# THE MEDIATED TEXT

# VIDEO PROGRAMME

5 APRIL 2019

TEXTUAL FUTURES
LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY

**To Montréal (10:00)**
**Abrie**

*To Montréal* is a textual video story about paddling a boat along the northern shore of Lake Ontario. It was produced using a combination of headless browser, video transcoder, custom software, and an inflatable packraft.

Abrie is an average writer, ostensibly born before his time. University educated, he has achieved neither academic success nor professional accolade. For the past ten years he has maintained hope for personal success by abandoning decisions to fate. In that time, he has learned to code, to draw, and shown faint signs of learning to play the piano. He has tagged walls and signposts in Seattle, Lusaka, Hong Kong, Amman, Chicago, and Brampton. He is the author of several electronic stories, one of which could be regarded as finished. Contact him at abrie@goeiebook.ca.

**Forms of Mediation of Reading in READ-IT (10:14)**
**Alessio Antonini and Francesca Benatti**

In this contribution, we discuss the outline and features of mediating factors in reading. We address these questions at a theoretical level within the frame of READ-IT, an interdisciplinary project with the goal of building a European database of annotated reading testimonies, specifically within the frame of developing the READ-IT data model. As the data model should act as common meta-language among research groups, we developed a holistic model by adopting an ecological viewpoint of reading. By considering the concept of niche, we define the ability to read, the act of reading and then, the entry points and sources of mediation in reading. Lastly, we discuss the implications of this viewpoint highlighting the role of the reader as the ultimate mediator, translating the external factors in a human and personal response based on experience, memory and values transferred in the reading experience.

Alessio Antonini is a Research Associate in Urban Computing at the Knowledge Media Institute of The Open University (UK). His research experience covers many topics ranging from knowledge networks, web-based collaborative geographical systems, to legal reasoning and e-gov. His interests are focused on modelling of social artefacts, web-based data technologies and cognitive science. He is responsible for the modelling of reading experience within the READ-IT project, funded by JPI-CH (2018-2021).

Francesca Benatti is a Research Fellow in Digital Humanities in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at The Open University. She leads the CHASE Arts and Humanities in the Digital Age training programme and the Digital Humanities at The Open University Research Collaboration. She was principal investigator of the A Question of Style project, which won the inaugural Research Society for Victorian Periodicals Field Development Grant (2017), and is a member of WP4 of the READ-IT project, funded by JPI-CH (2018-2021). Her digital research interests are digital literary studies, especially stylometry, text analysis, and text mining. Her non-digital research focuses on Irish author Thomas Moore, nineteenth-century Irish periodicals and newspapers, book history, comic books, and graphic novels.

## A Human Docum*nt (00:47)
## Ranjit Bhatnagar

*A Human Docum*nt* is an homage to Tom Phillips' *A Humument*, in which the artist painted and collaged over the pages of an old Victorian novel to create a new work. I took a scanned version of the same source text and submitted it to a cloud OCR service to learn the position of every word and letter on each page, and then wrote a program to expurgate every instance of the letter E, using angrier and more forceful scribbles as the book progresses, as if the censor were getting more and more frustrated with its work.

Ranjit Bhatnagar works in music, installation, and text, with a particular interest in algorithmic techniques and in improvisation at all stages of creation. His works have been exhibited across the United States and in Europe. He has worked with New Orleans Airlift to build several tiny musical houses, and just published a book of poetry, *Encomials: Sonnets from Pentametron* based on his algorithmic poetry bot. He has performed recently with Lea Bertucci, Thessia Machado, and Margaret Leng Tan. His heaviest work is Stone Song, a 7500-pound outdoor sound sculpture; his longest is The Tapestry of the Search for Terrestrial Intelligence at 44 yards.

## ARTIFICIO (02:00; 02:40; 02:18)
## Jorge Caballero and Anna Giralt Gris

ARTIFIC.IO is a TV series and interactive web series that explores the transformative power of artificial intelligence in the field of arts. Through outstanding AI-pioneering artists and experts, we will discover AI's creative potential at the intersection of AI and art. Who is the author: the machine or the artist? Will artificial intelligence bring us the next great art movement? Can AI be creative, or is this a distinct human trait? Each episode comes with several game-like experiences that allow users to compose original music, create pictures, or co-create texts through AI and interactive systems.  Users will judge by themselves whether algorithms are capable of replacing human creativity or if they remain a mere tool to enhance it.

Jorge Caballero holds a BA in Telecommunications Engineering, a BA in Audiovisual Communication, and an MSc in Interactive Media. He is a PhD Candidate in AI and Documentary. He is a co-founder of the production company GusanoFilms based in Barcelona and Bogota. As a filmmaker, his films have been selected in very prestigious film festivals around the world like IDFA Amsterdam, Cinema Du Reel Paris, Visions Du Reel Nyon, Biarritz, Thessaloniki Greece, and IFF Oslo, among others. He has won the national documentary award in Colombia twice. He is also the lecturer and

coordinator of expanded documentary at the master's degree in Theory and Practice of Creative Documentary of the Autonomous University of Barcelona. He teaches in some universities and Latin American film festivals like Universidad del Valle Colombia, DOCSDF Mexico, Ambulante Film Festival Mexico, Cartagena Film Festival, EICTV Cuba, and the Ecuador Cinema National Council. Currently he is co-developing ARTIFICIO.

Anna Giralt Gris holds a degree in Audiovisual Communication and studies in political science. Her latest short film, *44 messages from Catalonia* (2018), was produced by Laura Poitras (Director of the Oscar-winning Citizenfour) and published in the prestigious independent news publication The Intercept. She is currently producing her first feature-length film. She has filmed in countries such as Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq, and her documentaries have been recognised and selected at national and international festivals. With interest also in the intersection between technology and narratives, she works as a consultant for new narratives, a teacher of interactive narratives at the UB, the URL and UPF, and is developing interactive documentary projects. In 2018 she was one of the selected participants at the IDFA DocLab academy. Currently she is co-developing ARTIFICIO.

**'I tend to prefer real books to e-books': negotiating the realness and bookness of e-novels (01:38)**
**Laura Dietz**

This presentation offers a brief summary of findings from a recent mixed methods study on the legitimacy and reputation of e-novels. Novels are the most popular form of e-book, yet to many (including many who buy and read them) they remain enduringly separate from 'actual BOOKS'. Drawing on survey, focus group, and reading experiment data, the study explored e-novel realness, bookness, and ways in which readers incorporate elusive, protean e-novels into their reading lives and reading identities.

Laura Dietz is a Senior Lecturer in Writing and Publishing at Anglia Ruskin University. She writes novels and studies novels, using quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate readership and contemporary publishing practice. Her most recent publications include, in addition to fiction, papers and book chapters on e-novel readership, the digital short story, online literary magazines, and the changing definition of authorship in the digital era. She is the editor of the new Digital Literary Culture gathering of Cambridge Elements, from Cambridge University Press.

**Ballet of the Books (18:58)**
**Paul Dijstelberge**

The video has little function but amusing people. At the time I knew I was the last speaker on a very intensive congress, so I decided to do something different with the subject to keep the scholars awake. The noise at the beginning was just long enough to annoy people. My subject was the 15th century book and while listening to me everybody looked at the movie. At the time it was extraordinary. For some scenes, the computer had to do calculations for 48 hours.

Paul Dijstelberge is assistant professor for the History of the Book at the University of Amsterdam. He is a specialist in early modern typography. His main interest lies in exploring and inventing digital means to help research and create interest for his subject. Before he became a historian (PhD in 2007), he worked as a chef (French cuisine) and specialist bibliographer. He is married and lives with his wife and two daughters in Leiden. See also metabotnik.com.

**Glia (09:58)**
**David Jhave Johnston**

This video comprises excerpts from 20 years of my mediated-language-art-poetry interventions ranging from paper to interactive websites, generative video and audio, after effects, 3D modelling, fluid dynamics, immersive installations, and neural networks. All originals are available to see (perhaps, if your plugin enables you) online at glia.ca.

David Jhave Johnston is a digital-poet focused on combinatorial poetics and multimedia poetry. In 2017, he conceived and coded ReRites, a durational artificial-intelligence human-machine writing experiment. In the spring of 2019, Anteism Press will publish the results of that research as a 12-volume set of human + AI poetry books with ten accompanying essays. His theoretical work *Aesthetic Animism: Digital Poetry's Ontological Implications* (MIT Press, 2016) won the N. Katherine Hayles Award. Since 1999, he has intentionally published many interactive language-art works online (not on paper) at glia.ca.

**Rules That Order the Reading of Clouds (03:35)**
**Sally Morfill and Ana Čavić**

*Rules That Order the Reading of Clouds* is a screen-based work that explores the process of constructing meaning using line.

According to Laurent Jenny, the intention of the artist/writer Henri Michaux's early graphic work was 'to reconcile writing and drawing, which after all are both attributes of the same line'. This idea of the 'same line' producing both visual and literary meanings influenced *The Naturalness of Strange Things* (2015), a collaboration between Morfill and Čavić in which some of Michaux's lines were redrawn, translated into adhesive vinyl and physically reconfigured as poetry.

In *Rules that order the reading of clouds* (2016), the medium for our dialogue is again the nomadic line that traverses visual and literary fields as it moves between drawing and poetry. Our starting point is a single digitised sketch selected from a series of quickly executed line drawings of a landscape with clouds. The image is gradually deconstructed and recomposed as a poem. Then, in turn, the poem is deconstructed and reconfigured as a drawing, emulating the movements of clouds. We set in motion a call and response between drawing and writing, as each new configuration of lines, conjuring new meanings, emphasises the fluidity of communication.

Sally Morfill (art.mmu.ac.uk/profile/smorfill) is an artist and educator who lives and works in London and Manchester. As a member of Five Years, a collaborative artists' project, since 2007 she has curated shows for the programme, whilst continuing her practice and exhibiting her own work. Sally is currently a PhD candidate with MIRIAD at Manchester School of Art.

Ana Čavić is an artist and co-founder of Ladies of the Press (ladiesofthepress.org), a performative press duo that re-imagines the role of the publisher and the publicist into a theatrical persona, together with Renée O'Drobinak. Ana is a PhD student at Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton, researching alternative artist publishing practices in relation to performance art and theory.

**In the Middle of the Room (09:51)**
**Jeffry M. Morris, with Elisabeth Blair**

This video comprises a song improvised by Elisabeth Blair (elisabethblair.net) and live sampling by Jeff Morris (morrismusic.org), accompanied by improvised typing and video processing by Jeff Morris done after the original musical performance. Live audio sampling transforms the poetry into a conversation. The video intensifies the immersion in the words, rapidly forming and testing tenuous

connections among ideas as the come, as might happen in your own mind while absorbing a new poem.

Jeff Morris creates experiences that engage audiences' minds with their surroundings. His performances, installations, lectures, and writings appear in international venues known for cutting-edge arts and deep questions in the arts. He serves as Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal of Art, Culture and Design Technologies*. He created the Fresh Minds Festival of audiovisual art from all over the world, as well as the Performance Technology (PerfTech) program at Texas A&M University (a Carnegie Tier One Research University and member of the elite Association of American Universities).

**Wealth Begins with Human Need (05:42)**
**Johannah Rodgers**

An invited contribution to a collection of responses to the Wagner Labor Archive at the New York University Bobst Library, *Wealth Begins With Human Need, or Machines Can't 'Read'* is a reading and interpretation of the first chapter of Karl Marx's *Capital* that explores its relations to a variety of texts in different media and how the text's meanings change depending on how the text is published and presented to readers. The two-page 'remediated' text and accompanying video can be read and watched together, as they were originally presented at the March 2015 reading and performance of the piece. Additionally, readers can download and print the 44 pages of Marx's text used to construct the 'remediated' reading and assemble them on a wall. Alternately, readers can download the Large Format Print and have this printed at their local photocopy shop. Part of the rationale for this project relates to making discursively dense texts more portable and therefore familiar. By living with the remediated text of this project on a wall, readers will become much more intimately familiar with parts of it and may, thereby, reflect on the text and its meanings in new ways or be encouraged to reread Marx's original text.

Johannah Rodgers is a writer, artist, and educator whose work explores issues related to representation and communication practices across media. She is the author of *52WordDrawings* (mimeograph, 2017), *Technology: A Reader for Writers* (Oxford University Press, 2014), the digital fiction project DNA (mimeograph.org/The Brooklyn Rail, 2012), and the book *sentences* (Red Dust, 2007). Her visual works include the Excel Drawing Series, featured in the Drawing Center Viewing Program, and The How Much Project, which explores the intersection of aesthetics, civic literacy, and social action in relation to income inequality in the United States via digital and analog visualization tools. The editor of the open access educational web site digitalcomposition.org and the founder of mimeograph.org, she thinks, teaches, and writes about the history of the book and its relationships with both print and digital technologies of inscription and reproduction.

**MetaGarden:Bots (04:35)**
**Tanja Vujinović**

This video is the recording of a software made in Unity 3D that uses a primitive form of artificial intelligence to recombine the text from the *Tao Te Ching* book.

Tanja Vujinović (ultramono.org) is an artist living in Ljubljana and working internationally since 1997. She is educated in design, visual arts, and philosophy. Her work is research-based art practice that merges traditional art disciplines with new technologies. She focuses on the ways technology impacts human beings and nature and, through her work, she examines the relationships between human subjectivity, technology, and nature, as well as the amalgams formed by these relationships. Drawing from both past and future scenarios, she develops hybrid installations that she often refers to as poetic systems for rethinking of the world. Revolving around the metaphors of gardens, her recent projects envision the gardens of the future for the third millennium, where bionic systems of non-human agents work synergistically with natural world, human beings, and their renewed, sustainable technologies.