readers as an example of collaborative writing. For this reason, and following the temporal-level classification of Koskimaa (2010a), I find that in contrast to *DP*; *DT* can be classified within the category of *temporally evolving texts*. Considering a future research, I find interesting to compare how the process of creation and collaborative writing spaces have evolved, for instance, in terms of *temporally evolving texts* within the oeuvres themselves (*DP*, *OP*, *DT*).

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<sup>3</sup> See Frasca (2001), “One-session game of narration”, example borrowed from Koskimaa (2010a, p. 135).

<sup>4</sup> *Détrace* (Bouchardon et al., 2016) is a short online interactive narrative. This piece is part of a trilogy entitled *Hyper-Tensions: Déprise (Loss of Grasp)* (2010), *Opacité (Opacity)* (2012), *Détrace (Untrace)* (2016).

### 4.3 To Tell a Story

The *story time* in *DP* opens in the intradiegetic level of the narrative. A homodiegetic narrator that functions as an autodiegetic narrator evaluates his life from the perspective of what can be understood as a stormy moment, a *loss of grasp* (S1). He is standing above the events that he has experienced as the main character. In a recollection, he goes back 20 years in time (*analepsis*) to the moment when he had the first rendez-vous with his wife to be. This example of *analepsis* presents an interesting feature since an external voice to the story (*locuteur angélique*) presents three temporal options in which the rendez-vous can take place: 10 years, 3 hours, or, at that precise moment. It is important to note that the *locuteur angélique* is most probably present in the extradiegetic level of the narrative. However, given the novelty of these external voices, this is just an approximation. The purpose of the rendez-vous is to introduce a second character in the story, his future wife (S2). The autodiegetic narrator formulates a series of questions that give life to two presumed conversations between them. The fact that the woman never answers to those questions helps to construct the mystery that surrounds her personality.

In the liminal between the rendez-vous (S2) and the reading of his wife's twofold letter (S3), twenty years have passed<sup>5</sup>. There is a transition from the intradiegetic level of the narrative to the metadiegetic level since the content of the love letter or break up note gives voice to the written thoughts of the narrator's wife. Therefore, the letter is understood as an embedded narrative (metadiegetic level) that gives voice to love and to the need to express emotion in song.

As the story continues, the narrator reads his wife's letter during the morning of that stormy day<sup>6</sup>. This fact is important since it can be suggested that the reading of his son's moving text (S4), his auto-confrontation (S5), and the stormy moment (S1), take place at some

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<sup>5</sup> There are temporal indicators in the pseudo-time to assume there is a twenty-year gap between the rendezvous and the reading moment of his wife's letter, "*Vingt ans se sont écoulés depuis notre rencontre*", *DP* (S3).

<sup>6</sup> There are temporal indicators in the pseudo-time to assume the letter was read in the morning. "*Ce matin, je me perds...*", *DP* (S3).

point during that same day. The appearance of his son's moving text is understood as an embedded narrative too (metadiegetic level). The unfolding of these events, *rendez-vous* (S2), wife's love letter or break up note (S3), and son's text (S4), stand as the plot of the narrative. The story goes back to the intradiegetic level of the narrative where the autodiegetic narrator experiences a complete *loss of grasp* of his life (S5). He confronts his own "image" as a husband, as a father, as a human being; and consequently, reaches a climatic state of mind. Lastly, in the *dénouement* of the story (S6), the autodiegetic narrator apparently decides to confront the situation to take control of his life again; the story ambiguously closes with the word "FIN".

In terms of *discourse time* in relation to *story time*; in a first hypothesis (Figure 21), it seems to me that after moving from one plot complication wife's love letter or break up note (S3) to another son's *moving* text (S4), the autodiegetic narrator reaches the *climatic* state (S5); which takes him back to (S1) where he makes an evaluation of all the things he has lost. Hereafter, from (S1), the story time continues to (S6) where he apparently takes the control of his life again, and finally closes-up the narration (*dénouement*) with the word "FIN".

In a second hypothesis (Figure 22), it can be suggested that after the autodiegetic narrator has read the letter of his son (S4), the *story time* moves back to the stormy moment of the recollection (S1); and, consequently moves forward to (S5) to reach his climatic state of *loss of grasp* and auto-confrontation. Finally, the *story time* culminates as the autodiegetic narrator apparently takes control of his life again and finally closes-up the narration (*dénouement*) with the word "FIN" (S6). The following potential schemas show the relation between *discourse time* and *story time*. Their purpose is to function as proposition and a reference point for future readers when approaching the succeeding temporality sections.

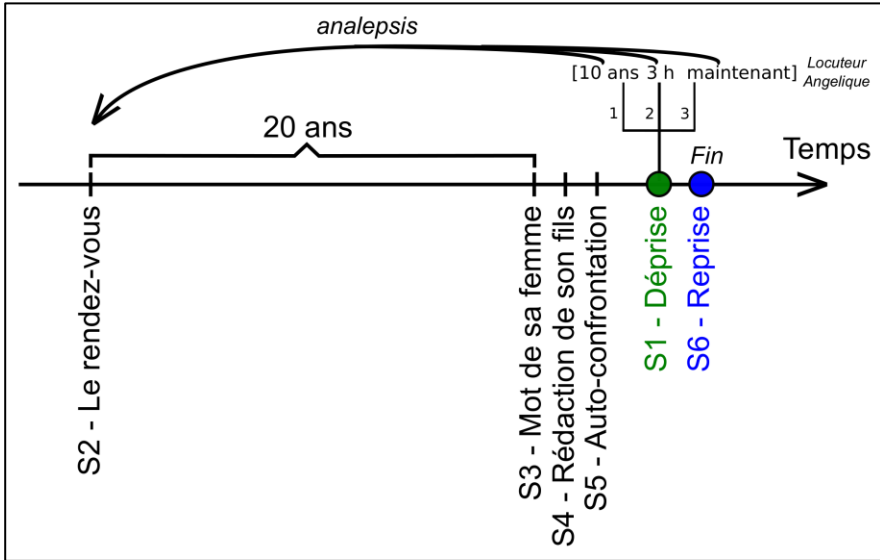


Figure 21. Scheme of *DP* Discourse Time in relation to Story Time, Hypothesis A.

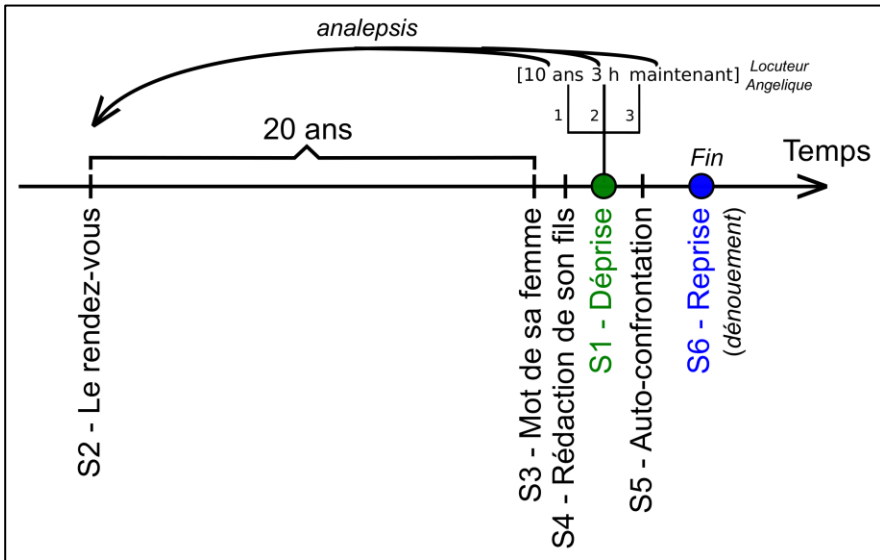


Figure 22. Scheme of *DP* Discourse Time in relation to Story Time, Hypothesis B.



## 5. SCENE ONE: “*TOUT S’ÉCHAPPE*”

### 5.1 Land(mind)scapes in Motion

Like the Greek hero Theseus<sup>7</sup>, the reader must accomplish six deeds in her/his quest through the sailing surface of the interactive narrative. These labours can be read as interior labours of the reader<sup>8</sup>, interior battles between fertile thoughts and emotions, and at times, glimpses of existentialism. Perhaps, like Theseus, in a way, the reader’s sword is the pointer of the mouse and his sandals are the material traces left on the surface of the work. As s/he wavers at the very outset of the journey, each click symbolizes the reader’s presence, step by step, in the rather complex polyphonic land(mind)scapes of *DP*’s interactive narrative.

- (1) Toute ma vie, j’ai cru avoir devant moi un champ des possibles infini. « L’univers entier m’appartient », pensais-je. J’ai le choix. Je suis maître de mon destin. Je peux prendre ce qui me plaît. Je deviendrai ce que je veux. J’ai tracé mon

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<sup>7</sup> Theseus great hero of Attic legend, son of Aegeus, king of Athens, and Aethra, daughter of Pittheus, king of Troezen (in Argolis), or of the sea god, Poseidon, and Aethra. Legend relates that Aegeus, being childless, was allowed by Pittheus to have a child (Theseus) by Aethra. When Theseus reached manhood, Aethra sent him to Athens. On the journey he encountered many adventures. At the Isthmus of Corinth he killed Sinis, called the Pine Bender because he killed his victims by tearing them apart between two pine trees. After that Theseus dispatched the Crommyonian sow (or boar). Then from a cliff he flung the wicked Sciron, who had kicked his guests into the sea while they were washing his feet. Later he slew Procrustes, who fitted all comers to his iron bed by hacking or racking them to the right length. In Megara Theseus killed Cercyon, who forced strangers to wrestle with him. (my emphasis) “Theseus” in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Theseus-Greek-hero>.

<sup>8</sup> cf. Bouchardon (2008), “*Les 12 travaux de l’internaute*”. Artist Statement (EN): “In this online artistic game, the internet user is regarded as the Hercules of the Internet. Often, he has indeed the impression to have to achieve Herculean labours. It can be a question of blocking popups which keep coming when one would like to see them disappear (the Lernean Hydra), cleaning the inbox of its spam (the Augean Stables), driving away the advertising banners (the Stympthalian Birds) or retrieving specific information (the Belt of the Queen of the Amazons)” <http://www.the12labors.com>.

propre chemin. J'ai parcouru de magnifiques paysages. Quoi de plus naturel, je les avais choisis. Mais depuis un moment, j'ai des doutes. Comment avoir prise sur ce qui m'arrive ? Tout s'échappe. Me glisse entre les doigts. Les objets, les personnes. J'ai l'impression de ne plus rien contrôler. Depuis quelques temps maintenant, Je n'attends qu'une chose. La suite.

The first line of the narrative discourse that appears on the screenic surface, “*Toute ma vie, j'ai cru avoir devant moi un champ des possibles infini*”, emerges as the SUM (“*mouvoir- déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”) is performed. The trait of iconicity, “*caresser une surface*” can be extrapolated to the sensation of delicately turning the pages of a book. In S1, this sensation can be experienced if one considers that every time the reader unveils a linguistic text on the surface, the sensation of delicately touching one by one the events in the story is evoked. This pattern of one line: one screen: one page: one thought, as of now specific to S1 but recurrent throughout the work, must be considered within the analysis of the *reading time*, *true time*, and *pseudo-time* since the amount of linguistic text shown can fast-paced or slow down the narration (cf. V.5.2).

Moreover, when the homodiegetic narrator, who also features as an autodiegetic narrator, expresses the words, “*devant moi*”, the narrative discourse itself highlights the idea of “opacity” and “expectation”, the reader submerges into the questions: what do I have in front of me?; what can I expect from the unknown future?; as a sailor of interactive digital narratives, what constructs my horizon of expectation in the land(sea)scapes of digital works? It seems to me that when the narrator expresses, “*devant moi*” it underlines the importance of “*opacité*”<sup>9</sup>, a feeling that one frequently encounters while reading works of EL.

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<sup>9</sup> It must be mentioned that *Opacité* (Bouchardon, Volckaert, Dumas, & Zénouda, 2012) is a later work developed by Serge Bouchardon, et al.; additionally, it is the second work in the trilogy, *Hypertensions: a trilogy*, to which *DP* (2010) belongs. Therefore, the feeling evoked in *DP* can served as a *distant paratextual memory* of *OP*.



The word “*champ*” also plays an important screenic role for it stands as the field of “*possibles interprétatifs*” (Charaudeau, 1983) and “*possibles infini*” (DP, S1) (not yet visible) behind the work. This effect brings back to the reader’s mind the dark space in which s/he finds her/himself at the beginning of the interactive narrative. In my opinion, the word “*champ*” additionally emphasises the idea of freedom, space and imagination. This idea is important since freedom will create opposition with what the authors and the work are evoking, “*les notions de prise et de contrôle*”; or, seen from a different perspective, it might be this *loss* of control what truly inspires the reader to seek for her/his own freedom not only throughout the interactive narrative but also throughout his/her personal evoked interior battles.

When the homodiegetic narrator expresses, “*L’univers entier m’appartient, pensais-je*”. The notion of space returns with the word “universe” (a field of thought and imaginary) and with the idea of power and possession. This sensation is emphasised by the freedom that the SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”) evokes. Besides, it must be noted that this is the first time the narrator shares his interior thoughts (his universe) with the reader. By quoting his own self in the past tense, the narrator also creates a dialogue within himself. This is an example of the narrator’s use of reported speech in direct style to report his own speech/thoughts “*L’univers entier m’appartient, pensais-je*”.

The following phrases, “*J’ai le choix*” and “*Je suis maître de mon destin*”, in a similar way reinforce for a few instants the idea of power, freedom, and possession. However, it is exactly at this point in the interactive narrative that the reader loses control on the screen; her/his presence is unexpectedly erased as the pointer of the mouse disappears on the surface. To put it differently, the action of mousing-over the linguistic text (SUM, “*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”) loses its touch by getting deactivated. In this case, the SUM creates a reaction on the reader since even if the reader tries to mouse-over the phrase, “*Je suis maître de mon destin*” the gesture does not produce any changes on the screenic surface. This stands as an example of interfacial neantism (Figure 23a) for the interactive gesture does not provoke any effect on the screenic surface (Saemmer, 2008b) (Table 2). There is no trace of the reading gesture that is already familiar to

the reader (SUM, “*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”). This fact immediately creates a contrast with the ideas of power, freedom, and possession recently evoked by the homodiegetic narrator, “*J’ai le choix*”; “*Je suis maître de mon destin*”; while it underlines for the first time the sensation of losing “*les notions de prise et de contrôle*” on the reader.

I consider that the reader continues the journey on the screenic surface thanks to the practice of gestural manipulation; and specifically, because the familiarity with the SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”) has created a “gestural memory” composed of body, mind and materiality, or a “gestural encyclopedia” of semiotic units of manipulation, a sort of treasury of gestures reinvented through SUM. In other words, the artisan reader believes to have learned “how to reveal the materiality of the text”; however, to her/his surprise the journey has just begun. A few seconds later, s/he learns that to continue exploring the interactive narrative s/he must venture to change the navigating gesture by switching from mousing-over the linguistic text (SUM “*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”) to randomly and sightlessly clicking on the black surface (SUM “*activer-presser le bouton de la souris*”).

Followed by this action, the linguistic text, “*Je peux prendre ce qui me plaît*” appears on the screenic surface accompanied by dots of different colours that symbolize not only her/his reappearance on the scene but also the springs of soul emotions hidden in the layers of the work. These soul emotions are randomly revealed by the homodiegetic narrator (through the reader) by means of an association of colour, movement and memory. In other words, as one clicks, one tinges; as one tinges, one creates; as one creates, one leaves a trace, as one leaves a trace, I consider: one draws a semiotic memory on the work. This might evoke, as the story suggests, “*un champ des possibles infini*”, a landscape of infinite possibilities that bring back to the reader’s mind the idea of free navigation, bewilderment and creation. Likewise, it is important to underline that these physical sensations have a short duration in the gestural manipulation of the work (one click, one move, one trace) (SUMs) but not in the *story time* of the memories evoked by the brush-stroking gestural manipulation. This idea will be further

explained when talking about the complex temporality of the work (cf. V.5.2).

After the SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”) gets activated again, the narrative continues, “*Je deviendrais ce que je veux*”, once again the notion of power as a product of gestural freedom appears. When the narrative voice expresses “*J’ai tracé mon propre chemin. J’ai parcouru de magnifiques paysages*” via the SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris en laissant une trace, tracer*”), the reader can actually experience that s/he is painting her/his own *reading* journey on the universe (a field of thought and imaginary) of the screen (mind). This is an example of interfacial retroprojection because there is a metaphorical relationship between the interactive gesture, the activable media content and the activated media content (Saemmer, 2008b) (Table 2). In other words, it seems to me that a sort of **gestural expressionism**<sup>10</sup> is created; as the reader can feel the power and freedom of the pointer of the mouse in all directions and express her/his emotions, anxieties and yearnings. Besides, it stands as an example of a “kiné-gramme”, defined by Saemmer (2015, p. 146) as, “*le procédé qui donne potentiellement l’impression au lecteur de manipuler aussi l’objet ou le concept évoqués, et non pas seulement le mot*”. To put it differently, the linguistic text says precisely what the SUM represents. In a parallel reading, I consider that the artisan reader like Theseus can feel *at hand* the emergence of his/her evoked creative interior battles and artistically confront them. These actions bring back the ideas of “land(mind)scape, universe, and black scenario” presented above. Thus, it can be suggested that there is a link between imagination, sky, universe, and colour, in which the reader becomes a painter of random and colourful interior and exterior land(mind)scapes via SUM.

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<sup>10</sup> Expressionism, artistic style in which the artist seeks to depict not objective reality but rather the subjective emotions and responses that objects and events arouse within a person. The artist accomplishes this aim through distortion, exaggeration, primitivism, and fantasy and through the vivid, jarring, violent, or dynamic application of formal elements. In a broader sense Expressionism is one of the main currents of art in the later 19th and the 20th centuries, and its qualities of highly subjective, personal, spontaneous self-expression are typical of a wide range of modern artists and art movements. "Expressionism." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/art/Expressionism>.

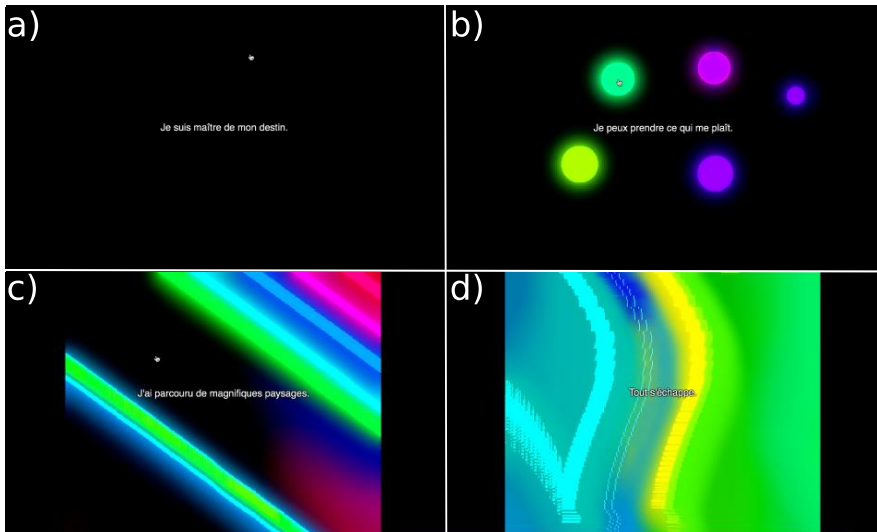


Figure 23. Screen captures of S1 showing a) interfacial neantism, b) interfacial retrojection, c) kiné-gramme, d) gestural expressionism, DP.

Furthermore, by experiencing the SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris en laissant une trace, tracer*”) and SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”) the idea of “*lever les yeux vers le ciel*” might be evoked. Every time the linguistic text is manipulated to advance in the interactive narrative, the eyes of the reader leave a trace through her/his glances on the surface. As if the reader were traveling through his own instantly created land(mind)scapes, most probably driven by his own *encyclopedia* of semiotic colours. Lastly, I think the pointer ceases to be the only paintbrush giving to our eyes the power of movement and freedom of creation.

The atmosphere of freedom and creation evoked by the **gestural expressionism** of the SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris en laissant une trace, tracer*”) and the SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”) is suddenly stopped by what I believe is the breaking point of S1, “*Mais depuis un moment, j’ai des doutes. Comment avoir prise sur ce qui m’arrive ? Tout s’échappe.*” At this moment of the interactive journey the reader’s presence is erased from the surface as the pointer of the mouse disappears on the screen. The reader experiences for the second time, the sensation of losing “*les notions de prise et de contrôle*”. There is a sensation of letting things go as the reader battles to establish a physical connection with the surface of the screen. It

seems to me that this moment stands as another example of interfacial retroprojection because the metaphorical relationship is created when the interactive gesture itself erases the presence of the reader from the screen. In other words, though physically performed through the gestural memory of SUMs (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”) the reader has the feeling that her/his gesture does not create any reaction on the screen and, as a parallel feeling, s/he experiences a sort of detachment from the story and the creative act.

Nonetheless, the activated media highlights the invisible though performative presence of the reader, as the homodiegetic narrator expresses, “*Tout s'échappe. Me glisse entre les doigts. Les objets, les personnes. J'ai l'impression de ne plus rien contrôler*”. The breaking point of S1 expresses the turn of thought of the homodiegetic narrator, it seems as if her/his own life would be slipping away through her/his hands. Or as if her/his memories just like the recently created land(mind)scapes would slowly fade away and disappear not only on the screen, as the reader continues her/his reading journey, but also on her/his own memory.

At the end of S1, the reader is left in a background of colours that resemble musical notes coming out of an old organ; this moment may resemble the visual music created by means of **interfacial anamnesis** at the beginning of the scene. Moreover, the linguistic text of the current time of the reading is displayed on the screen, e.g. “11:24:24”. This atmosphere prepares the reappearance of the *locuteur angélique*, whom by saying “*Bonjour, si vous voulez que votre rendez-vous soit dans 10 ans, tapez 1, dans 3 heures, tapez 2, maintenant, tapez 3*”, not only welcomes the reader to the next scene but invites her/him to select the *story time* (the time of the narrated events), in which the next scene will take place: 10 years, 3 hours or Now. Once the reader has decided on the *story time* of the meeting by “pressing 1, 2, or 3” (SUM, “*activer-appuyer sur une touche du clavier*”); the *locuteur angélique* enunciates, “*Bravo. Votre rendez-vous est arrivé*”, this occurs while the linguistic text, “*Et le rendez-vous est arrivé*” appears on the screen. Echoing the beginning of the scene if there is no gestural reaction by the reader, the *informative* paratext “*Appuyez sur n'importe quelle touche*” reappears on the screenic surface. This effect underlines for the second time the example of peritexts as linguistic texts and the

presence of the *locuteur angélique* as guidance voice and instructions' companion for the reader.

## 5.2 *Le temps me glisse entre les doigts*

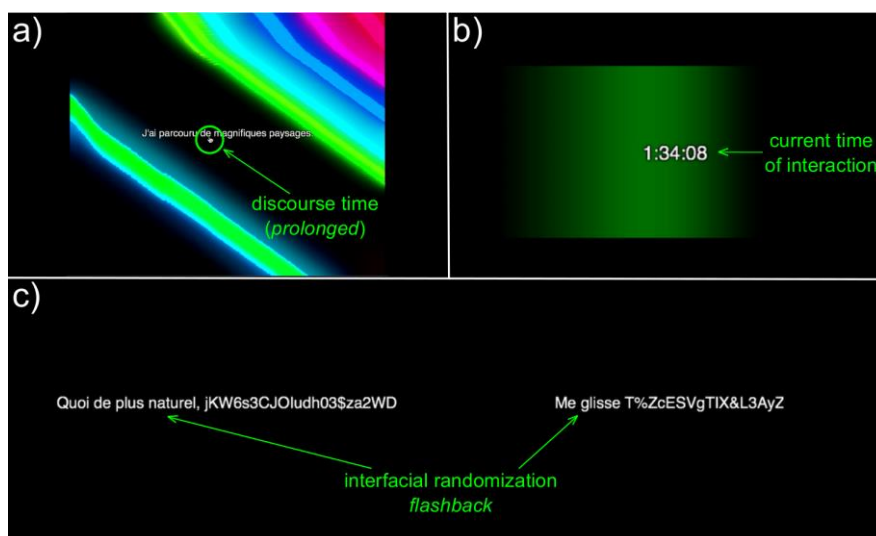
In terms of *limiting reading time* in S1 there is no difficulty in reading the linguistic texts that appear on the screenic surface since the one line on the screen pattern allows the reader to control her/his pace in the interactive narrative. For instance, when experiencing, “*Toute ma vie, j'ai cru avoir devant moi un champ des possibles infini*” by means of the SUM (*mouvoir-survoler*), the reader controls the pace of the *discourse time* (Figure 24a), and therefore the *reading time* s/he takes to read the linguistic text (*ergodic time*). It must be mentioned that if the reader decides to stop the interaction, the linguistic text remains on the screen until the reader decides to interact again (e.g. 30'', 3', 20', 40'.) Therefore, if there is no interaction, the text remains engraved on the screenic surface for as much time as s/he decides to leave the browser navigation window open. The fact that the text stays there in a sort of detainment, and slowly decomposes on the screenic surface stands as an example of “aesthetics of the ephemeral” (Saemmer, 2009a) (cf. III.2.3.2).

Bearing this effect in mind, an interesting feature also occurs at the end of S1. As the scene ends, a linguistic text appears showing the current time of the interaction, for instance, “1:34:08” (Figure 24b). A few seconds after the curious reader realizes that if s/he mouses-over it via SUM (“*mouvoir-survoler*”) s/he would encounter non-linear linguistic texts (*pseudo-time*) that correspond to the current scene's *discourse time*. For instance, “Quoi de plus naturel, je les avais choisis.” “*Tout s'échappe.*”, “*Je peux prendre ce qui me plaît.*”, “*Les objets, les personnes.*”, “Me glisse entre les doigts.”, “*J'ai le choix*”, “*La suite.*”. I find this novel effect of flashback composition (analepsis or retrospection) to create what I propose to call **interfacial randomization flashbacks**<sup>11</sup>(Figure 24c); given that the SUM (“*mouvoir-survoler*”) brings back small fragments of

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<sup>11</sup> This term is based on Saemmer (2008b) definition of interfacial randomization; “the interfacial gesture provokes the emergence of other media contents according to a random process”.

the narrative discourse of the interactive narrative while it reinforces the concept of **paratextual techniques of loading time**.



**Figure 24.** Screen captures of S1 showing a) discourse time (prolonged), b) current time of interaction, c) examples of interfacial randomization flashbacks, *DP*.

Furthermore, when speaking of “temporal levels for cybertexts with narrative content” (Koskimaa, 2010a, p. 136); the *user time* in *DP* is understood as the time the reader spends reading, interacting, experiencing each one of the scenes. To put it differently, the number of times the reader can access the text and re-read it; that is, the sum-up in hours, minutes or seconds of these *reading times*, which in the case of *DP* is unlimited and non-measurable. These *reading times* include the time travelling between the scenes, understood as small time fragments of “*l’évanouissement du temps*”. These are blank moments within the *ergodic time*: space and time abysses that cannot be truly time-measured but should be certainly *reading time*-considered.

Thus, bearing in mind that the *reading time* absolutely depends on *system time*, and that the *system time* in S1 is dynamic; and refers to the running time Bouchardon and Volckaert have given to *DP* (*texte-auteur*). One might think that the *reading time* can be measured from the moments of linguistic hesitation before the reader decides to click either on *Déprise*, *Loss of Grasp*, *Perdersi*,

or *Perduse*, until s/he decides to stop or re-experience the interactive narrative; however, this is not completely accurate. It must be noted that in *DP*, each scene requires to be manipulated by the reader to advance. It is the reader who triggers the change (*ergodic time*) and either expands or shortens her/his own *reading time*. In comparison to *88C*, in *DP* the reader not only “adds semiotic systems” when “playing with the Left Hand” to manipulate the *reading time* and *discourse time*, but also crafts their corresponding times by rhetorically winding SUM.

In terms of *discourse time* (the time of the narrative discourse), this is equivalent to the time the reader experiences the interactive narrative; the reader creates the *discourse time* and the *true time* (screen time) as s/he explores the interactive narrative. Interestingly, in this scene, the *pseudo-time* (spatial measure) is equivalent to each single linguistic text that appears on the center of the screenic surface. Therefore, the *true time* is equivalent to the screen time of each single linguistic text; and, consequently, equal to the *discourse time* crafted by the reader. For instance, as s/he arts via SUM (“*mouvoir-survoler*”), “*J’ai parcouru de magnifiques paysages*” (*pseudo-time*), the *discourse time* can be prolonged (prolonged discourse time) as much as the reader “time travels” on the screenic surface (of his memories) via SUM (“*mouvoir-survoler*”) (Figure 24a).

I find that these memories are evoked by the brush-stroking gestural manipulation to which I formerly referred as **gestural expressionism**. As noted above, it is important to emphasise that these physical sensations may have a short (or long) duration in the gestural manipulation of the work (one click, one move, one trace) but not in the *story time* of the possible memories of the narrator (or reader); one click might be equivalent to 1 year, one move to 10 years and one trace to 100 years. For they can be as long or as short as the reader decides to time travel throughout the “*magnifiques paysages*” of the screenic surface (**interfacial anamnesis**).



## 6. SCENE TWO: “JE POSE DES QUESTIONS POUR LA METTRE À JOUR”

### 6.1 *Rendez-vous des lettres*

- (2) [Et le rendez-vous est arrivé] Mais le rendez-vous était biaisé. Je ne m'en suis rendu compte que beaucoup plus tard. La femme en face de moi, qui paraissait si parfaite, me laissait bouche bée. Impossible de prononcer quelque chose de cohérent. [Questions] Sa présence me bouleversait... Il fallait que je pose des questions pour la mettre à jour. Sans que je m'en aperçoive, cette inconnue devenait ma femme. On a tout partagé. Mais jamais je ne suis parvenu à vraiment la connaître. Aujourd'hui encore je me pose des questions. Qui d'elle ou moi suit l'autre ? Quand je l'aime, elle me sème.

As before noted, at the end of S1, the voice of the *locuteur angélique* gets activated by the (SUM, “*activer-appuyer sur une touche du clavier*”), “*Bravo. Votre rendez-vous est arrivé*”. The linguistic text, “*Mais le rendez-vous était biaisé*”, appears on the screen without any intervention of the reader. From a narrative composition point of view, the use of “*mais*” indicates a complication in the configuration of the intrigue. That is, it awakes the curiosity on the reader since it presupposes a complication (*biaisé*) surrounding the “*rendez-vous*” before reading departure. It creates a space of mystery, tension, and negotiation that will later be reinforced by the unveiling of the narrator’s wife via SUM.

In order to navigate the reader uses gestural memory and remembers that the SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”) will allow her/him to reveal the text so as to advance in the interactive narrative. The homodiegetic narrator introduces a second character in the story as the linguistic text, “*La femme en face de moi, qui paraissait si parfaite, me laissait bouche bée*” appears on the screen. However, as of now, the woman cannot be seen nor her voice be heard; the only sound that can be heard is voices in the back that stand as external elements that modulate the interactive narrative. These voices appear as unidirectional

conversations at different rhythms that create an atmosphere of digital heterophony.

As previously mentioned, even if the *story time* of the *rendez-vous* can be chosen, “*Bonjour, si vous voulez que votre rendez-vous soit dans 10 ans, tapez 1, dans 3 heures, tapez 2, maintenant, tapez 3*” (my emphasis), the space is still unknown; a bar? a café? a restaurant? a romantic walk? When the linguistic text, “*Impossible de prononcer quelque chose de cohérent*” appears, the reading scenario, which had been a phrase in the middle of the screen, changes to a series of questions unveiling the homodiegetic narrator’s curiosity upon the woman’s personality. These six linguistic texts begin to emerge as the linguistic text, “*Impossible de prononcer quelque chose de cohérent*” slowly falls down on the screenic surface.

- (3) Et vous travaillez dans quoi ? (Et vous travaillez l’envoi ?) ; J’ai l’impression qu’on a beaucoup de point communs (Chemins pression en Allemagne point comme un...) ; Vous avez des yeux somptueux (vous avouez des notions de tueurs) ; Puis-je vous offrir un autre verre ? (Pigeon ouïr un Notre Père ?) J’aime votre façon de sourire (Gêne, votre garçon mourir) ; Vous voulez marcher un peu ? (Nouveaux-nés barges et il pleut) (Figure 25a).

In a way, it can be suggested that the appearance of these linguistic texts breaks the one line: one page: one glance pattern by appearing all at the same time; and having the effect of disappearing after they change into another question or statement by means of the SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”). This effect may remind the reader of the feeling of opening a secret message written in a folded paper or shaking secret messages on a crystal ball. Additionally, this can be an example of interfacial randomization given that the interactive gesture provokes the emergence of other media contents according to a random process (Saemmer, 2008b) (Table 2). In other words, the questions may vary from one interactive sequence to another creating more than one possibility. These phrases are also the materialized (digitalized) voice of the homodiegetic narrator as it is the first time that his voice is heard, up to this point the only voice the reader has heard is that of the *locuteur angélique*. In this case, **gestural enunciation** is

represented by a written and oral narrative voice. The SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”) activates the oral narrative within the linguistic text.



**Figure 25. Screen captures of S2 showing a) interfacial randomization, b) homophonous metamorphosis, c) gestural enunciation and interfacial randomization, d) gestural impressionism, DP.**

To my view, these questions create a flirty atmosphere by means of seductive language that at times may suggest intertextuality with other artistic fields. For example, the phrase, “*Vous avez des yeux somptueux*”, might be an allusion to a well-known scene in the French film, “*Le Quai des Brumes*” (1938) directed by Marcel Carné<sup>12</sup>. In this scene, as a part of a very seductive dialogue, one of the characters, Jean, tells to his lover, Nelly, “*T’as d’beaux yeux, tu sais*” (cf. “*Vous avez des yeux somptueux*”, DP, S2) This is an example of how certain filmic figures are inspired by the rhetoric of writing, which underlines EL’s reliance on other potential modes of expression (cf. IV.6.2 )

Therefore, it can be said that the homodiegetic narrator begins to linguistically unveil the woman’s appearance in different ways, by

<sup>12</sup> Marcel Carné (born August 18, 1906, Paris, France—died October 31, 1996, Clamart, near Paris), motion-picture director noted for the poetic realism of his pessimistic dramas. He led the French cinema revival of the late 1930s. "Marcel Carné." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Marcel-Carne>.

asking questions using three different semiotic units of manipulation, SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”), SUM (“*activer-presser le bouton de la souris*”), SUM (“*gratter-déplacer sa souris de façon répétitive*”). In the first example, the homodiegetic narrator’s digitalized voice is heard as each question experiences a kind of homophonous metamorphosis and disappears by the slight touch of the pointer (Figure 25b). In the second and third examples, the reader encounters the linguistic text, “*Il fallait que je pose des questions pour la mettre à jour*”, and following his gestural memory s/he intends to use the SUM (*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*) to advance in the interactive narrative; however, s/he finds out there is no reaction on the surface.

Meanwhile, throughout her/his exploration of semiotic units of manipulation (SUMs) in the screenic “*champ des possibles infini*”, a question mark enacts its presence on the screen, waiting for the reader to explore its functionality. A few seconds later after exploration the artisan reader understands that s/he needs to click (*activer-appuyer*) on the question mark for a series of questions to randomly appear on the screen, “*Qui êtes-vous ? Vous aimez... Que pensez-vous... D’où venez-vous ? Où allez-vous ? Vous pensez quoi de... ?*”. This may stand as an example of iconic irradiation defined by Saemmer (2013, pt. 2) as “the interaction of an iconic sign (SUM) with a linguistic sign”. To put it differently, the irradiation is produced as the SUM (“*activer-presser le bouton de la souris*”) triggers the questions.

Furthermore, it seems to me this is an example of an interfacial randomization inside an interfacial retroprojection since by clicking on the question mark the questions and affirmations appear randomly on the black surface of the screen (activated media content); at the same *time* that the text itself unveils the image of the mysterious woman (Figure 25c-d). In fact, it is the fine threads of discourse itself that gradually construct the image of the woman by means of **gestural enunciation**. Hence, it can be said that the SUM (“*activer-presser le bouton de la souris*”) triggers the enunciation of random linguistic texts (*énoncés*) that construct the lettristic image of the mysterious woman. It must be noted that the homodiegetic narrator utters (non-digitalized voice but linguistic text) all the linguistic texts, “*Qui êtes-vous ? Vous aimez... Que pensez-vous...*

*D'où venez-vous ? Où allez-vous ? Vous pensez quoi de... ?*" In this case questions are asked through gestures to reveal both the personality and the image of the woman. I consider that an **indirect characterization technique** is evoked through semiotic units of manipulation (SUMs), leaving the reader with an intriguing impression of the character's appearance, speech, and actions in the story. Since (still) there are not answers uttered by the woman which allows her voice to remain a mystery.

As mentioned above, in terms of SUM, there are two options to reveal her personality: the first one is by pressing the button of the mouse on the question mark via the SUM ("*activer-presser le bouton de la souris*"); and the second one by using the SUM ("*gratter-déplacer sa souris de façon répétitive, gratter de façon linéaire (par exemple raboter de façon unidirectionnelle), touiller avec des courbes...*"). According to my reading, both techniques can be read as what I propose to call **gestural impressionism**<sup>13</sup> ("*activer-presser*") ("*gratter-déplacer*") for each unidirectional movement brushes the questions and shapes the discourse that will unveil and give light to the woman's physical identity (Figure 25d). I find that each linguistic text (*énoncé*) is a colour-dab ("*active-presser*") that captures the feeling of the scene<sup>14</sup>. In other words, "the cursor is the pathway to dozens of questions that, in turn, like the strokes in an impressionist painting, reveal the hidden code, the woman behind the screen" (Bouchardon & López-Varela, 2011, p. 3) (my emphasis). Truly, each repetitive stroke ("*gratter-déplacer*") breaks in colour-language the image of the woman, as the authors suggest, behind the screen and beyond imagination.

At the same time, the artisan reader deconstructs this image, the homodiegetic narrator shares with him/her the fact that this woman

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<sup>13</sup> Impressionism, French Impressionnisme, a major movement, first in painting and later in music, that developed chiefly in France during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Impressionist painting comprises the work produced between about 1867 and 1886 by a group of artists who shared a set of related approaches and techniques. The most conspicuous characteristic of Impressionism in painting was an attempt to accurately and objectively record visual reality in terms of transient effects of light and colour. In music, it was to convey an idea or affect through a wash of sound rather than a strict formal structure. "Impressionism." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/art/Impressionism-art>.

<sup>14</sup> cf. Auguste Renoir, "La liseuse" (1874-76); Georges Seurat's "La parade du cirque" (1887-1888).

became his wife, “*Sans que je m'en aperçoive, cette inconnue devenait ma femme*”. *On a tout partagé. Mais jamais je ne suis parvenu à vraiment la connaître*”. The reader advances in the narrative via the SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”) to find out the homodiegetic narrator expresses, “*Aujourd'hui encore je me pose des questions.*”, it seems to me that this phrase echoes a line in the first scene “*Mais depuis un moment, j'ai des doutes*”, which mirrors and accentuates the homodiegetic narrator’s feeling of being lost. To close up, the last SUM in this scene is (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”), leaving on the screen the phrase, “*Qui d'elle ou moi suit l'autre ?, Quand je l'aime, elle me sème.*”. This depicts the potential misunderstandings concerning love. A portrayal of a fruitless search for love between the characters that recalls and evokes feelings with which most readers and listeners can identify. The scene closes with the image of the woman instantly disappearing on the dusky light of the screenic surface.

## 6.2 Time Will Tell

The closing seconds of the previous scene set the atmosphere for the reappearance of the *locuteur angélique*, whom by saying “*Bonjour, si vous voulez que votre rendez-vous soit dans 10 ans, tapez 1, dans 3 heures, tapez 2, maintenant, tapez 3*”; not only welcomes the reader to the next scene but invites her/him to choose the *story time* in which the following scene will take place: 10 years, 3 hours or Now. Once the reader has chosen, for instance, “10 years”, the scene begins. This is an example of how the SUM (“*activer-appuyer*”) opens the possibility to accelerate *discourse time* as the reader “time travels”, 10 years, 3 hours, or 1 second within *story time*.

Taking this into account, I find that it would be challenging and interesting if the temporality and settings of S2 would be different depending on the *story time* chosen by the reader in the interlude from S1 to S2. For instance, this would result in variations regarding characterization, which would absolutely call for variations in the writing content of the forthcoming character’s letters; not to mention the variations in choosing the narrator’s

adequate (aged) image in S5. It seems to me that this feature would enhance the complexity of the scene's temporality and the representation strategies of *DP*; and what is more, it would be research challenging to construct and reconstruct temporal relations within the new temporality pathways of the narrative discourse.

In terms of *limiting reading time*, the first linguistic text (1 out of 4) that appears on the screenic surface, keeps the one line on the screen pattern from the previous scene (S1), which allows the reader to control her/his pace in the interactive narrative. Therefore, the reader creates the *discourse time* and the *true time* (screen time) as s/he explores the interactive narrative. Like S1, the *pseudo-time* is equivalent to each single linguistic text that appears on the middle of the screenic surface. This effect changes with the emergence of six new linguistic texts (*pseudo-time*), which appear as the current linguistic text, "*Impossible de prononcer quelque chose de cohérent*", slowly falls down on the screenic surface.

- (4) Et vous travaillez dans quoi ? (Et vous travaillez l'envoi ?) ; J'ai l'impression qu'on a beaucoup de point communs (Chemins pression en Allemagne point comme un...) ; Vous avez des yeux somptueux (vous avouez des notions de tueurs) ; Puis-je vous offrir un autre verre ? (Pigeon ouïr un Notre Père ?) J'aime votre façon de sourire (Gêne, votre garçon mourir) ; Vous voulez marcher un peu ? (Nouveaux-nés barges et il pleut).

As noted earlier, these linguistic texts have the effect of disappearing after they change into another question or statement by means of SUM ("*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*") (**transformed pseudo-time**) (Figure 26a). I find that this effect enhances the ephemerality and distortion of the conversation. That is, the linguistic texts are triggered by SUM ("*mouvoir-survoler*"); they are uttered by the homodiegetic narrator; but they instantaneously disappear by the slightly touch of the cursor; which evokes the truly ephemerality of a conversation.

Moreover, the *pseudo-time* consists, as of this visit, of twelve lines, six clearly visible, and six triggered by SUM. It is important to bear in mind that this specific passage is an example of interfacial randomization, which means that there are hidden linguistic texts

that might *not* be activated by the reader in the first visit (*texte-auteur*). Therefore, these veiled linguistic texts must be considered as part of the digital work but not as part of the *pseudo-time* of the current *discourse time*.

Interestingly, if the SUM (“*mouvoir-survoler*”) is performed extremely fast, the reader will struggle when reading the six linguistic texts and their “derivatives”; which will lead her/him to experience *limiting reading time* (Figure 26b). This will cause the narrative pace to be incoherently accelerated. Consequently, all the phrases will be enunciated at the same time by the homodiegetic (autodiegetic) narrator, which will definitely create acceleration in the *discourse time* (Figure 26b). As pointed out by Eskelinen (2012, p. 156):

Ergodic limitations give the reader the chance to affect the settings of reading speed, duration and frequency (or at least one of these aspects) for better or worse (readers could be rewarded by giving them more time or punished by reducing their time with the text- or vice versa).

Hence, it can be suggested that specific SUM in *DP* might produce what Eskelinen (2012, p. 156) referred as “ergodic limitations”. In other words, SUM will give the reader the opportunity to affect the settings of reading speed and duration. For instance, in S2 the reader experiences the sensation of accelerating and decelerating *discourse time* as s/he experiences what I have referred above as **gestural impressionism** (cf. V.6.1). By means of SUM, the reader accelerates or decelerates the *discourse time* by slowly (or rapidly) unveiling (brush stroking) the narrator’s wife image through language (linguistic texts) (*pseudo-time*) (Figure 26c-d).



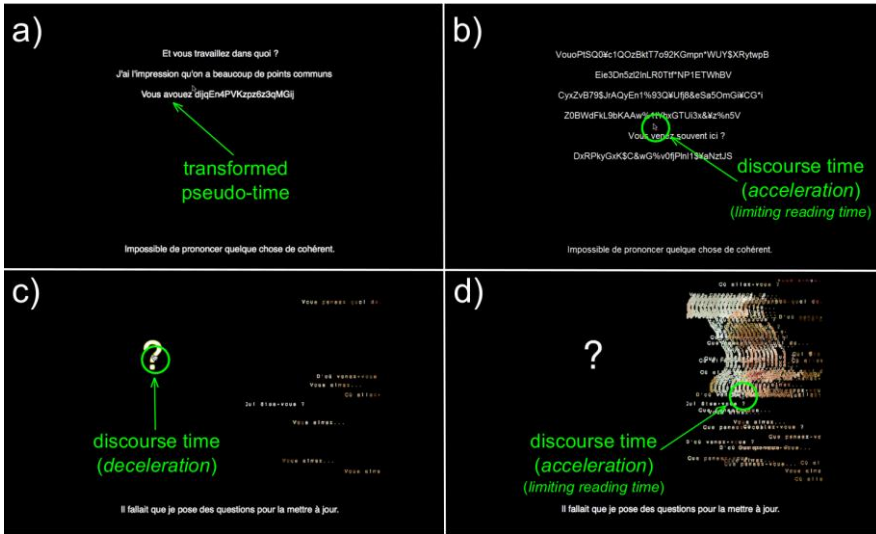


Figure 26. Screen captures of S2 showing a) transformed pseudo-time, b) discourse time (acceleration), c) discourse time (deceleration), d) discourse time (acceleration), DP.

I find that when experiencing the SUM (“*activer-presser*”) each linguistic text (*énoncé*), “*Qui êtes-vous ? Vous aimez... Que pensez-vous... D'où venez-vous ? Où allez-vous ? Vous pensez quoi de... ?*” either accelerates or decelerates the *discourse time* depending on the speed of the gestural manipulation. However, if the reader decides to interact via SUM (“*gratter-déplacer sa souris de façon répétitive*”); I find that the SUM is more suitable to show acceleration in the *discourse time* given that a brushstroke can summarize (condensed) the *story time* and *discourse time* of six linguistic texts in a single movement.



## 7. SCENE THREE: “MOT D’AMOUR OU DE RUPTURE ?”

### 7.1 “*La musique et les lettres*”

- (5) Vingt ans se sont écoulés depuis notre rencontre. Ce matin, je me perds dans un mot qu'elle m'a laissé. Tout se brouille dans mon esprit. Je ne sais comment l'interpréter. Mot d'amour ou de rupture ? Le fait-elle exprès ? Je sais que c'est pour toi un choc « Je n'ai que de l'amour pour toi » Est un mensonge, et « Dans un couple, il y en a un qui souffre et un qui s'ennuie » Je veux que tous nos amis sachent que Je ne veux pas rester avec toi, Depuis le premier jour, je ne sais pas comment tu peux croire que Je t'aime Mon amour A disparu L'indifférence Est plus vivace que jamais Le charme de notre rencontre S'est dissipé à présent Et le moindre malentendu A vaincu Notre amour Que puis-je faire ?

The idea of space returns to this scene when the homodiegetic narrator finds himself lost in the words that his wife has written, “*Ce matin, je me perds dans un mot qu'elle m'a laissé*”. In a parallel way, the reader finds her/himself lost in the screenic surface where s/he tries to grasp the meaning of the moving letter(s) through the arrow of love<sup>15</sup>. Love is treated as a question of vision, as a product of moving letters that might seem illusory or real. The letter gives the woman a voice, and her written words begin to construct her characterization, her role in the story. Like in S2 (cf. V.6.1), I shall suggest that a sort of **indirect characterization technique** by means of semiotic units of manipulation (SUMs) is created for the reader infers the character’s traits based on the linguistic contents of the moving letter(s). Inserted letters in the narrative discourse are a way to depict the character’s personality through words and fertile thoughts, besides they stand as examples of embedded narratives. In

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<sup>15</sup> At this moment of the interactive discourse the pointer can be interpreted as the “arrow of love” that either blinds or persuades the reader. According to (Stewart, 2003, p. 13), “The Arrow of Love has been a favorite topos of love poets since antiquity. Typically, Cupid shoots his arrow through the heart of an unsuspecting victim, who then falls in love with the next person he or she sees. In late medieval literature, this classical figure is given a new emphasis: the arrow does not always proceed directly to the heart, but strikes the lover first in the eyes”.

*DP*, the wife's letter vividly begins to claim the woman's presence in the artistic puzzlement of the narrator's thoughts and personality. In my view, the fact of presenting the woman's characterization (or any other character) through an interactive letter by means, not only of semiotic units of manipulation, but also of word melody and tone colour, emphasizes the **indirect characterization techniques** used by the authors<sup>16</sup>.

This gives an arc of literary sense because before reading the woman's letter, the reader learns that the homodiegetic narrator feels confused, "*Tout se brouille dans mon esprit. Je ne sais comment l'interpréter. Mot d'amour ou de rupture ? Le-fait-elle exprès ?*"; his words might be an anticipation of the content that inhabits the letter, a "seasonal opening", a prediction of what it is to come. I find there is a connection between the narrator's state of mind and nature. To my view, the phrase, "*Tout se brouille dans mon esprit*", is an example of an inverted pathetic fallacy<sup>17</sup>, and therefore depicts the temperament in the homodiegetic narrator's existence (Figure 27a). That is, the narrator is confused, and as a mirrored-feelings effect, the contents of the letter gradually *blur* his sight and his own feelings, as if a mist will swim before his eyes as he reads. For the verb, "*se brouiller*" means to *mist* over, to *cloud* over, to turn *cloudy*; and in a figuratively sense, it might allude to the recurring literary idea that "when the sky turns cloudy, misty, or hazy something might go wrong...". However, in *DP*, this idea stands as an allusion to another sky, that within the narrator's existence. This cloudy spot in the interactive narrative underlines for the third time, the character's sensation of losing "*les notions de prise et de contrôle*", the reader feels a little bit lost in the mist of events. However, it must be noted that this time, the *loss of grasp* it is not the outcome of a specific SUM, as in S1, but a greater effect, that of the poetics of language and nature, "*Tout se brouille dans*

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<sup>16</sup> cf. *Connected Memories* (Mencía, 2009) in *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature* (2012).

<sup>17</sup> Pathetic fallacy, poetic practice of attributing human emotion or responses to nature, inanimate objects, or animals. The practice is a form of personification that is as old as poetry, in which it has always been common to find smiling or dancing flowers, angry or cruel winds, brooding mountains, moping owls, or happy larks. The term was coined by John Ruskin in *Modern Painters* (1843–60). "Pathetic fallacy" in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/art/pathetic-fallacy>.

*mon esprit*”<sup>18</sup>. Likewise, this can be read as a metalinguistic function since as noted earlier there is an aesthetic agreement between what the texts says and the evoked feelings transmitted to the reader.

In terms of SUM, since the beginning of S3, the *mise en scène* of the linguistic texts has been associated to the SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”); however, the woman’s letter is presented in a different way. That is to say, when the linguistic text, “*Mot d’amour ou de rupture ?*”, appears on the screen, it slowly falls down to the bottom of the screen, sharing the same visual effects as the linguistic text “*Impossible de prononcer quelque chose de cohérent*” in S2. It must be underlined that there are aesthetic parallelisms in terms of semiotic units of manipulation (SUMs) in the scenes. In both cases, the interactivity in the reading rhythm suddenly changes to welcome a new visual arrangement of linguistic texts. In other words, in S2, there are six linguistic texts sharing homophony, metamorphosis, and individual disappearance (Figure 26); and in S3, there are eighteen rhythmic linguistic texts expanding and compressing in an accordion melodic kind of way to suggest two different constructions of meaning (Figure 27b-c).

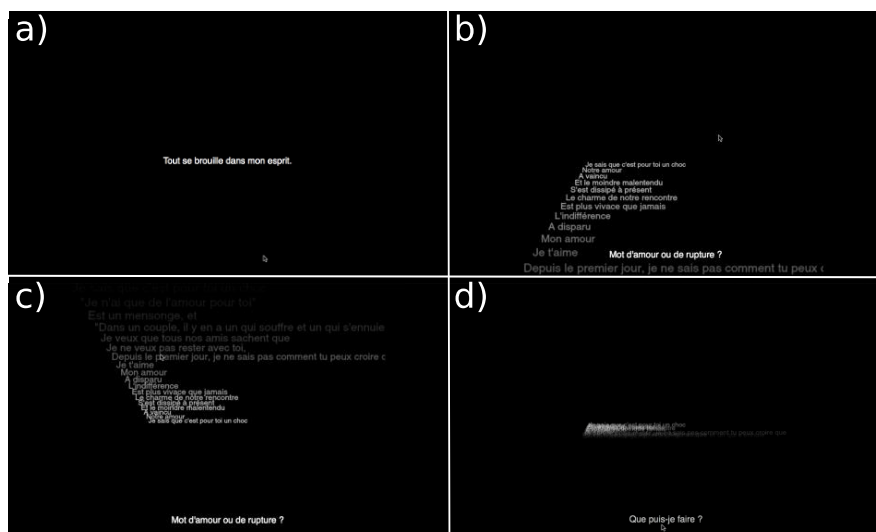
A few seconds later, the first linguistic text that composes the letter appears on the screen, “*Je sais que c’est pour toi un choc*”. To advance in the narrative, the reader realizes that s/he must combine his/her interactive gesture SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”) to the SUM (“*tirer-faire glisser un élément à la souris ou au clavier, appuyer-tirer*”). It is important to mention that as the reader plays with the movement of the mouse on the screen, s/he manipulates through the arrow of love the visibility and elasticity of the linguistic texts; and therefore, as I shall show later, his/her own *reading time* (cf. V.7.2).

As the love letter or break up note begins to construct and deconstruct itself to the rhythm of an opera, the sound of Georges

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<sup>18</sup> “L’invitation au Voyage” (Baudelaire, 1857) “Mon enfant, ma sœur, / Songe à la douceur / D’aller là-bas vivre ensemble ! / Aimer à loisir, / Aimer et mourir / Au pays qui te ressemble ! / Les soleils mouillés / De ces ciels brouillés / Pour mon esprit ont les charmes / Si mystérieux / De tes traîtres yeux, / Brillant à travers leurs larmes. / Là, tout n’est qu’ordre et beauté, / Luxe, calme et volupté”. (my emphasis)

Bizet’s *Carmen* (1875)<sup>19</sup>, specifically, act 1 (Aria, *L’amour est un oiseau rebelle*<sup>20</sup>), accompanies the reader’s explorative journey throughout the interpretation of each emerging line. This would confirm the previous impression that the text evokes, on the one hand, misunderstandings and contradictions on love; and on the other hand, lyrical expression in song. As those evoked at the end of S2, “*Qui d’elle ou moi suit l’autre ? Quand je l’aime, elle me sème*”. But it can also open a new thematic where the character’s mood is associated to the background music and certainly to other female characters with analogous passions.



**Figure 27. Screen captures of S3 showing a) inverted pathetic fallacy, b) gestural enunciative polyphony, c) *Mot d’amour ou de rupture ?*, d) Effacement closing the scene, DP.**

<sup>19</sup> *Carmen* opera in four acts by French composer Georges Bizet—with a libretto in French by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy—that premiered on March 3, 1875. With a plot based on the 1845 novella of the same name by Prosper Mérimée, Bizet’s *Carmen* was groundbreaking in its realism, and it rapidly became one of the most popular Western operas of all time. “Carmen”, in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Carmen-opera-by-Bizet>.

<sup>20</sup> cf. Georges Bizet’s *Carmen*, Aria, “L’amour est un oiseau rebelle”, 1875. “L’amour est enfant de bohème, Il n’a jamais, jamais connu de loi ; Si tu ne m’aimes pas, je t’aime ; Si je t’aime, prends garde à toi ! (Prends garde à toi !) Si tu ne m’aimes pas, Si tu ne m’aimes pas, je t’aime ; (Prends garde à toi !) Mais si je t’aime, si je t’aime ; Prends garde à toi !”

In his/her horizon of expectation, the reader finds out that if s/he goes to the right, the rhythmic linguistic texts will construct a love letter, and if s/he goes to the left the rhythmic linguistic texts will construct a break up note. It can be suggested that the reader gets lost while interpreting the letter through manipulation since the reader manipulates the movement of the linguistic texts to construct the multiple meanings of the lines. As pointed above the manipulation of *reading time* plays an important role in this part of the scene (cf. V.7.2).

For instance, the letter can be read as a love letter (movement to the right): “*L’indifférence A disparu Mon amour Je t’aime je ne sais pas comment tu peux croire que Depuis le premier jour, Je ne veux pas rester avec toi*”, or as a break up note (mouvement to the left): “*Depuis le premier jour, je ne sais pas comment tu peux croire que Je t’aime Mon amour A disparu L’indifférence Est plus vivace que jamais*”. The SUM reveals another textuality by means of a visual effect; which produces playfulness on the letters and the background sounds. This technique of poetic appearance may remind the reader of Ferdinand de Saussure<sup>21</sup> research on anagrams<sup>22</sup>.

As I shall show in the following paragraph, in the letter there are internal echoes of interdiscourse that confirm a general reflection on the complexity of love; which are based on literary references (a play and a fairy tale). Interestingly, traces of intertextuality are found in the letter, two literary references are present on its content;

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<sup>21</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure, (born Nov. 26, 1857, Geneva, Switz.—died Feb. 22, 1913, Vufflens-le-Château), Swiss linguist whose ideas on structure in language laid the foundation for much of the approach to and progress of the linguistic sciences in the 20th century. "Ferdinand de Saussure." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ferdinand-de-Saussure>.

<sup>22</sup> Anagram. The arrangement of the letters of a word or phrase to produce another word of phrase [...] Anagrams have been conceived as substantive components of poetic discourse occurring in a number of poetic traditions. This view originates with the partial publication in the 1960’s of Ferdinand de Saussure’s notebooks (for 1906-9) containing research on anagrams [...] In the Saussurean model, the functioning of the anagram presupposes both a poet capable of sophisticated operations on verbal material and a reader able to recognize the presence of the anagram and to reconstitute the hidden whole. (Greene, Cushman, Cavanagh, Ramazani, & Rouzer, 2012, pp. 48–49).

echoes of Madame d'Aulnoy<sup>23</sup> and Maurice Donnay<sup>24</sup> are found in the following lines. “*Je n'ai que de l'amour pour toi*” is an extract from “*Le Prince Marcassin, Conte*” (1697-98)<sup>25</sup> written by Madame d'Aulnoy; and “*Dans un couple, il y en a un qui souffre et un qui s'ennuie*” is an extract from *L'Affranchie: Comédie en trois actes* (1898)<sup>26</sup> written by Maurice Donnay. This is an example of how

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<sup>23</sup> Marie-Catherine Le Jumel de Barneville, countess d'Aulnoy, Aulnoy also spelled Aunoy (born 1650/51, near Honfleur, Fr.—died Jan. 14, 1705, Paris) writer of fairy tales and of novels of court intrigue, whose personal intrigues were commensurate with those described in her books. When she termed her works *contes de fées* (fairy tales, or literally, "Tales of the Fairies."), she originated the term that is now generally used for the genre. Her 'fairy tales' were written in a style suitable for entertaining in adult salon gatherings, and not with a child audience in mind. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Marie-Catherine-Le-Jumel-de-Barneville-Countess-dAulnoy>.

<sup>24</sup> Maurice Donnay, in full Maurice-Charles Donnay (born October 12, 1859, Paris, France—died March 31, 1945, Paris), French playwright whose dramas deal with love and adultery, social problems, and the manners of his time. Donnay was born into a wealthy family and originally trained to be a civil engineer. His dramatic career began with monologues written for the literary cabaret Le Chat-Noir. He made his name in the theatre with *Amants* (1895; “Lovers”), one of his best plays and the first work of a series called “Théâtre d'Amour,” which also includes *La Dououreuse* (1897) and *L'Affranchie* (1898), both of which are dramas about women whose loves are spoiled by lies. A second cycle of plays, including *Le Retour de Jérusalem* (1903) and *Les Éclaircuses* (1913), deals with current social problems; and another group of plays, including *La Chasse à l'homme* (1919) and *La Reprise* (1924), are comedies of manners, depicting France after World War I. Among Donnay's other works are several autobiographical publications, including *Mon Journal, 1919-30* (1953). Donnay's *Théâtre* was published in 8 volumes (1908–27). *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Maurice-Donnay>.

<sup>25</sup> cf. “Le Prince Marcassin, Conte” (1697-98) by Madame d'Aulnoy (1785). “Que prétendez-vous donc, cruel prince, s'écria Ismène, en arrêtant celui qu'elle aimoit ? Croyez-vous le bannir de mon cœur comme de ma présence ? Non! il y est trop bien gravé. N'ignorez donc plus votre malheur, vous qui faites le mien : voilà celui seul qui peut m'être cher ; je n'ai que de l'horreur pour vous. Et moi, barbare, dit Marcassin, je n'ai que de l'amour pour toi ; il est inutile que tu me découvres toute ta haine, tu n'en seras pas moins ma femme, & tu en souffriras davantage”. (my emphasis) <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k96076208/f329.item.r=Madame%20d'Aulnoy%20Marcassin%20je%20n'ai%20que%20de%20l'amour%20pour%20toi>

<sup>26</sup> *L'Affranchie : Comédie en trois actes*, 1898, Acte I, Scène V (Donnay, 1898). “Antonia : Vous voyez bien... C'est dommage, pauvre petite ! Dire qu'il y en a toujours un qui aime davantage... et c'est celui-là qui souffre ; Roger : Mais c'est l'autre qui s'ennuie ; Antonia: Vous vous ennuyez ? ; Roger : Je ne parle pas de



polyphony and interdiscourse are interlaced in the letter (internal discourse space). Since as the woman writes, she inserts literary references (*énoncés*) that are familiar to her and that in a way may depict her present state of mind. Besides, by inserting these literary references, she adds voices (*enunciators*) to her writing, that is, Madame d'Aulnoy and Maurice Donnay; and certainly, the characters in the literary works: Ismène and Le Prince Marcassin; Antonia and Roger. This fact challenges the reader of interactive narratives to encounter unexpected literary echoes in the land(sea)scapes of his/her horizon of expectation. Above all I find that the inclusion of two literary references truly enrich the reflection about the fruitless search for love evoked in S2. Lastly, I may add that in terms of characterization, the interdiscourse found in the letter also gives two states of mind to the female character (split subject). On the one hand, a woman who *highlights* her feelings for the narrator; and, on the other hand, a woman who declares that her feelings have vanished.

In fact, as it shall be explained later, at times the letter can become completely illegible on the screen; for through manipulation all the linguistic texts that composed it appear totally crammed and amassed. As mentioned above, there is a rupture in the construction of meaning that leads to the creation of new-opposite meaning(s). I shall argue that the double-meaning found in the love letter or break up note by means of the SUM (“*mouvoir- déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”) and the SUM (“*tirer-faire glisser un élément à la souris ou au clavier, appuyer-tirer*”) mirrors the distortion of meaning found in S2 (*Je pose des questions pour la mettre à jour*) when the questions are transformed into homophonic phrases via the SUM (“*mouvoir- déplacer sa souris dans le plan survoler*”).

Therefore, in terms of **gestural enunciation**, the SUM (“*tirer-faire glisser un élément à la souris ou au clavier, appuyer-tirer*”)

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nous.; Antonia: Vous parlez des amants ordinaires.; Roger: Oui.”.  
[https://books.google.com/books?id=Dn0MAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=il%20y%20en%20a%20toujours%20un&f=true](https://books.google.com/books?id=Dn0MAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=il%20y%20en%20a%20toujours%20un&f=true) cf. « L’Esprit de Maurice Donnay » in *Le Figaro*. Supplément littéraire du dimanche, Le Figaro (Paris) (1907-12-21) “Il y en a toujours un des deux qui aime plus que l’autre, et c’est celui-là qui souffre....; Oui mais c’est l’autre qui s’ennuie !”.  
<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k272943x/f1.item.r=Maurice>.

activates not only the voice of the woman in the love letter or break up note, but also the voice of the woman that interprets the Aria in *DP*'s version of Bizet's *Carmen* (1875), *Carmen*, and the voices of the chorus. However, inside the voice of the woman (narrator's wife), the voices of Madame d'Aulnoy (*Ismène* and *Le Prince Marcassin*); and Maurice Donnay (*Antonia* and *Roger*) thoughtfully resound. This is an example of how the communication act is a kind of theatrical representation where the exchange partners (immerse in an external communication situation) project diverse enunciators (present in an internal discourse space) (Charaudeau, 1983). These enunciators deal with a linguistic battle among them to obtain their communication goals. This idea immediately redirects my thinking to Ducrot's theory of enunciative polyphony where the author notes that, "the meaning of the utterance, in the representation it gives of the enunciation, can reveal several voices that are not those of only one locator" (Ducrot, 1984, pt. XIII).

Considering this, I find that a sort of **gestural enunciative polyphony** may be created where implications of polyphony for the representation of a fruitless love are depicted. For the SUM ("*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*") and SUM ("*tirer-faire glisser un élément à la souris ou au clavier, appuyer-tirer*") not only trigger one but ten voices: 1) the woman (narrator's wife), 2) Madame d'Aulnoy, 3) *Ismène*, 4) *Le Prince Marcassin*, 5) Maurice Donnay, 6) *Antonia*, 7) *Roger*, 8) *Carmen*, 9) the woman interprets *Carmen* in the Aria, and 10) the chorus (which is more than one voice) (Figure 27b). It can also be suggested that the authors were seeking to join different points of view through different semiotic systems to enrich the complexity (textuality) of this scene. Therefore, both SUMs show that the opera is making a double association to the content of the letter since it also speaks of the abstraction and the complexity of love. This is an example of how music empowers characterization through the addition of different semiotic systems. As I shall explain later, the fact of setting in motion the body of the linguistic text itself through the combination of the SUM opens various imaginaries and story times (cf. V.7.2).

To better describe this interactive gesture, I propose an additional SUM to the chart presented by Philippe Bootz, Serge Bouchardon, and Alexandra Saemmer (Bouchardon, 2011, p. 39-40) (Table 1); in

my opinion, the closest SUM to describe this action is the SUM (“*tirer-faire glisser un élément à la souris ou au clavier, appuyer-tirer*”). However, when applied to this specific moment of the interactive narrative in *DP*, it made me think of two possible actions that require a new SUM for their description. In the first place, the idea of playing an accordion by expanding and compressing the bellows (linguistic texts) while pressing buttons or keys (pressing the mouse or keyboard); and in the second place, the idea of scratching a record in real time to produce sound effects by moving it back and forward (slipping the linguistic texts), which it seems to me makes a clear association with the ideas of left/right; back/forward; love/rupture; clear/distortion. In both cases, the SUM (“*tirer-faire glisser un element à la souris ou au clavier, appuyer-tirer*”) will not be enough to describe this action.

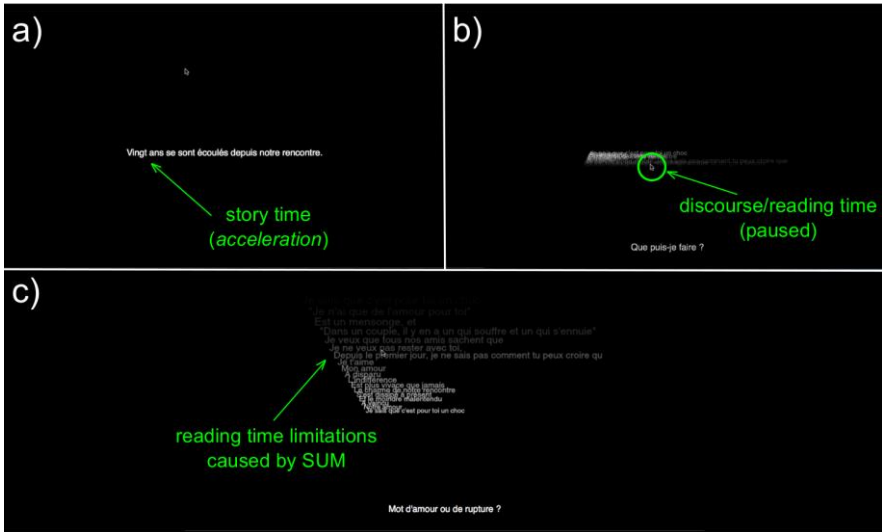
Therefore, I propose, the SUM *étirer-comprimer*. Following this description, USM: appuyer-tirer; actèmes: *faire glisser un element à la souris ou au clavier (appuyer-tirer) en va et vient*; délimitée dans les temps: *non*; répétitive: *oui*; traits d’iconicité potentiels (ce à quoi l’USM fait penser dans le monde physique): *jouer de l’accordéon, scratcher des disques vinyles*. [SUM: press-pull; acteme: to drag an element with the mouse (press-pull) or with the keyboard *back and forth*; delimited by time: no; repetitive: yes; potential traits of iconicity (what the SUM remind us in the physical world): to play the accordion, scratch vinyl records.]

To sum up, the personality and voice of the woman are gradually constructed between S2 and S3; in S2, “*le rendez-vous*”, the narrator asks the first questions to reveal her but her voice is never heard; in S3, after twenty years have passed the reader learns a little bit more about her but not all, through an inserted break up note or love letter in the narrative discourse. Finally, at the end of the scene, the **gestural enunciation** is triggered by the homodiegetic narrator who addresses himself again, “*Que puis-je faire ?*”, and the reader by using the SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan survoler*”) gently closes the scene.

## 7.2 Time Is No Longer the Same

As the linguistic text, “*Vingt ans se sont écoulés depuis notre rencontre*” appears on the screenic surface, it stands as an example of how the *system time* has accelerated the *discourse time* as the reader “time travels” 20 years in the *story time* (Figure 28a). However, I assume the linguistic text (*pseudo-time*) has come into scene, as a sequel of the last SUM (“*mouvoir-survoler*”), which was experienced by the reader in the previous scene, “*Quand je l'aime, elle me sème*” (S2). Similar to my perception about new potential temporality pathways explained in the previous section (cf. V.6.2), I find that if the linguistic text, “*Vingt ans se sont écoulés depuis notre rencontre*” (*pseudo-time*), would have been triggered by the reader via the SUM (“*mouvoir-survoler*”), as s/he started S3; the impression of “time traveling” 20 years, would enhance the sensation of “feeling the meaning of the work at hand” (Simanowski, 2011, p. ix) in terms of *discourse time* and *story time* acceleration.

Another interesting feature that occurs at the beginning of the scene is the presence of Georges Bizet’s *Carmen* (1875), specifically, act 1 (Aria, *L’amour est un oiseau rebelle*). This happens as the reader explores the screenic surface to advance in the interactive narrative. If there is no interaction whatsoever; the voice of *Carmen* accompanies the reader as long as s/he wanders through in the land(sea)scapes of her/his horizon of expectation. This is another example of temporal distortion; on the one hand, a potential time traveling will range from the Opera’s premiere on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1875 at the *Paris Opéra Comique* to the time *DP* was created, most probably in France between 2008 and 2010 (I specifically refer to the time when this part of the scene was programmed). And, on the other hand, though as noted above, the *pseudo-time* within “*Vingt ans se sont écoulés depuis notre rencontre*”, calls for an acceleration in the *discourse time*, if the reader decides not to advance in the interactive narrative the *discourse time* will be manipulated, and consequently, it will certainly feel slower than the *story time* (unless in a remote possibility the reader would have decided to spend 20 years at the beginning of that scene before interaction).



**Figure 28.** Screen captures of S3 showing a) story time (acceleration), b) discourse/reading time (paused); c) reading time limitations caused by SUM, DP.

The linguistic text, “*Mot d’amour ou de rupture ?*”, simulates a curtain down effect on the screen. The reader begins to play and control the *reading time* while constructing the twofold meaning of the letter; this action confirms that the *system time* allows for temporal dynamics. The *true time*, *pseudo-time*; and, therefore the *discourse time* and *reading time* can be manipulated (paused or stopped) by means of the SUM (“*mouvoir-surlover*”) (Figure 28b). As pointed out by Eskelinen (2012, p. 158), “if temporariness implies that something changes, one must come to terms with what changes, how it changes, and why it changes”. Considering this, I find that this will create such effects as: a) increase and decrease of font size (alterations in the legibility of the linguistic texts) (*limiting reading time*) (Figure 28c); b) slow and fast-paced display of the letter’s linguistic texts (altered appearance of *pseudo-time*); and finally, c) agglomeration of linguistic texts in the middle of the screen (crammed and amassed linguistic texts) (altered appearance of *pseudo-time*) (Figure 28b). It must be noted that all these changes are reversible, that is, if the reader decides to re-visit the scene, s/he will experience the construction of the letter in a completely new desired way. Since, as previously explained, the changes made on the digital work cannot be stored (*temporally evolving texts*) (cf. III.2.2.3).

To my view, these effects will certainly call for *limiting reading time* situations caused by the reader's SUM performance (Figure 28c). As proposed by Eskelinen (2012, p. 157), "The effect of the reader on the text's settings of *reading time* could be either a matter of explicit choice or a more implicit one resulting from his actions in ways that he may be only vaguely (or not at all) aware of". It seems to me quite difficult that the reader will be able to read the entire letter in a first visit due to the fragility of the digital medium (aesthetics of the surface; mimetic aesthetics (cf. III.2.3.2); I assume in the first visit s/he will explore the manipulation and navigation features; and from her/his "gestural memory" of SUM develop her/his own reading skills and strategies to eye capture her/his interests in search of a further reading.

Lastly, it must be underlined that there are various temporal issues at play in the construction of meaning of the whole scene. For instance, as previously stated the *pseudo-time* is gradually displayed and manipulated by the reader, affecting the time the letter's linguistic texts appear on the screen (*true time*). Therefore, the *discourse time* and *reading time* are controlled by the reader by means of the SUM ("mouvoir-surlover"). In terms of *story time*, there are also important aspects of time inside the letter; like 88C, the allusions to literary works by means of direct literary references are an example of how time is condensed in quotations. In this scene, the examples are *L'Affranchie: Comédie en trois actes* (1898) by Maurice Donnay (presented for the first time at *Théâtre de la Renaissance* on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1989); and "Le Prince Marcassin" (most probably written around 1697-98) by Madame d'Aulnoy (1785). The *story time* within Antonia and Roger's conversation, as well as the *story time* within Ismène and Le Prince Marcassin's conversation must be considered in the analysis.

## 8. SCENE FOUR: “L’OEUVRE DOIT QUITTER SON CREATEUR POUR POUVOIR VIVRE PLEINEMENT”

### 8.1 “Come, Let Me Clutch Thee”

- (6) [Si ce n'était qu'elle, je pourrais l'accepter. Mais mon fils dispose des mêmes armes. Il voudrait mon avis sur sa rédaction] [Mais je ne parviens pas à me concentrer sur le texte] [Étrange impression de ne pouvoir lire qu'entre les lignes] Je n'ai pas de héros. D'aussi loin qu'il m'en souviennent, et même après une longue réflexion, je n'ai jamais eu de héros. La figure du héros ne me séduit pas. Sans doute parce que je ne préfère pas une qualité à une autre, une valeur morale à une autre. Les héros, je les connais, je les reconnais, mais je n'éprouve ni adoration, ni idolâtrie pour eux. À dire vrai, le fanatisme me rend fou. Si l'on considère que le héros obtient son titre par ses actions, son statut est donc une forme de récompense pour la prouesse, la hardiesse, l'originalité. Mais que reste-t-il à la personne, une fois l'acte terminé ? Rien, sinon le titre. On peut présumer que le héros retire de son action une aura : l'action brille à travers lui. J'ai tendance à croire, que l'œuvre — l'action selon les domaines — doit quitter son créateur pour pouvoir vivre pleinement. Les enfants-livres des auteurs vont eux-mêmes tracer leur chemin, se cognant à l'occasion à quelques Zoïles. [Étrange impression de ne pouvoir lire qu'entre les lignes]

Scene number four opens with the voice of the homodiegetic narrator sharing his thoughts and feelings with the reader, the narrator has reached a point in which he is in total confusion about his wife's love. Drown in confusion, with a troubled heart, and submerged into the question, “*Que puis-je faire ?*”; he finds out that his son has written a *moving* text from which he awaits his opinion, “*Si ce n'était qu'elle, je pourrais l'accepter. Mais mon fils dispose des mêmes armes. Il voudrait mon avis sur sa rédaction*”. As expected, these lines appear on the screen by means of the SUM

(“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”). The allusion to the power of language is highlighted; language is brought into focus and the strategies within the son’s discourse are underlined, “*Mais mon fils dispose des mêmes armes*”. By referring to “arms” within the art of writing, an emotional-embodied literary metaphor is created; the homodiegetic narrator announces the strength of the writing’s content, and the tropological impact these words (“arms”) can have on the story, on the reader, and on the screenic surface.

To my view, the idea of language as a literary/emotional weapon alludes to other literary references, for instance, William Shakespeare’s famous Macbeth’s soliloquy, “*Is this a dagger which I see before me / The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee. / [...] A dagger of the mind, a false creation, / Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?*”<sup>27</sup> (my emphasis) It seems as if like Macbeth, the homodiegetic narrator were trying to “clutch” at the words of his son to grasp sense of the letter; or as if the reader were decisively “clutching” meaning through semiotic units of manipulation (SUM) on the screenic surface. I shall further explain this idea in the following paragraphs.

As the reader slightly mouses-over the line, “*Il voudrait mon avis sur sa rédaction*” (SUM *mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*); similarly to S2, the *moving* text is brought into scene. In terms of **gestural enunciation**, the son’s voice is introduced as the linguistic text appears (one letter at a time) on the screenic surface, which creates a synchronism between the rhythm of the son’s voice and the time in which the words appear on the screenic surface<sup>28</sup>. Up to this point, the reader has mainly been familiar with the spoken narrative voice of the narrator in S2 (cf. V.6.1), and the *locuteur angélique*; his/her presence has functioned as a guide and advisor in the previous scenes (cf. V.4.1), but now the reader

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<sup>27</sup> cf. *Macbeth* Act 2, Scene 1 (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 48); “*Is this a dagger which I see before me, / The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee. / I have thee not, and yet I see thee still. / Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible / To feeling as to sight? or art thou but / A dagger of the mind, a false creation, / Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain? / I see thee yet, in form as palpable As this which now I draw.*” (my emphasis)

<sup>28</sup> As noted by (Zinna, 2004), a syncretic assembling happens when signs belonging to different semiotic systems compose a new unity.



encounters the spoken (digitalized) narrative voice of the narrator's son.

The linguistic text literarily sprays on the screenic surface as it populates it with ungraspable letters and signs<sup>29</sup>; it is important to mention that, at this precise moment of the interactive narrative, there is not interactivity or manipulation (though semiotically this is understood as a sequence); as of now the reader carefully listens and observes. The incessant movement of the words is framed under the narrator's phrase, "*Mais je ne parviens pas à me concentrer sur le texte*", implying that the narrator cannot completely focus his sight and attention on the *moving* text. It must be noted that this is the first time the written (linguistic) text is spoken at the same time as it appears on the screen, creating a "syncretic assembling" (Figure 29b).

The letters fly on the screen simulating a typewriter splash; it seems as if the letters knew their way, the reader completely *loses grasp* of them. Despite the constant pointer's exploratory movement, the reader's presence is erased from the surface; consequently, producing no gestural reaction. It must be noted that this time, the *loss of grasp* is depicted as the outcome of a specific SUM (*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*), similarly to S1, "*J'ai le choix*"; "*Je suis maître de mon destin*" (cf. V.5.1); and not as the effect of the poetics of language as in S3, "*Tout se brouille dans mon esprit*" (cf. V.7.1).

Bearing in mind the above-mentioned association to Macbeth's soliloquy<sup>30</sup>, the exposition on the figure of a hero expressed by the

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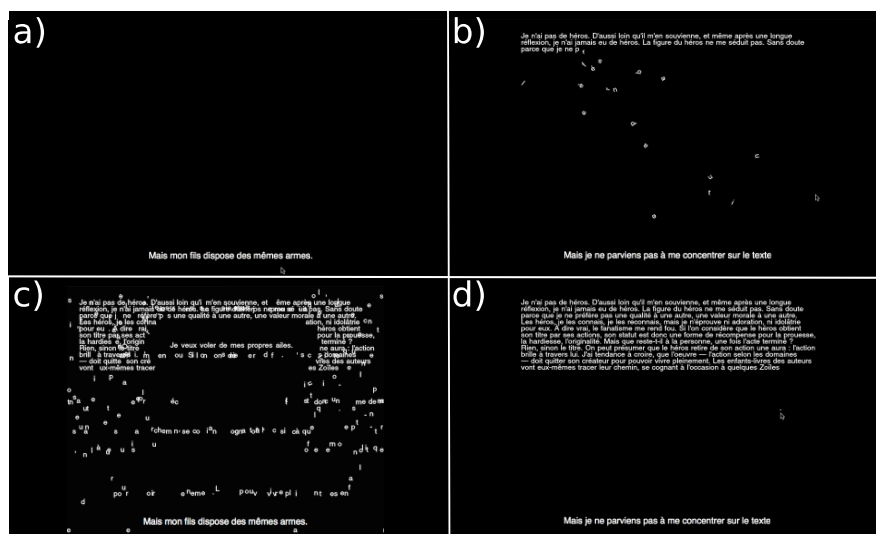
<sup>29</sup> *Screen* (Wardrip-Fruin et al., 2011), *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two* (2011).

<sup>30</sup> Soliloquy. Passage in a drama in which a character expresses his thoughts or feelings aloud while either alone upon the stage or with the other actors keeping silent. This device was long an accepted dramatic convention, especially in the theatre of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. Long, ranting soliloquies were popular in the revenge tragedies of Elizabethan times, such as Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, and in the works of Christopher Marlowe, usually substituting the outpouring of one character's thoughts for normal dramatic writing. William Shakespeare used the device more artfully, as a true indicator of the mind of his characters, as in the famous "To be or not to be" soliloquy in *Hamlet*. "Soliloquy." *Encyclopædia Britannica*,

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/soliloquy>.

narrator's son can be interpreted as his own soliloquy. The exposition evokes not only the subject of heroism but also the idea of a hero being (de)constructed through words, actions, and more importantly, *figures* of speech.

As I shall present later, interestingly, the narrator's son presents the (de)construction of the *figure* of a hero through figures of manipulation. The narrator's son opens his psychological exposition by an affirmation, “*Je n'ai pas de héros. D'aussi loin qu'il m'en souviennne, et même après une longue réflexion, je n'ai jamais eu de héros. La figure du héros ne me séduit pas.*” The figure of the hero is constructed from the memories of the son, who claims to have encountered (one can assume physical and literary) heroes during his life; and therefore, to be able to recognize them among other individuals. Besides, the narrator's son firmly states neither to possess admiration nor love for them, by clearly stating, “*À dire vrai, le fanatisme me rend fou*”.



**Figure 29. Screen captures of S4 showing a) triggered gestural enunciation, b) syncretic assembling, c) interfacial randomization and kiné-gramme, d) complete son's moving text, DP.**

Afterwards, he focuses on discussing the hero's actions stating that what truly defines a hero is his skills, strength, and courage, not the so-called “title”. He also emphasises on the traces of the hero's actions, memory and aura, “*Mais que reste-t-il à la personne, une*

*fois l'acte terminé ? Rien, sinon le titre*". In my view, these actions can also be extrapolated to the skills, strength, and courage of the reader throughout the six scenes of *DP*. As I explained at the beginning of the analysis (cf. V.5.1), the reader is like the Greek hero Theseus, adventurous, courageous, and full of prowess. Each scene presents a manipulation challenge (chthonic<sup>31</sup> enemy) to be defeated where the reader heroically leaves following Saemmer (2007, p. 33): "*la lecture [...] ne semble plus seulement se résumer à un processus mental, elle laisse parfois des traces matérielles*" (my emphasis). Therefore, considering the following lines, "*On peut présumer que le héros retire de son action une aura: l'action brille à travers lui*"; it can be suggested that it seems as if the reader's aura were exactly the digital prowess of having bravely traversed each of the six scenes in Bouchardon and Volckaert's interactive narrative.

Moreover, there is no SUM that needs to be activated to read the whole text; after the *moving* text appears (sprays) on the screen, the reader has enough *reading time* to read and seek for the messages hidden in-between the lines (cf. V.8.2). It is not until the reader begins to explore the screenic surface that s/he realizes that the SUM ("*activer-presser le bouton de la souris*") will shatter the *moving text* into pieces, creating an interfacial retroprojection. In my view, the SUM ("*activer-presser le bouton de la souris*") underlines the power of language. The pointer of the mouse which has been previously associated to Theseus's sword in scene number one<sup>32</sup> (cf. V.5.1); in this scene, becomes the pointer of the dagger that through language decisively shatters into pieces not only the *moving text* but also the narrator's heart (metaphorical relationships). In other words, by clicking on the *moving text* (activable media content), the reader breaks the son's writing structure to find out a set of phrases (activated media content) that synthesize the son's

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<sup>31</sup> Chthonic. Of or relating to earth, particularly the Underworld. Chthonic figures in Greek mythology included Hades and Persephone, the rulers of the Underworld, and the various heroes venerated after death; even Zeus, the king of the sky, had earthly associations and was venerated as Zeus Chthonius. "chthonic." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/chthonic>.

<sup>32</sup> "Perhaps, like Theseus, in a way, the reader's sword is the pointer of the mouse, and his sandals are the material traces s/he leaves on the surface of the work."

feelings towards his father and towards the subject of the hero as a whole. These voices are the interpretation of the narrator, or correspondingly, an interpretation of the interactive reader. Language becomes a dagger of the mind as suggested by Macbeth, “A *dagger of the mind, a false creation*”, which metaphorically shatters to pieces the idea of the *figure* of the father as a hero through figures of manipulation.

- (7) Je ne t'aime pas. Tu ne me connais pas. Nous n'avons rien en commun. Je ne veux rien de toi. Tu n'es pas un modèle pour moi. Je veux voler de mes propres ailes. Bientôt je partirai.

I find that these phrases are an example of an interfacial randomization inside an interfacial retroprojection since the interactive gesture SUM (“*activer-presser le bouton de la souris*”) provokes the emergence of other media contents (activated media content) according to a random process (Saemmer, 2008b) (Figure 29c). These phrases can be read as interior voices of the narrator’s son used to shatter the *figure* of the hero through such interfacial media figures as interfacial randomization and interfacial retroprojection. Interestingly, the phrase, “*Je veux voler de mes propres ailes*”, besides being a product of interfacial randomization, it stands as an example of a kiné-gramme (Saemmer, 2015) since the text says precisely what the SUM represents. In this case, after the linguistic text, “*Je veux voler de mes propres ailes*”, breaks into scene inside the son’s writing, the (broken) linguistic text (activable media) breaks and “flies” away and back to the text as if it having its own wings.

In terms of intertextuality, there are a few elements that I would like to mention. In the first place, I would like to bring back a phrase from S3, “*Tout se brouille dans mon esprit*” (cf. V.7.2), which as explained before is an example of an inverted pathetic fallacy, and therefore depicts the temperament in the homodiegetic narrator’s existence. That is, the narrator is confused, and consequently, the contents of his wife’s letter gradually blur his sight and his feelings. Here, in S4, it is the contents of his son writing that break his sight and his feelings; however, in comparison to S3, where the phrase appears as a linguistic text triggered by SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”); in S4, this is evoked by the

powerful interior voices of the letter that are triggered by SUM (“*activer-presser le bouton de la souris*”).

The difference is that in S3 the SUM does not exactly evoke a relation between what it says and how it is performed; for instance, the words “*brouille*” or “*esprit*” do not appear on *italics* or have a fade in/fade out effect to emphasise the feeling of the phrase. I find that the addition of this *blurry* effect will enrich the interactive experience. In contrast, in S4, the SUM does evoke the relation between what the *moving* text says and how it is performed; for instance, the screenic surface breaks into multiple letters, transmitting the physical sensation of shattered fragments/feelings. Taking this into account, the potential interpretation/parallelism, “*tout se brise dans mon esprit (cœur)*” can be suggested.

In the second place, it is precisely the trait of iconicity (*déclencher ou démarrer une action*) produced by SUM (“*activer-presser le bouton de la souris*”) what creates two types of intertextuality. On the one hand, an allusion to an earlier work by Serge Bouchardon, *Détournement* (2008) in which there is a specific section called “*Tuer l’auteur*” (“*Kill the author*”). In this section, the reader needs to “break the mirror” (the screen) via SUM (“*activer-presser le bouton de la souris*”) to experience what lies behind it. It must be noted that the author is surely alluding to the code that lies behind the piece. In her/his gestural memory, the reader remembers to have used precisely this SUM in a previous digital work; therefore, intertextuality via a SUM that triggers a digital literary allusion is created. In this case, the digital literary allusion is by the same author though it may be interesting as well as challenging to see if such patron can be found in the works of other digital poets.

On the other hand, there is certainly the allusion to Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author” (1967). It is interesting to see how the intertextuality of Barthes is present in both works in two different ways. In *Détournement* (2008), intertextuality is present with a direct quotation appearing in the presentation of the above-mentioned section (“*Tuer l’auteur*”); the linguistic texts, “« *La naissance du lecteur doit se payer de la mort de l’auteur* ». Roland Barthes”, populate the screenic surface. However, in *DP*, it is presented in a more complex way. The allusion to “The Death of the Author” (1967) is inserted in the *moving* text of the narrator’s

son, “*J’ai tendance à croire, que l’œuvre, l’action selon les domaines, doit quitter son créateur pour pouvoir vivre pleinement*”. As *Détournement* was created in 2008, and *DP* in 2010, one can point out to a change in intertextuality techniques within the authors’ digital creation. That is, going from an allusion via a “linguistic text” to an allusion triggered by a SUM. Moreover, in Barthes’ essay (1967, p. 146) the word “gesture” surprisingly appears:

[T]he writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings [...] in such a way as never to rest on any one of them (my emphasis).

In comparison to S3, this is not an example of a **gestural enunciative polyphony** since even though the allusion to the voice of Roland Barthes is present in the text, the enunciation is not triggered by a specific SUM inside the *moving* text; as for example, in S3, where the voices of the woman, Madame d’Aulnoy, Maurice Donnay, Carmen, and the chorus are triggered by two specific SUM. On the contrary, the enunciation is part of the **gestural enunciation** triggered by the “*énoncé*” that sprays the text into scene. Furthermore, this may stand as an example of interdiscourse in the son’s letter, in the internal discourse space of the letter the son’s discourse reveals the unconsciousness of his split subject, the different enunciators (Barthes) that in a way break free not only as the text sprays into scene, but also as the reader randomly clicks to reveal what is hidden in between the lines (Figure 29c).

Furthermore, the linguistic text, “*Les enfants-livres des auteurs vont eux-mêmes tracer leur chemin, se cognant à l’occasion à quelques Zoïles.*”; in my opinion, gathers the ideas above-exposed to give complete freedom to the digital work. That is, it underlines, “*La naissance du lecteur doit se payer de la mort de l’auteur*” proposed for Barthes in 1967; and it extrapolates it to the proposition of Bouchardon and Volckaert in *DP*, “*l’œuvre doit quitter son créateur pour pouvoir vivre pleinement*”. I think Bouchardon and Volckaert open a door to criticism by addressing any reader as a reviewer, a critique, a Zoïle, for the words, “*mot*”, “*rédaction*”, “*enfants-livres*”, “*texte*”, and the work in its totality, the *loss of grasp*, of the text are truly constructing the idea globally. If as exposed by Barthes in his

essay quoting Mallarmé, “it is language which speaks not the author”; therefore, what happens if the reader manipulates the linguistic text? Could we say that s/he speaks for the author? Is this an established co-authorship?

Finally, there is an example of interfacial neantism, which refers to the moment when the interactive gesture does not provoke any effect on the screenic surface (Saemmer, 2008b) (Table 2). This is depicted by the floating presence of the closing period of the letter. Even if the reader tries to mouse-over the closing period via the SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”) there is no reaction on the screenic surface. Its provocative immobile presence underlines its resistance to manipulation. The scene closes as the reader mouses-over the linguistic text, “*Étrange impression de ne pouvoir lire qu'entre les lignes*”, suddenly, the linguistic text, “5”, conquers the scene.

## 8.2 Played Time Is Never Found Again

In S4 synchronism is depicted between the rhythm of the son’s voice and the time in which the words appear on the screen. The reader must read and listen at the same time. Therefore, concerning the appearance of the son’s *moving* text on the screen, it can be said that the *reading time* is controlled by the *system time*; which consequently makes the *system time*, static. I assumed that the triggering of the *pseudo-time* (eleven lines) is a continuation of the SUM (“*mouvoir-survoler*”) performed by the reader in her/his passage from S3 to S4. This method of appearance can be referred as “**emerged pseudo-time**”; and it is an example of *limiting reading time* because [at times] it may produce illegibility (Figure 30a).

As pointed out by Koskimaa (2010a, p. 135) while reading the *moving* text, the reader might experience what the theoretician describes as “to force the reader to read on the edges of apprehension”. The idea that the text appears in a different manner completely breaks the one line on the screen pattern experienced in the previous scenes (S1, S2, S3); and, consequently, this variation plays with the reader’s expectations. Once the linguistic texts of the son’s *moving* text are all on the screenic surface (eleven lines); the

reader freely controls the *reading time*; and can spend as much *user time* as s/he needs to read and re-read the text. This makes the reading activity of this specific passage non-measurable.

In terms of *reading time*, Eskelinen (2012, p. 157) notes three major types of setting reading time: “given (i.e. beyond the reader’s influence), chosen, and caused” (cf. III.2.2.3). Taking this into account, I consider these three major types to be found in S4: a) the *reading time* of the *moving text* is “given” (that is, the time beyond the reader’s influence is given by the system); b) the *reading time* of the *moving text* (once is on the screen) is “chosen” (that is, the reader chooses the time to spend with the text); and, lastly, c) the *reading time* of what I will refer as “**hidden (veiled) pseudo-time**” is “caused” (that is, the *reading time* is controlled by the *system time* and triggered by SUM).

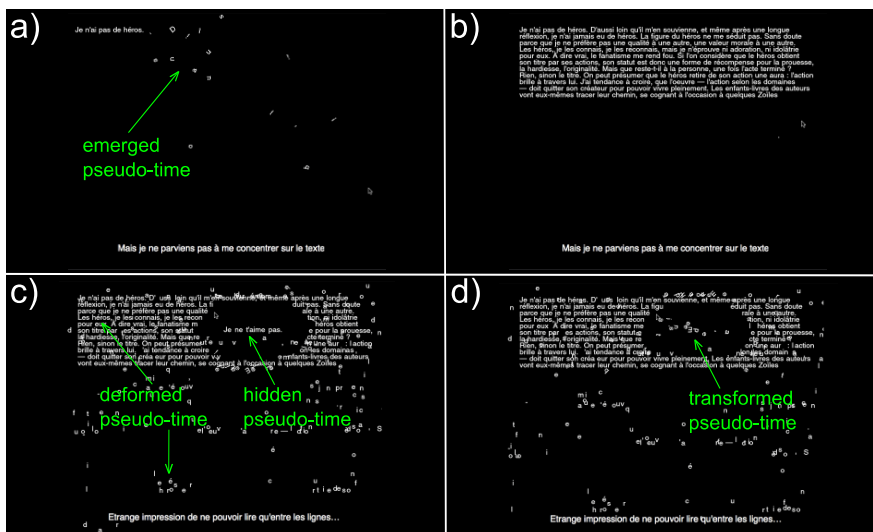


Figure 30. Screen captures of S4 showing different ways of pseudo-time appearance: a) emerged pseudo-time, b) fixed pseudo-time: eleven lines, c) deformed and hidden pseudo-time, d) transformed pseudo-time, DP.

The “**hidden (veiled) pseudo-time**” is understood to be the linguistic texts provoked by the interfacial randomization. These linguistic texts are veiled under the son’s *moving text*; and, as previously discussed; they are triggered by the SUM (“*activer-presser le bouton de la souris*”).



- (8) Je ne t'aime pas. Tu ne me connais pas. Nous n'avons rien en commun. Je ne veux rien de toi. Tu n'es pas un modèle pour moi. Je veux voler de mes propres ailes. Bientôt je partirai.

Remarkably, by means of the formerly mentioned SUM (“*activer-presser le bouton de la souris*”), the linguistic texts of the “**hidden (veiled) pseudo-time**” are later *transfigured* into the son’s *moving* text. In other words, once they appear, they fly away, and become part of the original text; which in itself has been metaphorically *disfigured* to unveil them. Taking these propositions into account, so as to underline the versatility of the *pseudo-time* when it comes to reshape itself into different forms of visualization and possibilities of representation; it can be suggested that in S4, the linguistic texts that represent the *pseudo-time* go from being “**emerged**” (Figure 30a): to being “**deformed**” (Figure 30c): to being “**hidden**” (Figure 30c): to finally being “**transformed**” (Figure 30d).

Moreover, in S4, I have found a balance in terms of *limiting reading time* in relationship to the versatility of the *pseudo-time*. In other words, though these *pseudo-times* in their majority produced *limiting reading time* at their moment of appearance. I find that once they are fixed and have produced their aesthetic entrance on the screenic surface. Their *system time* becomes dynamic allowing the reader to read freestanding from the “edges of apprehension” (Koskimaa, 2010a, p. 135).

Lastly, I would like to comment on the period that marks the end of the letter. Though standing there without any other linguistic text by its side, it may represent an important moment in time, an interlude to the *climatic* state the homodiegetic narrator will reach in S5. Besides, it may remind the reader of 88C creating intertextuality between the two digital works. I refer specifically to Ursa Minor’s artistic statement, “A point is a fact. A line connects two points. A line is a story that connects two facts. A story is a vector connecting facts together. These vectors make pictures; as above, as below or vice versa” (Transcription of UMI in 88C). (cf. IV.5.1).



## 9. SCENE FIVE: “*SUIS-JE SI PEU PRESENT ?*”

### 9.1 On Brushstrokes and Emotion

- (9) Suis-je si peu présent ? Si modelable ? Ma propre image semble me fuir. Elle m'échappe. Je me sens manipulé.

This scene opens with the homodiegetic narrator addressing himself, “*Suis-je si peu présent ? Si modelable ?*”. In fact, these questions echo past scenes in which the narrator also addressed himself, “*“L'univers entier m'appartient”, pensais-je.*” (S1), referring to the full control of his life; “*Comment avoir prise sur ce qui m'arrive ?*” (S1), referring to the upcoming events in his life; “*Que puis-je faire ?*” (S3), referring to the love letter or break up note that his wife has left him. Now in S5 he questions his existence; his relationship with the world, and with his surroundings; he intends to prove his presence on the screenic surface, and to model not only his physical appearance through SUM, but also to “remodel”, to re-evaluate, the idea of his shattered *figure* as a father, sculpted by the dagger-rhetorical figures of the last scene.

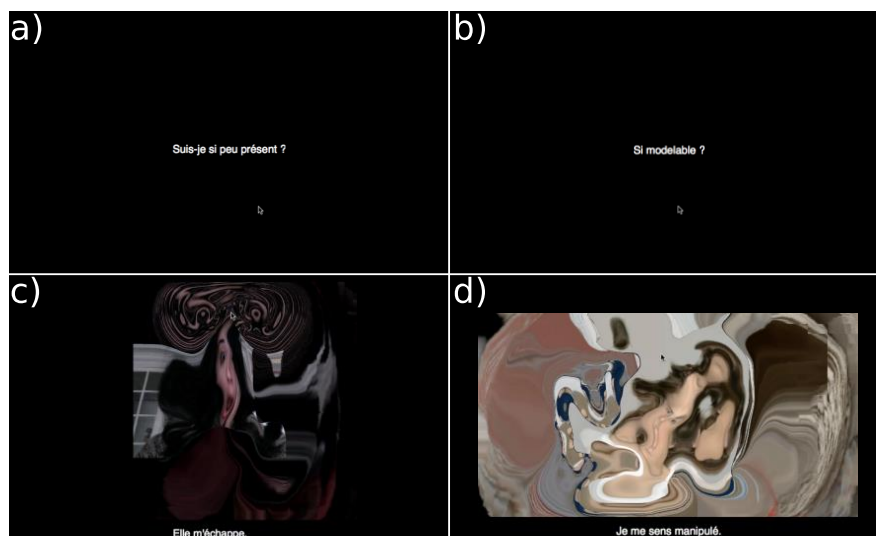
In terms of SUM, the linguistic texts, “*Suis-je si peu présent ? Si modelable ? Ma propre image semble me fuir.*”; they all appear on the screenic surface via the SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”); it is not until the reader mouses-over the linguistic text, “*Ma propre image semble me fuir*”, that the linguistic text falls down on the screen as it welcomes the linguistic text, “*Elle m'échappe*”. This linguistic text does not appear alone; it is accompanied by either the image of a young man<sup>33</sup>, or the image of the reader him/herself. It must be mentioned that this effect will vary depending on the start-up settings the reader has chosen at the beginning of the interactive narrative. There are two possible choices, either to allow the activation of the computer's webcam or not. The present analysis is based on the idea that the reader has

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<sup>33</sup> cf. JK Keller, Living My Life Faster (2014) 3:26 minutes. <http://jk-keller.com/daily-photo/> (this website is now unavailable).

previously activated the webcam; and, consequently, sees his/her own image on the screen.

As it has been shown, the effect of letters falling down on the screenic surface is quite recurring in *DP*. It was present in S2 when the linguistic text, “*Impossible de prononcer quelque chose de cohérent*” prepared the scene for a series of questions unveiling the homodiegetic narrator’s curiosity upon the woman’s personality. It appeared again in S2 when the linguistic text, “*Mot d’amour ou de rupture ?*”, prepared the scene for the appearance of the love letter or break up note. Therefore, as the falling down effect reappears in S5, “*Ma propre image semble me fuir*”; it can be underlined that the aesthetic parallelisms, in terms of SUM in the scenes, increase as the interactive narrative goes on.



**Figure 31.** Screen captures of S5 showing a) gestural memory, b) aesthetic parallelisms with S2, c) interfacial retroprojection, d) gestural expressionism, *DP*.

In the previous cases, the interactivity in the reading rhythm suddenly changes to welcome new visual arrangements of linguistic texts. In S5 specifically, the new visual arrangement is the reflection of the narrator’s image or reader’s image. That is, in S1, there are six linguistic texts sharing homophony, metamorphosis, and individual disappearance; in S2: there are eighteen rhythmic linguistic texts expanding and compressing to suggest two different

constructions of meaning; and, in S5: there is the image of the narrator or the reader him/herself ready to be artistically manipulated.

This moment of interactivity and manipulation can stand as an example of interfacial retroprojection because there is a metaphorical relationship between the interactive gesture, the activable media content (her/his self-reflection) and the activated media content (her/his self-reflection artistically modelled/manipulated) (Saemmer, 2008b) (Table 2). In other words, similarly to S1, it seems to me that a sort of **gestural expressionism** is created (cf. V.5.1). The reader can feel the power and freedom of the pointer in all directions to express his emotions, anxieties and yearnings (Figure 31c-d). It seems to me that the effect of the SUM in this scene (and certainly throughout the whole interactive narrative within *DP*) may stand as a brief but powerful example of T.S. Eliot's "objective correlative"<sup>34</sup>. As a part of an essay entitled "Hamlet" (1919) later re-edited as "Hamlet and his problems" (1921), Eliot (1921, p. 92) writes:

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is a way to find an "objective correlative": in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.

The distortion of form and the deployment of strong colours to convey a variety of emotions is depicted by the exaggeratedly executed SUM brushstrokes. There is an atmosphere of freedom

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<sup>34</sup> The term "objective correlative" was originally used in the 19th century by the painter Washington Allston in his lectures on art to suggest the relation between the mind and the external world. Washington Allston (born Nov. 5, 1779, Allston plantation, Brook Green Domain on Waccamaw River, S.C., U.S.—died July 9, 1843, Cambridgeport, Mass.), painter and author, commonly held to be the first important American Romantic painter. Allston is known for his experiments with dramatic subject matter and his use of light and atmospheric colour. Although his production was small, it shaped future American landscape painting by its dramatic portrayals of mood. Allston's work anticipated that of a line of American visionary painters including Albert Pinkham Ryder and Ralph Blakelock. "Washington Allston." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Washington-Allston>.

and creation evoked by the **gestural expressionism** of the SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris en laissant une trace-tracer*”), SUM (“*activer-faire un mouvement brusque et non itéré devant sa webcam*”), and the SUM (*gratter-déplacer sa souris de façon répétitive (gratter de façon linéaire (par exemple raboter de façon unidirectionnelle), touiller avec des courbes*); where the traits of iconicity, “*tracer*”, “*dessiner*”, “*mélanger des substances, de matières*”, are emphasised by the idea of the reader as a potential expressionist painter.

However, different to S1 where the landscape was made of infinite landscapes generated by the reader; or landscapes visited by the narrator throughout his life. In S5, the landscape to be modelled is the orography of the reader’s face; the landscape of his/her own reflection, to be precise. The reader can experience that s/he is painting her/his own self-portrait on the canvas-universe of the screen<sup>35</sup>. Besides, it stands as an example of a “kiné-gramme” since the reader experiences, “*le procédé qui donne potentiellement l'impression au lecteur de manipuler aussi l'objet ou le concept évoqués, et non pas seulement le mot*” (Saemmer, 2015, p. 146). The image portraits precisely what the SUM represents. That is to say, the feeling of manipulating the appearance of your own image on screen, and the feeling of your image (life) slipping through your fingers, “*Elle m'échappe. Je me sens manipulé.*”

Finally, this effect leads to a possible intertextuality by means of allusion between S1, “*Mais depuis un moment, j'ai des doutes. Comment avoir prise sur ce qui m'arrive ? Tout s'échappe.*” (my emphasis); and S5, “*Elle m'échappe. Je me sens manipulé.*” (my emphasis). In the first example, the reader’s presence is erased from the surface, as the pointer of the mouse disappears on the screen (the narrator cannot control the events in his life and experiences a *loss of grasp*); and in the second example, the interaction of the reader is emphasised by the free swirling and swaying of the pointer but still s/he cannot “clutch” his own reflecting self on the moving canvas, and therefore, experiences a *loss of grasp*, “*Elle*

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<sup>35</sup> cf. “The Scream” (1893) by Edvard Munch, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Edvard-Munch>. “Self-Portrait” (1971) and “Two Studies for Self-Portrait” (1977) by Francis Bacon, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Francis-Bacon>.

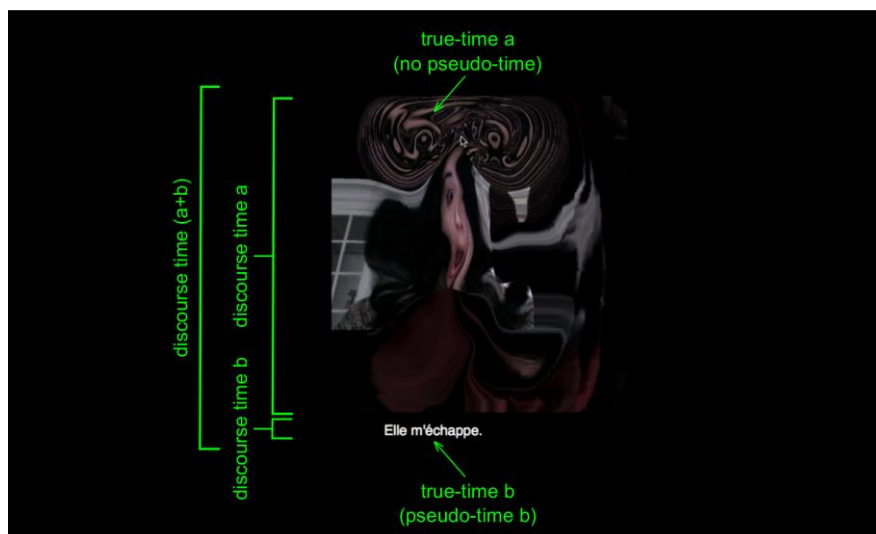
*m'échappe.*”, within a *loss of grasp*, “*Je me sens manipulé.*”. The scene closes as the SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”) mouses-over the linguistic text, “*Je me sens manipulé.*” vanishing at its pace the image of the reader. The scene closes in two different ways; either as the SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”) mouses-over the linguistic text, “*Je me sens manipulé.*” vanishing at its pace the image of the reader; or as the designated *system time* of the scene dissolves the image on the screen.

## 9.2 “*Les temps m'échappe et fuit*”

Similarly to scene number two, the first linguistic text (1 out of 5) that appears on the screenic surface, “*Suis-je si peu présent ?*”, keeps the one-line on the screen display pattern, which allows the reader to control her/his pace in the interactive narrative. As a consequence, through SUM the reader creates the *discourse time* and the *true time (screen time)* as s/he advances in the interactive narrative. Like in the previous scenes, the *pseudo-time* is equivalent to each single linguistic text that appears on the screenic surface. Interestingly, even after the image of the narrator (or the reader) appears on the upper part of the screen, the reader (still) continues to manipulate the *pseudo-time* (at the bottom of the screen).

It is important to underline that the *true time (screen time)* of the image does not depend on the *pseudo-time* of the linguistic texts. There is a *discourse time* temporal partition. However, it is necessary to have them both in order to create the *discourse time* of the scene (Figure 32). In this specific case, the *discourse time* of the scene has its own (one can say), combined *true time* (the *true time* of the video (or webcam); the *true time* of the *pseudo-time*; and the sum of both). This fact creates a very interesting temporal situation since the *discourse time* will be composed of two different and complex **meta-discourse times**. On the one hand, the one that corresponds to the *true time* of the video (or webcam) (there is no display of linguistic texts, and therefore there is an absence of *pseudo-time*); and, on the other hand, the one that corresponds to the *true time* of the video (or webcam) plus the *true time* of the linguistic texts (*pseudo-time*). It is important to consider at this

point, what are the implications in terms of aesthetics and temporality when inside the *discourse time*'s frame; there is a video (or webcam) that runs at a different time?



**Figure 32.** Screen capture of S5 showing reader's interaction and discourse time temporal partition, *DP*.

As noted earlier, at this point of the interactive narrative, the reader might have to choose between the manipulation of the narrator's image via SUM ("*mouvoir-survoler*"), creating what I have referred above as **gestural expressionism** (cf. V.10.1) (Figure 31c-d); or the manipulation of the *pseudo-time* at the bottom of the screen. In some cases, the reader can experience and manipulate both. To my view, an additional worth mentioning division of time is created. If the reader decides to experience *DP* without a webcam, a video of [1'44"] will run on the screen independently of the manipulation of the *pseudo-time*. Therefore, even though the reader has control of the *pseudo-time* s/he loses control of the *discourse time* (and *true time*) of the video. For the video will continue to run and will not stop until it is finished (*system time*). Interestingly, the video's creator (JK Keller) intended to show in 1'44" (1 minute 44 seconds) a time lapse of 8 years.

This goal was part of a project called, "Living my life faster", which consisted on taking a photo of him every day during 8 years to create the video (a total of approximately 2920 (365X8) photos).



The photos were taken first from 1998 until 2006, and then from 2006 to 2014. Considering that *DP* was created between 2009 and 2010, I assume that Bouchardon and Volckaert opted to use the first video (1998-2006). Unless in recent dates (2015-2016) they had decided to switch it to the second one (1998-2014); if that is the case, this fact would stand as a feature of *temporally evolving texts* following Koskimaa's (2010) categorization (cf. III.2.2.3).

On the other hand, if the reader decides to experience *DP* with a webcam her/his own image will be displayed on the screen in *current time*; for example, Paris, November 24, 2015, at 11:24:24. This intervention is independent of the manipulation of the *pseudo-time*. Therefore, the reader has control of the *pseudo-time* and s/he also controls the *discourse time* (and *true time*) of the webcam; for as noted above the intervention is in *real time*. I assumed that the time of free **gestural expressionism** given to the reader is equivalent to the total time of JK Keller's video, 1'44". The webcam will stream the image of the reader, and will not stop until the *system time* discontinues the intervention.



## 10. SCENE SIX: “*IL EST TEMPS DE REPRENDRE LE CONTRÔLE*”

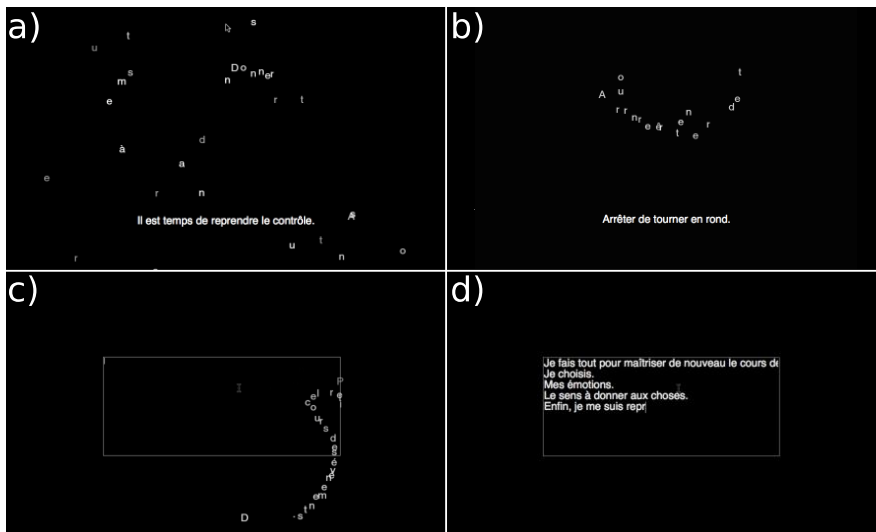
### 10.1 L’artifice des lettres

- (10) [Il est temps de reprendre le contrôle.] Retrouver une direction. Plier le cours des événements. Donner un sens à mes actions. Arrêter de tourner en rond. [Arrêter de tourner en rond.] Je fais tout pour maîtriser de nouveau le cours de ma vie. Je choisis. Mes émotions. Le sens à donner aux choses. Enfin, je me suis repris. Fin.

The last scene in *DP* begins as the linguistic text, “*Il est temps de reprendre le contrôle*” appears at the bottom of the screen. At this point of the interactive narrative there is an atmosphere of contemplation and low interaction. A few seconds later, the reader begins to mouse-over the screen in an exploratory quest using the SUM (“*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*”); consequently, individual letters begin to populate the screen surface. From his gestural memory (composed of body, mind and materiality), the reader remembers the effect of individual letters flying on the screen, the atmosphere becomes familiar. This effect immediately alludes to the moment when the narrator’s son *moving* text shattered in pieces in S4 (cf. V.8.1). In S6, the individual letters spark and expand on the screen as little floating ships without sense and direction. It seems as if the pointer of the mouse had a magnet; and as if the individual letters will follow it depending on the pointed path. I find that the first half of S6 is a complex metaphor about the creative unknowns of (digital) navigation. This metaphor is constructed by means of rhetorical figures, and the construction of meaning is based on the performativity of the verbs, “*Retrouver une direction, Plier le cours des événements, Donner un sens à mes actions, Arrêter de tourner en rond*” (my emphasis).

The linguistic text, “*Retrouver une direction*” is an example of kiné-gramme (Saemmer, 2015, p. 146), since the linguistic text portrays precisely what the SUM represents; that is to say, the linguistic text, “*Retrouver une direction*”, is constructed at the same time the

cursor of the mouse is pointing towards North, South, East or West on the seascape of the screen or the mindscape of the narrator. In a similar way, the linguistic text, “*Plier le cours des événements*” is textually gathered as the cursor of the mouse is creating linguistic events on the screenic surface (the appearance of each linguistic text can be considered an event on the surface). There are two potential readings; on the one hand, “*plier*” can be understood as the physical folding or bending of the events in the surface by means of the SUM (“*mouvoir-survoler*”) (gestural memory). It is important to underline that this does not exclusively refer to the events on S6 but to the events that the reader has experienced throughout her/his quest in *DP*. On the other hand, it may refer to the idea of taking control of the events in the narrator’s life, “to fold the course of the events” following her/his wishes and needs. In other words, it may be suggested that the narrator is struggling to *grasp* the digital helm of her/his own life.



**Figure 33.** Screen captures of S6 showing a) digital navigation-gestural enunciation, b) visual exaggeration (hyberbole), c) gestural memory, d) interfacial antagonism, *DP*.

In a similar way, the linguistic text, “*Donner un sens à mes actions*”, may refer to the actions of the reader on the seascapes of the screen; as if the digital work (“*l’œuvre doit quitter son créateur pour pouvoir vivre pleinement*”) (cf. V.8.1) would be telling the reader: have you understood all the actions (SUMs) you have

performed in order to construct the meaning of this work? This idea is accentuated as the next linguistic text appears into scene, “*Arrêter de tourner en rond*”. I find that a hyperbole is created at this moment by means of intensifying the linguistic text effect and appearance. Since the linguistic text in the bottom changes from “*Il est temps de reprendre le contrôle*” to “*Arrêter de tourner en rond*”; at the same time, a new linguistic text enunciating the same message, “*Arrêter de tourner en rond*”, appears on the screen (Figure 33b).

I assume that Bouchardon and Volckaert (2010) wanted to emphasise the fact that the homodiegetic narrator needs to stop moving around in circles concerning a specific idea, situation, or event in his life (events on the screen); and instead he must “act” upon it (them). However, this is mirrored by the interaction of the reader at play, since s/he would be inevitably tempted to go around in circles on the screenic surface, to “draw (infinite) pictures [∞∞∞] on the screenic surface of the sky” (cf. 88C for Wittgenstein (*to be played with the Left Hand*)) (cf. 3.2.1). This fact will surprisingly trigger at its pace a rainfall of linguistic texts at once, “*Retrouver une direction, Plier le cours des événements, Donner un sens à mes actions, Arrêter de tourner en rond*”. Consequently, this action will certainly create *limiting reading time* issues in the construction of meaning of the text, as it shall be shown in the next section (cf. V.10.2).

In terms of **gestural enunciation**, it must be pointed out that these phrases are triggered by the SUM (“*mouvoir-survoler*”). The interactive gesture changes to SUM (“*activer-appuyer sur une touche du clavier*”) as the interactive narrative approaches its “end”; the reader is tempted to type on a seductive blank text box that challengingly appears on the screenic surface. As the reader freely types her/his random thoughts, s/he realizes that they do not correspond to what appears on the screen, “*Je fais tout pour maîtriser de nouveau le cours de ma vie. Je choisis. Mes émotions. Le sens à donner aux choses. Enfin, je me suis repris...*”. This is an example of interfacial antagonism (Saemmer, 2008b) (Table 2) (Figure 33d) for the SUM (“*activer-appuyer*”) provokes the emergence of media contents (programmed text) contrary to the contents announced by the activable media (expected text typed by each visiting reader).

From a narrative point of view this precise moment is an example of *dénouement de l'intrigue* for it seems to be the culmination of the narrator's *loss of grasp*-journey through the land(mind)scapes of his life. To put it differently, a time of resolution condensed in a blinking cursor that is impatiently waiting for creation in a seductive blank text box. This effect can be enhanced by the idea of "ergodic intrigue" proposed by Aarseth (1995, p. 125) (cf. III.2.2.1); since the SUM ("*activer-appuyer sur une touche du clavier*") will unveil the *dénouement de l'intrigue* (linguistic texts) proposed by the authors but will fail to unveil the *dénouement de l'intrigue* (linguistic texts) proposed by the reader; creating a *loss of grasp* in the negotiation.

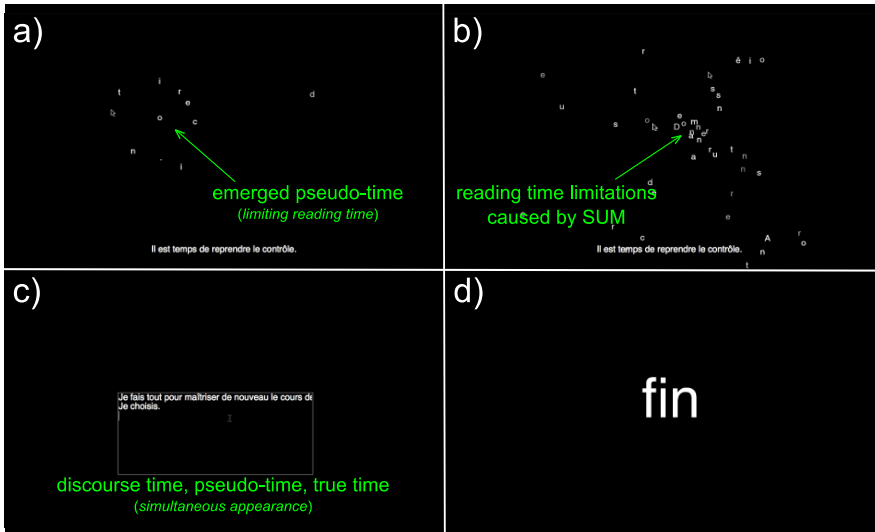
Therefore, though this is the closing scene of *DP*, which is clearly underlined by the final linguistic text, "*Fin*"; I find that the *dénouement* is ambiguous since as previously mentioned the reader is left in *loss of grasp* in terms of gestural manipulation (interfacial antagonism). In other words, the linguistic intervention in the culmination of the digital work is just a mirage. For this reason, it seems to me that *DP* presents a dynamic *dénouement de l'intrigue* calling for an opened ending since the tension and revelation of the ergodic intrigue will prevail on the reader until the last typing key (*sa dernière touche*). Lastly, I find that the reader's horizon of expectation is broken in sight, the reader feels detached one more time from the creation; and it is the creation itself that consequently, awakens ("*l'œuvre doit quitter son créateur pour pouvoir vivre pleinement*") (cf. V.8.1), and produces its own meta-figure, the figure of [dé] prise.

## 10.2 Time to Tell

In scene number six, the one line on the screen display pattern also finds its ending. The reader's pace in the interactive narrative is marked by the SUM ("*mouvoir-déplacer sa souris dans le plan, survoler*"). The *pseudo-time* is divided and displayed differently. Like the previous scenes, the *pseudo-time* is equivalent to each single linguistic text that appears on the screenic surface. Nevertheless, on this occasion, a sort of "emerged" *pseudo-time* comes into scene. As noted earlier, this is a perfect example of

*limiting reading time*; since as the reader mouses-over the screen, the phrases are formed from a cloud of letters depending on the direction of the pointer of the mouse (Figure 34b). Wittily, the “emerged” *pseudo-time* will not be arranged horizontally as the *pseudo-time* at the bottom of the screen. In this occasion, the “emerged” *pseudo-time* will be shown in a variety of shapes following the traces of the pointer’s direction (digital helm) (Figure 34a). Consequently, this effect will unquestionably trigger limitations in *reading time* (given, chosen, caused). For instance, the *reading time* of the “emerged” *pseudo-time* is “given” (that is, the time beyond the reader’s influence is given by the system).

Still, the reader creates the *discourse time* and the *true time* (*screen time*) as s/he explores the possibilities of the “emerged” *pseudo-time* on the screen. Interestingly, the reader will only be able to manipulate the *pseudo-time* at the bottom of the screen, “*Il est temps de reprendre le contrôle*”, if the “**emerged pseudo-time**” displays four linguistic texts successively, “*Retrouver une direction. Plier le cours des événements. Donner un sens à mes actions. Arrêter de tourner en rond*”. This creates a co-dependency between both *true times*. It is important to underline that the *true time* (*screen time*) of the *pseudo-time* found in the linguistic texts presents independent *reading times* from the *pseudo-time* at the bottom of the screen; which will create once again a temporal dimension partition.



**Figure 34.** Screen capture of S6 showing a) emerged pseudo-time, b) reading time limitations caused by SUM, c) discourse time, pseudo-time, true time (simultaneous appearance), d) fin, DP.

The *pseudo-time* of the last part of S6 also presents interesting features; as it creates the *discourse time*, the *true time* and the *pseudo-time* at the same time and in *real* time (Figure 34c). This is done via the SUM (*activer-appuyer sur une touche du clavier*). The reader is tempted to type her/his thoughts on the screen. However, as previously mentioned, the “ergodic intrigue” will unveil the *dénouement de l'intrigue* (linguistic texts) proposed by the authors but will fail to unveil the *dénouement de l'intrigue* (linguistic texts) proposed by the reader; creating a *loss of grasp* in the negotiation. Finally, in comparison to 88C where there are 88 or infinite attempts to exhaust an “end”; in DP the end is given by the *system time* and by the *illocutory (performative) force* of the linguistic text: “fin” (Figure 34d).



## 11. CONCLUSION

The analysis of *Déprise* implied to explore its paratextual presentation inside the *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature* (2012). The creation of the *AEEL* is a social and literary practice that aims at putting together a multilingual corpus of media products that have originated in different contexts. This action demands dealing with multiple times and spaces already included in the works, which clearly generates a process of recontextualization and resemiotization where digital works such as *Déprise (Loss of Grasp)* negotiate their literary identity. The fact that *DP (LG)* is archived and anthologized under the *illocutory force* of the peritext, *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature* (2012) stands as an initial literary characteristic because it suggests a publication criteria and a social and cultural delineation.

The paratextual discourse within the digital choreography of the *AEEL* presents mostly issues of digital paratextual temporality. The temporal confrontations between *peritexts* and *epitexts* accentuate aspects of absence and ephemerality that lead to complications concerning authorship and publisher's editing criteria. These temporal confrontations concern date variations among *prior* paratexts, *original* paratexts, and *posteriori* paratexts that consequently have an impact on *authorial* paratexts and *publisher's* paratexts. Issues of digital paratextual temporality highlight, on the one hand, the importance of relocating distant paratextual memories as primary traces of the works, and on the other hand, the challenge of spatial and temporal recontextualization processes in the composition of the *AEEL* or other digital compilations (*ELC2*).

In terms of paratextual negotiation, the main paratextual presentation of the digital works presents peritextual absences (e.g. name of the author) that may create authorial imprecision and reader's misinterpretation. The need for the factual paratextual message: *categorization* is another important issue in the creation of the *AEEL*. The problematic of genres in EL is an ongoing research subject that brings into focus (among other aspects) how digital works will be remembered, valued and archived. Bearing this in mind, a carefully constituted "keywords" section in the *AEEL* would have enhanced the reader's vocabulary and terminology

concerning EL. Likewise, in terms of genres, the fact of being categorized under a keywords criterion inside the *AEEL*, would immediately create, not only a *distant paratextual memory* of the works (*DP*), but also a future categorization reference for the readers.

Works of EL face new paratextual trials and conventions when included in larger digital compilations such as the *AEEL* and the *ELC2*. This generates what may be referred as the aesthetics of the paratextual discourse. In the *AEEL* this is shown through the following features: (1) techniques of presentation and pre-visualization, (2) previous classification and publication (relocating *distant paratextual memories*), (3) digital choreography challenges, (4) new *performative* paratexts (e.g. launch work), (5) new genres' categorization and manipulation, (6) novel inclusion of instructions and additional research materials, (7) diverse iconic representations, (8) dynamic labels, and (9) different accessing points through performative, informative and explorative hyperlinks. These paratextual trials and conventions are subject to change depending on the evolution and lability of the digital medium. Editing new textualities implies not only encountering new sensations but also confronting new approaches to study the versatility of paratextuality (as of now) in regards to the current digital media landscape.

*Déprise* (2010) is an example of how an electronic literary work can construct a lyric self by combining different artistic techniques. Throughout the scenes there is a dialogism of different fine arts that awakens not only the interior battles of the narrator but also those of the reader. These battles represent a convergence of voices featuring memory, emotion, love, and creation. The interactive discourse in *DP* is formed as Semiotic Units of Manipulation (SUMs) create media couplings by activating the variability of semiotic systems that compose the digital work. The act of enunciation within the interactive discourse of each scene is associated to specific SUMs. The lyric self is thus constructed through a process of **gestural enunciation** where different “*énoncés*” (SUMs) are composed of diverse materialities. In the complexity of the lyric discourse, these SUMs acquire different functionalities and are associated, as aforementioned, to specific kinds of voices: memory, love, nature, regret, parenthood, and silence. Throughout the scenes these

triggered voices develop a specific iconicity trait within the poetic frame of the work which evokes different artistic techniques.

In terms of literariness, intertextuality and polyphony are activated in the interactive discourse through **gestural enunciation**. Intertextuality is represented by allusions to different fine arts and literary quotations. There are allusions to filmic works (*Le Quai des Brumes*, 1938) (S2), to musical signs and sounds (the sharp sign #; the pound key #) (S1); and to literary works (Barthes, “The Death of the Author”, 1967) (S4). Likewise, there are allusions in-between the scenes by *reprise* of phrases, “*Tout s’échappe*”, (S1); “*Elle m’échappe*”, (S5); and curiously, there are literary allusions between works of EL themselves that are triggered by associated SUMs. This creates a **gestural manipulation memory** and a flow of intertextuality among electronic literary works. In *DP* the referred work is a creation by the same author(s) (S4) *Détournement* (2007) and the alluded work is a creation by artist researcher María Mencía entitled *Transient Self-Portrait* (2012).

Literary quotations are represented by two direct references (S3). These literary references are taken from a fairy tale, “Le Prince Marcassin” (1697-98), and a piece of theatre, *L’Affranchie: Comédie en trois actes* (1898). Both literary references enhance aspects of characterization and literariness in the narrative because they are associated to a specific character, the narrator’s wife (S3). Likewise, they underline the appearance of new voices and embedded stories in the interactive discourse. The use of literary quotations to present the woman’s and the son’s characterization through gestural manipulation (interactive letters and messages), stands as an example of **indirect characterization techniques** in EL. A further look at how characters are constructed in works of EL will show the influence of the reader in shaping the characters’ personality through gestural manipulation in which collaborative writing may play an important role.

In terms of polyphony, a link to enunciation theories, specifically to the propositions on enunciative polyphony (Ducrot, 1984) is found in the interactive discourse. In S3 a total of ten voices are presented by means of SUMs, this example underlines such association between enunciation theories and the rhetoric of manipulation as it enables new interpretations of literariness based on such theoretical

intersections. In other words, new literary forms where the lyric self is amid thoughts, emotions and feelings composed of diverse materialities. Therefore, the action of triggering more than one “*énoncé*” by means of different SUMs in a digital context, whose diverse materialities host inside split subjects and, consequently, multiple voices (utterances) may be referred as **gestural enunciative polyphony** (S3).

Interfacial media figures help to communicate the poetic sensations that the power of composition and contemplation evoke in the work. Interfacial neantism highlights detachment and *loss of grasp* through the scenes of *DP*. It creates contrast with the ideas of power, freedom and possession (S1); at the same time, it highlights resistance to manipulation (S4). Interfacial antagonism (S6) emphasises defiance, detachment and ergodic intrigue. Both figures share the idea of contradiction and friction in the screenic surface, the former by total absence of aesthetic effects and the latter by surprising appearance of opposite effects. This mirrored contradiction is a key element to craft not only the construction of meaning by hand; but also, to experience the digital work’s *loss of grasp* at hand. Interfacial randomization is associated to the ephemerality, spontaneity, and distortion of conversations; and therefore, strictly linked to the creation of **gestural enunciation**. Interfacial retroprojection is quite recurring and it generates interesting associations to painting. I have referred to these sensations as **gestural expressionism** (S1, S5) and **gestural impressionism** (S2); these propositions that are genuinely generated by the interactive discourse underline the poeticity of colour and the plasticity of language.

Interestingly, examples of interfacial randomization are found inside interfacial retroprojections. This effect is found twice (S2, S4), it seems to me that in both cases the metaphorical relationships go further. In S2 their textuality is composed of random *énoncés* (linguistic texts) that aid to portray **gestural impressionism**; this creative process evokes the figure of manipulation, kiné-gramme. In S4 the textuality is also composed of random *énoncés* (linguistic texts) but this time only one *énoncé* triggers the kiné-gramme; that is, the kiné-gramme is inside the *énoncé* and not evoked by it. Comparably, in S1 and S5 the textuality (plasticity of colour) that composes the interfacial retroprojection hosts the same inside figure

of manipulation, kiné-gramme; but this time within the idea of gestural expressionism, and not as part of a specific randomization process. Therefore, it can be suggested that for **gestural expressionism** (*sensation of loss of grasp through the plasticity of colour*) and **gestural impressionism** (*unveiling of linguistic texts through SUMs brushstrokes*) to occur, an interfacial retroprojection and a kiné-gramme must precede. These findings may stand as a primary source for the future creation of a visual literacy of EL works.

Due to the dynamic nature of the text, it has been shown that the appearance of new aspects and dimensions of time are frequently associated to gestural manipulation, **gestural enunciation**, and most recently, to the association of EL to different fine arts. The high presence of *ergodic time* (temporal dynamics) throughout the narrative enables the reader to control *reading time*, and therefore, allows her/him to manipulate *discourse time*, *true time*, and [at times], also *pseudo-time* (S3) (S6). The only exception is found when syncretic assembling creates the opposite effect, and *system time* controls *reading time* (given) (S4).

The possibility to control the pace of *discourse time* can be experienced in AS, S1, S2, S3, S5, S6; and partially in S4, due to the presence of *static time*. Another interesting characteristic is the possibility to choose the *story time* of the narrative through gestural manipulation (SUMs) (S2). As noted before, the suggestion to include different *story time* possibilities would create a complex relationship between *discourse time* and *story time* in the interactive discourse. This shows that temporal dynamics in EL can be creatively affected by very simple or elaborated means.

The novelty to have a *discourse time* that is composed of two meta-*discourse times* is an example of new forms of literariness through temporal dynamics. Even though this feature was only found in S5, it stands as an example of the theoretical complexity that authorial intrusion (S5) (S6) (in *real time*) may cause not only in *DP*, but also in other digital works. Interestingly, this new feature triggers two different *true times* (S5); one depending on a dynamic *system time* and the other one depending on a static *system time*. Likewise, SUM produce “ergodic limitations” which craft and alter time in the narrative discourse (reading speed, duration, frequency). In *DP*

these limitations consequently produce new forms of literariness through temporal dynamics: prolonged *discourse time* (S1) (**interfacial anamnesis**); *discourse time* (acceleration) (*locuteur angélique*, S2); *discourse time* (acceleration) (limiting reading time) (S2); *discourse time* (deceleration) (S2); *story time* (acceleration) (limiting *reading time*) (S3); *discourse time* and *reading time* (paused) (S3); “emerged” *pseudo-time* (limiting *reading time*) (S6); and simultaneous time appearances (*discourse time*, *pseudo-time*, *true time*) (S6).

As *discourse time* acceleration and deceleration (caused) (S2) are mostly associated to gestural manipulation; therefore, **gestural enunciation** acceleration and deceleration may occur in the work. The aesthetic purposes that these “ergodic limitations” produce must be highlighted. For instance, on the one hand, acceleration and deceleration of *discourse time* aid to create, via two different SUMs, the experience of **gestural impressionism** (S2). And on the other hand, “ergodic limitations” inside gestural manipulation can produce such time distortions as, **prolonged *discourse time*** (interfacial anamnesis), which lead to **gestural expressionism** (S1); as well as meta-*true time* and absence of *pseudo-time* (S5). All these features stand as theoretical challenges and complexities in the digital interactive discourse of *DP* that can be further examined when exploring other digital works.

The different representations of *pseudo-time* as a product of **gestural enunciation**, challenge the screenic surface and trigger different kinds of *pseudo-time*’s aesthetic visualizations; such as, emerged *pseudo-time* (S4) (S6); hidden (veiled) *pseudo-time* (S2) (S4) (interfacial randomization); deformed *pseudo-time* (S4); and transformed *pseudo-time* (S2) (S4) (interfacial randomization). As it can be observed, most of these *pseudo-time*’s aesthetic visualizations produce limiting *reading time* at their moment of appearance.

Lastly, the association between temporal dynamic theories and rhetoric of manipulation is shown at different levels. *Delaying reading time* is an example of how aesthetical effects lead to the recurring **paratextual techniques of loading time** (AS, S1), which unveils different temporalities through SUMs (e.g. hidden *pseudo-time*). Furthermore, the proposition, **interfacial randomization**

**flashbacks** (S1) is an example of how theories intersect to portray the aesthetic value of the events that occur in the screenic surface. This proposition can be referred as what I propose to call “time interfacial media figures” (e.g. interfacial anamnesis) for it not only evokes a surprising effect on the reader but also affects the narrative time of the interactive discourse.





## CHAPTER VI. METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION AND HYBRID TERMINOLOGY TO THE FIELD OF ELECTRONIC LITERATURE

### 1. AN APPROACH TO RHETORICAL ENUNCIATION AND TEMPORALITY (AReT)

As a closing proposition and before presenting the general conclusions, I would like to offer a methodological contribution to the field of EL that can be used to study the conditions and patterns of appearance in which new forms of literariness materialize and perform in certain works of EL<sup>1</sup>. I have decided to call this methodology of interpretation: *An Approach to Rhetorical enunciation and Temporality* (AReT). My proposition centres on four specific points: (1) the diversity of enunciative variations in terms of intertextuality and polyphony within the internal discourse space of the works; (2) the mingling between enunciative variations and tropological potential of couplings between text, movement and manipulation; (3) the merging between paratextual messages and temporal reorganizations within the works' complex narrative practices; and (4) the mingling between temporal reorganizations and tropological potentials of couplings between text, movement, and manipulation.

The proposed methodology of interpretation (AReT) is composed of the following points:

1. To describe the general and individual paratextual presentations (peritexts and epitexts) of the electronic literary work in the selected digital compilation (if belonging to one), e.g. name, year, editorial house, research group, university, pre-visualization screenshots, characteristics of the enunciative device, required program or software installation, brief description of the general theme of the work;

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<sup>1</sup> It must be underlined that my analyses were based on *Flash* software creations.

2. To look closely at the work's "antechamber" (preface) in search for instructions and other anticipating paratextual voices that the author may have left veiled to guide the reader in her/his journey. The spatial representation of the work's "antechamber" is the reader's first step (aesthetic engagement) of interaction and negotiation with the discourse space of the digital work;
3. To describe the reading path(s) when necessary; sometimes the reader will experience the possibility to explore a diversity of reading paths in a single work (linearity and nonlinearity); to evaluate how the different architectures of the reading paths affect the construction of meaning;
4. The text fluidity and variability on the screen (*texte-à-voir*) occasionally limits the apprehension of the linguistic text; therefore, the first step is to locate the text. For such endeavour, it is necessary to make a transcription of the oral text and written linguistic text to better analyse *some aspects* of the enunciative, rhetoric, and temporal imaginaries of the discourse space.
5. To apply to the obtained transcriptions specific subjects belonging to enunciative variations in terms of intertextuality and polyphony; as well as to search for examples of new concepts derived from the mingling between enunciative variations and tropological potential of couplings between text, movement and manipulation;
  - a. To search and evaluate the appearance of occasional *locuteurs angéliques* (Maingueneau, 2014a), different types of narrators, and different narrative levels (embedded narratives) (Genette, 1997b) throughout the discourse space of the digital work;
  - b. To explore examples of intertextuality (allusions, quotations, plagiarism) (Genette, 1997a), within the digital work; these examples may come from inside and outside sources through a process of intermediality; to explore intertextuality manifestations among works from the same author,

or intertextuality manifestations amongst different electronic literary works;

- c. To search for examples of (gestural) intertextual anamnesis, and (gestural) polyphonic anamnesis; to examine how they become meaningful in relation to memory, spatiality, temporality, ephemerality, memorization, and *digital madeleines*;
  - d. To search for examples of enunciative polyphony (Ducrot, 1984) in poetic, narratological, and dialogical passages of the works; as well as to explore its further relation to tropological potential of couplings between text, movement and manipulation;
  - e. To explore examples of gestural enunciative polyphony, that is, by establishing a relationship between gestural enunciation produced by SUM and the number and action of such triggered voices;
  - f. To look for examples of characterization techniques (direct or indirect) evoked through gestural enunciation and produced by SUM or other recurring figures (e.g. interfacial retroprojection);
6. To examine the level of interaction and manipulation in relation to multimodal and multimedia emerging contents; this step may require to make print screens, or record a video of your interactivity on the screenic surface;
- a. To evaluate the five different levels of gestural manipulation: i) gesteme, ii) acteme, iii) semiotic unit of manipulation (SUM), iv) media coupling, v) interactive discourse (Bouchardon, 2011, 2014a);
  - b. To evaluate the appearance of temporal semiotic units (TSU); and figures of animation;
    - i. e.g. Ciné-gramme, emergence and eclipse, transpositions, catachretic animation effects,

- animated sporulation, kinetic allegory, transfiguration (Saemmer, 2010a);
- ii. animated hyperbole;
- c. To evaluate the use of semiotic units of manipulation (SUM) (gestural enunciation); and figures of manipulation (interfacial media figures);
    - i. E.g. Kiné-gramme, interfacial retroprojection, interfacial neantism, interfacial incubation, interfacial involution, interfacial sporulation, interfacial pleonasm, interfacial randomization, interfacial antagonism (Saemmer, 2008b);
    - ii. interfacial anamnesis, interfacial anaphora;
7. To examine situations in which the literary through interactive and multimodal practices establishes strong liaisons between EL and other fine arts such as film, opera and painting;
- a. To search for examples of gestural impressionism (SUM “*activer-presser*; *gratter-déplacer*”) (interfacial retroprojection + kiné-gramme) (linguistic text);
  - b. To look for examples of gestural expressionism (“*mouvoir-déplacer*; *gratter-déplacer*”) (interfacial retroprojection + kiné-gramme) (plasticity of colour);
8. To examine specific examples of temporal dynamics and temporal manipulation in narrative digital texts by exploring (1) the temporal possibilities in programmed texts and (2) the temporal levels for cybertexts with narrative content (Eskelinen, 2012; Eskelinen & Koskimaa, 2001; Koskimaa, 2010a); as well as to search for examples of new concepts derived from the mingling between temporal reorganizations and tropological potentials of couplings between text, movement, and manipulation;

- a. Limiting reading time, delaying reading time, limiting the reading opportunities, temporally evolving texts;
  - b. User time, discourse time (pseudo-time and true time), story time, system time;
    - i. To search for examples of syncretic assembling showing *system time* controlling *reading time*; to search for examples of meta-discourse times (showing the merging of dynamic *system time* and static *system time*);
    - ii. To look for examples of prolonged *discourse time* (interfacial anamnesis) (time stored in visual forms); *discourse/story time* (acceleration/deceleration);
    - iii. To search for examples of different aesthetic visualizations of *pseudo-time*: emerged *pseudo-time*, hidden (veiled) *pseudo-time*, deformed *pseudo-time*, and transformed *pseudo-time*;
  - c. To search for examples of time interfacial media figures: interfacial randomization flashbacks/retrospections (interfacial randomization + linguistic texts foretelling events in the story); interfacial randomization forwards/anticipations (interfacial randomization + linguistic texts anticipating events in the story);
9. To look closely at the merging between paratextual messages and temporal reorganizations within the complex narrative practices of digital works;
- a. To look for examples of paratextual techniques of loading time (intertextuality via allusions or quotations, instructions + *loading time/system time*);
  - b. To search for examples of peritextual interfacial involution (interfacial involution + re-appearance of titles or subtitles);

10. To evaluate from the perspective of AReT the various degrees of literary elements through manifestations of hybrid terminology based on aspects of enunciative variations, tropological potentials of couplings between text, movement and manipulation, and temporal reorganizations within the complex narrative practices of digital works.

### Advantages

1. AReT is a starting point for those interested in examining enunciative variations through digital rhetoric practices (rhetoric of manipulation and rhetoric of reception);
2. AReT can inspire further studies on enactment of voices in works of EL, which can help to the creation of a categorization of voices associated to the interfacial media figures from which they emerge;
3. AReT can help to understand how characters are constructed in works of EL, the intermingling of theories sheds light on direct and indirect characterization techniques not yet explored in EL theories;
4. AReT can be used to further investigate the relationship between figures of animation, figures of manipulation and temporal reorganizations (eg. time interfacial media figures).

### Constraints

1. Due to the versatility of the digital environment, AReT should be expanded and adjusted parallel not only to the ongoing production of works of EL (variety of genres), but also to the variety of the reading devices in which they are read;
2. AReT is based on the multimedia event displayed on the screen (*texte-à-voir*). However, I am aware that in the encoded data (*texte-auteur*) literariness could be present in different ways or could acquire different natures, which can be an interesting and promising future research trajectory;

3. I am aware that AReT centres on enunciation, rhetoric, and temporality; however, incorporating analytical frameworks from other fields such as music, communication, and film studies could enrich its transdisciplinarity.





## 2. HYBRID TERMINOLOGY ON AReT

The couplings of different theoretical approaches based on DA, LT and EL have not only enhanced the results of the analyses, but also, as aforementioned, have called for the creation of the following hybrid terminology:

1. Gestural enunciation describes enunciation variations triggered by semiotic units of manipulation (SUM) within the interactive discourse of the works (88C; DP);
2. Gestural enunciative polyphony can be defined as a variation of gestural enunciation, where more than one “*énoncé*” is triggered by means of SUM in a digital context, whose diverse materialities host inside split subjects and, consequently, multiple voices (utterances) (88C: UMI; DP: S3);
3. Interfacial anamnesis occurs when the interactive gesture provokes an effect of strong recollection or remembrance through the emergence of new or previously seen media contents (DP: S1);
4. Interfacial anaphora occurs when the interactive gesture, supposed to provoke the emergence of a single image, inevitably provokes the repetition of the same image or a group of identical images; the interactor is left with a sense of visual embedment
5. (Gestural) intertextual anamnesis happens when the flow of memory is tied to semiotic modes that via temporal semiotic units (TSU) or semiotic units of manipulation (SUM) bring quotations or allusions from other contexts into play (88C: CAS, UMI, HYA);
6. (Gestural) polyphonic anamnesis which occurs when the flow of memory is tied to semiotic modes that via TSU or SUM triggered multiple voices (utterances) (88C: CAS, HYA);

7. Gestural impressionism happens when certain SUM e.g. “*activer-presser; gratter-déplacer*” combine with a kinégramme and an interfacial retroprojection to produce brushstrokes of different materialities (e.g. linguistic text) (*DP: S2*);
8. Gestural expressionism occurs when certain SUM e.g. “*mouvoir-déplacer; gratter-déplacer*” combine with a kinégramme and an interfacial retroprojection to produce brushstrokes of different materialities (e.g. plasticity of colour) (*DP: S1, S5*);
9. Indirect characterization techniques are used to engage readers in unveiling their characters’ personality through diverse techniques of gestural enunciation (*DP: S2, S3*);
10. Paratextual techniques of loading time appear as pauses governed by mimetic aesthetics as new data is loading on the screenic surface, the core of the effect is to parallel show instructions, allusions and quotations of the work itself (*88C: UMI, HYA; DP: AS, S1*);
11. Peritextual interfacial involution is used for the visual re-appearance of titles, subtitles, and prefaces throughout the work via interfacial involution (*88C: UMI*);
12. Interfacial randomization flashbacks/retrospections are a combination of interfacial media figure randomization and temporal reorganizations in the work that recall earlier events in the story (*DP: S1*);
13. Interfacial randomization forwards/anticipations are a combination of the interfacial media figure randomization and temporal reorganizations in the work that anticipate events in the story;
14. Meta-discourse times happens when dynamic *system time* and static *system time* merge into composed *discourse times* with a variety of *pseudo-times* and *true times* reorganizations (*88C: HYA; DP: S5*);

15. Aesthetic visualizations of *pseudo-time* happen when *pseudo-time* reshapes itself into different forms of visualization and possibilities of representation;
- a. emerged *pseudo-time* occurs when a SUM triggers linguistic text on the screening surface;
  - b. hidden (veiled) *pseudo-time* is the linguistic text waiting under another semiotic mode to be triggered by a SUM;
  - c. deformed *pseudo-time* occurs when the visualization of the emerged pseudo-time is altered by a SUM but goes back to its original state;
  - d. transformed *pseudo-time* occurs when the visualization of the emerged pseudo-time is altered by a SUM and reshapes to a new linguistic text (*DP*: S4, S6).



## CHAPTER VII. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH TRAJECTORIES

### 1. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

In the present thesis, I have focused on studying the possible ways in which literariness is depicted in two contemporary works of EL, as well as on developing a transdisciplinary research methodology to study its potential manifestations. For my interests, I have chosen to apply a methodology of interpretation that brings together theories coming from Discourse Analysis (DA), Literary Theory (LT), and Electronic Literature (EL) itself. The analyses show that the merging of theories has produced, on the one hand, a fruitful dialogue between apparently distant disciplines such as EL and DA; and, on the other hand, it has opened new exchanges between EL, LT, and different fine arts.

I have examined two electronic literary works: *88 Constellations for Wittgenstein (to be played with the Left Hand)* (88C) (2008) by David Clark, and *Déprise (DP)* (2010) by Serge Bouchardon and Vincent Volckaert. The works present different levels of interaction and manipulation that play decisive roles in their construction of meaning. 88C and DP belong to two different digital compilations: *Electronic Literature Collection Volume Two*, 2011; *ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature*, 2012. The results of the analyses have enabled the creation of a transdisciplinary methodological contribution called “An Approach to Rhetorical enunciation and Temporality” (AReT), as well as the proposition of new hybrid terminology. Both propositions can be further used to better describe the ways in which literariness materialises and performs in works of EL.

I have observed that the possible manifestations of the literary in the multimedia event of the works (*texte-à-voir*) can be explored through the intermingling of three distinct approaches: (1) enunciative variations, (2) tropological potential of couplings between text, movement and manipulation, and (3) temporal reorganizations within the works’ complex narrative practices. The

applicability of these approaches shows that their intersection opens a new discursive space of creation and negotiation where new forms of literariness acquire diverse digitally-born natures.

Enunciative-discursive oriented theories coming from DA have proven to be a good theoretical tool to study the aesthetic organization of voices in the discourse space of digital works. I have found a strong connexion between the enactment and complexity of their enunciative composition and the digital rhetoric structures by which polyphony and intertextuality are constructed. Likewise, I have studied the concept of “*énoncé*” (the product of the act of enunciation) from the perspective of DA, and in a parallel way, from the perspective of EL. Following the idea that the action of the reader is considered as an enunciation of gestures (Bouchardon, 2011), I have observed that in addition to being perceived as an act of enunciation, gestural manipulation: *opens the space of enunciation*. In other words, it is within each gestural action that a wide array of multi-materiality “*énoncés*” is triggered in the multimedia event (*texte-à-voir*).

This idea suggests a process of gestural enunciation in the construction of meaning of works of EL, where the act of producing “*énoncés*” (e.g. linguistic text, image, sound, video) via interaction and manipulation generates a *mise en scène énonciative* of challenging meanings, where figures of animation (TSU) and figures of manipulation (SUM) play an important role. It seems to me that the degree of integration between DA and EL maximizes its complexity at this meeting point since to form figures of animation and figures of manipulation such triggered voices ought to acquire specific iconicity traits within the poetic frame of the works.

This action consequently creates a new discursive space, where the literary finds the environment to emerge into new forms (e.g. catachretic animation effects, 88C: CAS; gestural enunciative polyphony, DP: S3; interfacial randomization and kiné-gramme, DP: S4). Additionally, the study of these voices may lead to a first categorization based on how the diverse materiality within each “*énoncé*” affects the conditions of appearance and performativity of the different enunciators in the discourse space. For instance, in 88C: CAS, the condition of appearance is via a catachretic animation effect that triggers intertextual anamnesis; in DP: S3, the

condition of appearance is via interfacial retroprojection that triggers gestural enunciative polyphony.

Furthermore, I have observed that the literary potentialities of 88C and *DP* find a great percentage of their polyphony and intertextuality traces in printed-based literary sources (88C: CAS, HYA, UMI; *DP*: S3, S4), filmic works (88C: HYA; *DP*: S2), theatre plays and productions (*DP*: S3), and classical music or works of opera (88C; *DP*: S3). Though the aesthetic representation of these literary potentialities is never linear, and differs from one electronic literary work to another, due to different levels of interaction and manipulation, it can be implied that during the hyperphonic process of creation the tendency (authorial intention) to find inspiration in different fine arts is highly present. The voices (enunciators) behind the experimental hyperphonic practices of works of EL linguistically battle for signification as they traverse the screen at the rhythm of our fingertips.

This implies a blend of arts that produces a blend of senses. A reverse process of expression where the *reconfiguration* of the literary begins to take different shapes through remediation, intermediality, and gestural manipulation (figures of animation and figures of manipulation). I consider that even though composition meets textuality in the digital environment what is evoked by it in terms of human creativity and powerful emotion surpasses the medium. The analyses suggest that at times the literary potentialities found in the works ingeniously test the boundaries of EL itself.

The analysis of figures of animation and figures of manipulation within the interactive discourse of the works has proven to be an effective way to locate and study new emerging forms of literariness. As each figure requires specific conditions of appearance at a digital rhetoric level so does each literary aspect at a literary level. Therefore, the light of research is focused on how the association is made between the original purpose of a figure and the way in which the literary is evoked and transmitted. It seems to me that it is in such cases where examples of new literariness are truly produced since the process of association between figures and literariness encompasses various significations and associations that emerge at different levels of study: interaction, manipulation, rhetoric, enunciation, and temporality.

For instance, (1) in *88C*: CAS, the figures: animated sporulation and intertextual anamnesis induce the literariness effect of multi pop-up intertextuality and enunciative polyphony through the varied appearances of the letter “W”; (2) in *DP*: S1, the figure interfacial randomization flashbacks triggers temporal reorganizations within the narrative discourse by recalling earlier events in the story (flashbacks) through a random process of creation; (3) in *DP*: S2, the figure interfacial retroprojection provokes the appearance of linguistic texts as dialogic impressionism (gestural impressionism) that later develops into a potential characterization technique in works of EL. Thus, if the purpose of the figure is to poetically destabilize the reader’s expectations through the manipulation of semiotic forms, then the purpose of the literary traces hidden within the figures, is to aesthetically engage the reader within a work that implies to decode the literary through interactive and multimodal reading practices, which will not only poetically destabilize the reader’s expectations but also add poetic consistency, flexure and texture to the layers of the work.

Interestingly, the analyses show that through such interactive and multimodal reading practices, different fine arts such as music, film, opera, and painting establish strong liaisons with electronic literary works (*88C*: CAS, UMI, HYA; *DP*: S1, S2, S3, S5). The reverse process of expression that is produced owing to a continuous blend of arts and blend of senses calls for the creation of specific figures for its description (e.g. interfacial retroprojection: gestural impressionism; interfacial retroprojection: gestural expressionism). This fact emphasises that the relationship between EL and different fine arts is a noteworthy subject that can be further developed in future investigations.

The examination of temporal dimensions has opened different possibilities to test and expand concepts of literary narratology in *88C* and *DP*. The analyses have demonstrated that new types of relation among temporal dimensions, enunciative variations, tropological potentials, and paratextuality are possible. The representation of events and the diverse aesthetic techniques in which the narrative discourse is constructed has opened new ways to manipulate temporal levels through SUM. For instance, figures of animation and figures of manipulation allow not only to add but also change the course of events in the *story time* and *discourse time*



of the works. This is possible by the inclusion of linguistic texts (*pseudo-time*) (88C: UMI, CAS; DP: S6), or more complex structures, such as sounds or videos (88C: HYA; DP: S5). These additions produce two effects; on the one hand, they extend *discourse time* and *reading time*; and, on the other hand, they are an example of the unpredictable dynamism of authorial intrusion.

The alteration of temporal levels through SUM underlines the aesthetic purposes of ergodic limitations by calling for the creation of new concepts to express these temporal reorganizations. The analyses have enabled the creation of the following propositions: prolonged *discourse time*, interfacial randomization flashbacks, interfacial anamnesis, *discourse time* acceleration and deceleration, *meta-discourse time* (DP: S1, S2, S3, S5). Additionally, figures of animation have produced the storage of (historical and fictional) time through poetic forms (88C: CAS) (e.g. WWI). It seems to me that this is truly significant since if, as abovementioned, temporality is one of the components in the process of association between figures and literariness; therefore, these findings are a starting point for the array of relations that temporal reorganizations can establish with such digital rhetoric structures. Consequently, this fact will certainly suggest the creation of *time interfacial media figures* in digital works.

Temporal dynamics has likewise underlined the unexplored questions of the way in which electronic literary works end in the multimedia event (*texte-à-voir*). In 88C there is an exhaustive ending as *system time* allows the reader to extend *reading time* for as long as s/he decides to time travel in between constellations. In DP, though the work ends in S6, the extended ending possibilities can be seen through prolonged *discourse time* in the individual scenes, more than in the work in its totality. A good example is found in S1 where the reader time travels throughout the “*magnifiques paysages*” of the screenic surface via interfacial anamnesis. Moreover, temporal reorganizations within the narrative discourse manifest in theoretically different ways by creating complex *meta-discourse times* (DP: S5), as well as by generating new artistic and literary creative spaces within the *user time* and the *reading time* of the *figures*. For instance, paratextual techniques of loading time are an example of unexpected emerging literariness (intertextuality and *story time*). These techniques are possible due to

the screenic delay of *reading time* and the unpredictable shifting sands of the lability of digital works.

Works of EL are an example of how various forms of literary practice are being used to portray humanity modes of expression and artistic sensitivity. The problematic of genres in EL is an ongoing research subject that intensifies as works experience diverse reverse processes of expression, where the delineation between one genre and the other is subtle and fragile. This fact causes the nature and identity of the works to change not necessarily at the same speed, as the field can theorize their categorization. In both works, *88C* and *DP*, I have established different contracts of literary communication that have allowed me to construct interpretative bonds through a fruitful blend of artistic connexions and awakening senses. This is not to suggest that by using AReT all the works' depths have been explored in my analyses, as I am aware further studies will be needed to assess if the works possess divergent interconnecting degrees of literariness at different theoretical, material, and technical gradations. However, I consider that both works have constructed in unique ways what constitutes their literary style.

For instance, *88C* can be read as a metaphysical reflexion that artistically engages readers to grasp and reformulate Wittgenstein's philosophical concepts through a glimpse, a gesture, or a memory. If philosophy shapes, invents, and creates concepts about human experience with the world; therefore, in *88C* the complexity of drawing a universe of philosophy where both concepts: universe and philosophy are limitless in interpretation, accentuates the recreation and re-invention of traditional philosophical concepts through interactive and multimodal practices. The literary legacy of *88C* can be interpreted as a state-of-the-art proposition to revisit and rediscover philosophy through digital rhetoric practices where such concepts as materiality, aesthetics, and poetics open new spaces of interpretation. This may suggest that such digital rhetoric practices can be applied to other philosophical investigations (e.g. Kant, Nietzsche, Sartre). It seems to me that this proposition will represent an attempt to test the future paths and creative unknowns of EL, which as it can be observed nowadays, will continue to nourish from the insights of different arts and sciences.

Following this stream of thought, *DP* can be read as an interactive narrative of arts, where the rich intersection of human forms of expression acquires an aesthetic power that mirrors and awakens the philosophy of the self not only on its readers but also on the work itself. At times the electronic literary work draws its own self-portrait through self-referential tropes that are triggered by gestural manipulation (e.g. meta-figure of [dé] prise). Throughout the scenes, the events and characters in *DP* construct new ways to approach self-experience through two lights: born-digital experience and born-lyric experience. Resembling 88C, where each constellation is represented as a musical score of philosophical thoughts and intermedial imaginaries, in *DP* each scene is represented as a played-string of artistic and literary sensibility. If EL is a field where the pleasure of reading implies experimental creativity, exploration, and contemplation; thenceforth, in *DP*, the art of touching the ephemerality of love, the power of emotional expression, the pursuit of parenthood, the twists of language, and the labyrinths and mirages of creation itself, reinforces the ever-present endeavour to understand our existence by remixing and *transfiguring* the different media that surrounds us.



## 2. FUTURE RESEARCH TRAJECTORIES

As a first proposition, further research of the present thesis should aim at applying the proposed methodological contribution, *An Approach to Rhetorical enunciation and Temporality* (AReT) to other international and multilingual works of EL that present similar characteristics to the selected corpus (i.e. created particularly but not exclusively in Adobe's Flash; having high levels of interactivity and manipulation). This would contribute to test the viability of the proposed methodology in different works and it would certainly help to find answers to its constraints. I am specifically interested in examining the cultural distinctive features of Latin American works of EL. I consider that their discursive space hosts veiled voices of history, identity, and folklore that are waiting to be examined and analysed. This exploration will imply a cultural reading specific to each work. I believe that given the distinctive features of Latin American works the creation of new figures of animation and figures of manipulation, as well as their association to specific sorts of voices, will suggest the emergence of potential literary styles among the works.

This fact will inevitably enrich and enlarge the proposed “Hybrid Terminology on AReT”. For instance, (1) the figure “interfacial/animated sporulation” may extend its meaning and suggest fertilization as it evokes the idea of “land/homeland” (*tierra*) in Latin American works, e.g. *Cielotierra*, MIDIPoet (Tisselli, 1999); *Tierra de Extracción* (Chiappe, 2007); (2) the figure “interfacial anamnesis” and all its diverse associations to memory (oblivion, erosion, recollection, ephemerality, *digital madeleines*) presented in the analyses may be used to further study the role of cultural and collective memory, that is, the study of how the political or literary memory of a society unfolds thanks to the imaginary of media, e.g. *Tierra de Extracción* (Chiappe, 2007); *Memorias y Caminos* (Rodríguez, 2016); This future trajectory will lead towards the goal of creating a digital rhetoric of Latin American works of EL, a research line that to my knowledge has not yet been explored.

As a second proposition, it would be interesting to study how through interactive and multimodal practices different fine arts such

as film, opera, theatre, and painting establish strong liaisons with works of EL. As shown in the analyses, this continuous blend of arts and blend of senses suggests the creation of specific figures for their interpretation, e.g. gestural impressionism and gestural expressionism through interfacial retroprojection. As a research subject, I propose, on the one hand, to explore other electronic literary works that present these exact figures, and most importantly, to examine the functionality of the figures on these works; for instance, *Transient Self-Portrait* (Mencía, 2012), where the figure interfacial retroprojection triggers gestural impressionism and functions as a characterization technique.

On the other hand, I propose to find examples in the international and multilingual breadth of EL, where the juxtaposition of words, images, sounds, and videos evokes artistic traits of other art movements. As art movements rise as reactions to other art movements, it can be interesting to see if there is a pattern in the evolution of works of EL regarding the modelling of creation techniques (high level of experimentation and sensory modalities). A way to start will be the following: (1) to learn the characteristics of the art movement, e.g. Cubism or Surrealism; (2) to explore these characteristics in a selection of digital works by studying through which SUM these characteristics are constructed or evoked; (3) to analyse the functionality and possible emergence of figures of animation and figures of manipulation. For example, the suggested figures interfacial anaphora and animated hyperbole reveal the density of artistic exposure of some works that may suggest a connection to Surrealism, e.g. *Surrounded by Boxes of Dangerous Creatures* (J. Nelson, 2015), where the figure interfacial anaphora creates memory games and visual embedment.

As EL employs various techniques that endow the works with a deeper and kaleidoscopic meaning, I am also interested in exploring the relation between works of EL and films. After I have analysed the philosophical stars of *88C* and the lyric scenes of *DP* new questions have opened regarding the importance of (sequence) scene structure, musical interludes, depth, and iconicity. A way to begin will be to search for filmic techniques in the works, I think for example of “voice-over” (*88C*) or “iris shot”, the latter, is a filmic technique use to show an image in only one small round area of the screen, which is employed to gradually begin or end a scene, e.g.

*Umbrales* (De la Torre, Gómez, & Nepote, 2014); *Memorias y Caminos* (Rodríguez, 2016).

As a third and final proposition, I seek to go back to the place where I first met EL: the teaching landscape. I find that the role of EL today should shift part of its strength and features (e.g. *transliteracy*<sup>1</sup>) to the pedagogical impact that electronic literary works may have in other spheres. Based on my professional experience, I have considered the following: (1) teaching Spanish as a Second Language (SSL) using EL as a tool; (2) teaching *electronic literature* as EL; (3) teaching translation using EL. In the first point, I would like to promote the importance of literary texts in the community of foreign language learners. In the ever-changing class environment, works of EL may serve as a new electronic resource that through its new reading practices and writing dimensions will strengthen the digital, literary, and intercultural competences of SSL students. The second point underlines that the inclusion of EL as a new subject in the university curricula is still in progress in many countries; therefore, the pedagogical methodologies will present variations from one context to another. A way to collaborate in its dissemination and expansion will be, on the one hand, to elaborate pedagogical methods for teaching EL, and, on the other hand, to propose introductory courses or seminars in Literature, Communication, or Media Studies Departments. The main objective will be to awaken the curiosity on the students to discover the field in new academic environments.

Lastly, with the evolution of textuality in the digital age, it seems to me that translating EL works will present an attractive challenge for students of Translation Studies. For not only it will imply to translate words but also images, audios and videos, which in themselves may host other semiotic substances and dimensions of writing that will require to develop different translation techniques. I think for example of the challenge of translating the poetic and rhetoric effects of figures of animation or figures of manipulation and their further transfiguration and mutation into a new text. Though translating EL is currently an ongoing research line, it

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<sup>1</sup> Transliteracy can be defined as the “ability to read write and interact across a range of platforms, tools and media from signing and orality through handwriting, print, TV, radio and film, to digital social networks” (Thomas, 2008, p. 101).

would be interesting to see how it is appreciated from other academic perspectives.

As a closing paragraph, I would like to say that in the same way I studied Electronic Literature through Discourse Analysis in a Department of Translation and Language Sciences (DTCL), perhaps in the future this thesis will serve as a *distant paratextual memory* that invites students of Translation Studies from the DTCL to examine the creative unknowns and the new spaces of linguistic, kinetic, acoustic, and visual negotiation that translating EL presents.



This thesis contains an article already published.

Meza, N. (2015). [Reading Hypermedia Narrative Stars: “88 Constellations for Wittgenstein” by David Clark. Analytical Approach to Constellation 18 Cassiopeia.](#) *Texto Digital*, 11(1), 287–314.



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## ANNEX: ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF *DEPRISE*

### *Loss of grasp*

(Translated from the French by I. Leguy & V. Bouchardon)

Loss of grasp is a digital creation about the notion of grasp. Under which circumstances do we feel we have a grip on our life or not? Six scenes feature a character who is losing grasp. At the same time, this play on grasp and loss of grasp mirrors the reader's experience of an interactive digital work.

#### **Pre-scene**

Is your computer's sound on?  
Loading in progress  
Please be patient...  
Press any key

#### **Scene 1**

My entire life, I believed I had infinite prospects before me.  
“The whole universe belongs to me”, I thought.  
I have the choice.  
I control my destiny.  
I am the king of the world.  
I will become what I want.  
I followed my own path.  
I browsed beautiful landscapes.  
No wonder, because I had chosen them.  
But for a while, I have had doubts.  
How can I have grasp on what happens to me?  
Everything escapes me.  
Slips through my fingers.  
Objects, people.  
I feel I've lost control.  
For some time now,  
I expect but one thing.  
What comes next.

## Scene 2

[Meeting time has arrived.]

But the meeting was trumped.  
I only realized it later.  
The woman in front of me seemed so perfect, I was flabbergasted.  
I couldn't say anything coherent.  
I was distraught.  
I had to ask questions to reveal her.  
Without my being aware of it, this stranger became my wife.  
We shared everything.  
But I never got to know her truly.  
Today, I still wonder.  
Who is following whom?  
When I love her, she loses me.

[Questions]

Who are you?  
Do you like...  
What do you think about...  
Where are you from?  
Where are you going?  
Do you think...

"Have you lived around here for a long time?" "Have you used the wrong ear for a long time?"  
"What do you do for a living?" "What do you do fall and evening?"  
"You are very pretty!" "You all very picky!"  
"You have gorgeous eyes" "You have college size"  
"I feel we have a lot in common" "Feuds we have a lot in common"  
"Do you often come here?" "Dew often comes here?"  
"Can I get you another drink?" "Caning gets you into the drink"  
"I like the way you smile." "By night they would use mine"  
"Shall we go for a walk?" "Should we go to Walter"

### Scene 3

Twenty years have gone by since we first met.  
This morning, I am reading a note she left me.  
I am at a loss.  
I don't know what to make of it.  
Love poem or break up note?  
What can I do?

[Letter]

I know it's a shock for you  
All I feel for you is love  
Is a lie, and  
"In a couple, there is always one who suffers and one who is bored"  
I want all our friends to know that  
I don't want to stay with you  
From the first day, I have wondered how you can believe that  
I love you  
My love  
Has disappeared  
Indifference  
Is more vivid than ever  
The charm of our encounter  
Has dissolved  
And the slightest misunderstanding  
Has vanquished  
Our love

### Scene 4

I can take it from my wife.  
But how can my son do this to me?  
He wants me to read his paper.  
But I can't focus on the words.  
How come I can only read between the lines.

[Letter]

I don't have a hero. As far back as I can remember, and even after thinking hard, I have never had a hero. The hero figure doesn't appeal to me. No doubt because I don't value one quality or moral value more than another. I know heroes, I can recognize them, but I

don't love them nor worship them. To tell the truth, I hate fanatics. If one considers that what makes a hero is what he does, his title is a reward for his feats, his heroic actions, his uniqueness. But what is he left with once his heroic deeds are over? Nothing but the title. It can be assumed that the hero retains an aura: the action shines through him. I tend to believe that the deed has to free itself from its creator to live a life of its own. The authors' offspring will meet their own audience, occasionally finding on their way a few hash and envious reviewers.

I don't love you.  
You don't know me.  
We have nothing in common.  
I don't want anything from you.  
You're not a model for me.  
I want to make my own way.  
Soon I will leave.

### **Scene 5**

Am I so little here?  
So easily deformed?  
My own image seems to escape me.  
It fails me.  
I feel manipulated.

### **Scene 6**

It's time to take control again.  
To stop going round in circles.

Find some guidelines.  
Shape events.  
Give meaning to my actions.  
Stop going round in circles.

I'm doing all I can to get a grip on my life again.  
I make choices.  
I control my emotions.  
The meaning of things.  
At last, I have a grasp...