

## THE MOVING WORD

### *Towards The Theory of Web Literary Objects*

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In the 20th century the new media have become a new means of artistic creativity. This applies to the traditional mass media, such as television, radio and film, as well as to the newer media comprising video, holography, synthetic music, comics, robotics, satellite communications and photo-copying, and finally to the latest media – computer networks. It appears that the artists are obliged, mostly due to the imperatives of the artistic avantgarde and neo-avantgarde, to strive to conquer the new media with an incredible pace. As a consequence, within a short time from their introduction, all the media are artistically upgraded – typical examples of such an artistic 'evolution' are the cases of net art, the art of simulation based installations in virtual reality environments, and techno performances based on the latest state-of-the-art robotics. These new media have provided the traditional art with many new forms, challenges and aesthetics, and have also revealed many of its constraints both in forms and institutions. Furthermore, it is in the light of the uniqueness of these new media (or better still, their 'anatomy') that the reconstruction and analysis of the basic concepts of traditional art is possible. Thus the ontological status of traditional art and forms of its perception can be seen in a new way. Through comparison with the unstable nature of the new media forms of digital arts (which are not based on rituals and politics according to Walter Benjamin's distinction but rather on communication) the traditional art form reveals itself as an example of what Martin Heidegger in his essay *The Origin of the Work of Art* called 'the temple work'<sup>1</sup>.

The new media have introduced new forms, techniques, methods and devices into the arts, and notably, they have also formed new types of perception. The film, for example, improves and advances the visual per-

ception of the stream of moving images, and the logic of their emergence, disappearance, and absence. This visual experience introduced into the art by film has, simply, made us look differently and see more. Our perception would be diminished had we not acquired such experience – had we lived in a world without Lang’s, Bergman’s, Antonioni’s, Fellini’s, Godard’s, Wenders’ and Almodovar’s films. One can see parallel effects brought along by electronic music (produced via synthesizers, samplers and computers), which stimulates our hearing perception in many new ways, as for example when techno music reaches barely audible frequencies (such as 180 bpm). Last but not least, the computer (the ‘intelligent machine’), which has primarily influenced the musical quests and visual arts installations, has not only enriched our ways of perception, but has also stretched the limits of art and played a part in its redefinition. The immense influence of computers can nowadays be seen virtually in all art forms (not to speak of the fact that computers have even generated totally new forms, such as digital cinema, computer graphics, animation, and virtual architecture), and now it is also reaching the realm of literary-coded textuality – that is, texts written and computed as digital literature, influenced and stimulated mostly by the use of on-line computers and the state-of-the-art software.

### *The Web literary objects*

Internet is not only an excellent medium for reproduction and distribution of literature-as-we-know-it, but also for introducing new forms of writing which employ the main features of the Internet, and which are possible only in this medium. Consequently, these new forms of writing cannot be transferred into the medium of the printed book without a noticeable loss of their main characteristics. In addition to hyperfiction, MUD/MOO literary projects, and Internet collaborative novels, we are now also witnessing the formation of a new generation of literary objects. These works, based on the latest software and appearing in the web medium can be called *second order digital literature*<sup>2</sup>. It includes such works as *Grammatron* (by Mark Amerika), kinetic and visual poetry (for example by Komninos Zervos, Loss Pequeño Glazier and Miekal And), as well as kinetic textscapes such as *Fidget* (by Kenneth Goldsmith and Clem Paulsen), *Flesh/Threshold/Narrative* (by Eugene Thacker) and *Keywords* (by Claire Cann and Richard

Allalouf). Typical of these objects is their placement in the intersection of experimental works by the literary avantgarde and neo-avantgarde (from Marinetti, Russian futurism and Czech poetism<sup>3</sup> to concrete poetry), of web art, and of electronic installation art. Works of web kinetic poetry are usually closer to certain text based installations by Jeffrey Shaw - for instance *The Legible City* (1990) and *The Virtual Museum* (1991) - than to projects of literature-as-we-know-it. Consequently, the aesthetics of cyber arts and web art are sometimes more appropriate for the interpretation of these web based works than traditional literary theory (or even newer theory, influenced by poststructuralism). When talking about web art in relation to digital literature it must also be mentioned that the contemporary, new media based narratives can be found in the medium of web art as well. For example, the specificity of the web medium finds an excellent expression in Olia Lialina's web work of art *Anna Karenin Goes to Paradise*. State-of-the-art web storytelling in this piece is realized through the itinerary made by search engines, which demonstrates the way how today a trendy individual makes her own story under the conditions of web surfing.

Web Literary Objects are a new medium, and they can be appropriately interpreted only on the basis of the very nature of this medium. However, they are also a means for the realization of certain experimental tensions within the institution of literature-as-we-know-it. We are referring to the explorative tradition of visual and concrete poetry, as well as to certain poetic and theoretical works which highlight the materiality of the (literary) signifier, the basic elements of the word and the letter, and their strained relation to the blankness or whiteness of the printed page (as shown, for example, in literary and theoretical works by Paul Celan, Edmond Jabes, and Maurice Blanchot). It seems that in this new medium the authors of web literary objects also succeed in creating something which was often attempted by the literary avantgarde and 20th century artists dealing with the medium of the *artists' book*<sup>4</sup>, but which could not be realized using the traditional interface of printed pages. With regard to the new forms of digital literature and literary objects based on non-textual media (like stone, wood, walls, roads), we may introduce the term *expanded concept of literature*, applying a term coined by Joseph Beuys: the expanded concept of the work of (visual) art.

What are, then, the main features of the web literary objects, and how do we define their basic theoretical concepts? The following are the key concepts of the theory of this new media:

*Word-image-body* is arranged to create special effects, presented as "total-data-work-of-art" (Gesamtdatenwerk), which includes interaction between media and which daringly stimulates the perception. Because of this, reading is supplemented with looking and touching (led and seduced by techno-suspense and techno-surprise), total immersion devices, encountering "impossible written objects", manipulation of screens, and, in some projects also with listening. All of this means that we are dealing with an activity very distant from reading regular literary forms and closer to the appreciation of the new visual (as well as aural and tactile) forms of culture. We are no longer diving into the worlds of traditional narratives, but instead we are entering multimedia enhanced verbal design constituted by a series of techno-words-images-bodies, which are arranged to produce special effects with regard to certain conceptual schemes. This form of the verbal is the state-of-the-art "answer" to the demands of a current visual and tactile culture. In their article *The Post-Alphabet Future* Marilouise and Arthur Kroker write: "The real world of digital reality has always been post-alphabetic. Probably because the letters of the alphabet were too slow to keep up with the light-time and light-speed of electronics, the alphabet long ago shuddered at the speed of light, burned up and crashed to earth. Writing can't keep up to the speed of electronic society." (2000) The authors of web literary objects designed by means of Shockwave, Javascript, Quicktime and VRML do not share this statement; their works can be understood precisely as a reconciliation of the alphabet medium with the new media, keeping up with the speed of electronic society.

Techno-word, simulated in the way of units in 3D immersive environments, is a new media word, inscribed into the field of computer generated visual and tactile cyberculture. The word is an object with body, with substance, living a double life; on the one hand preserving the indicative and referential function, on the other hand as only the visual, tactile and verbal signifier for building textual objects from the words-images-bodies. It permits a new matrix of entry into the literary text. The word with tactile features belongs to the current trendy media culture, which is not only visual, but tactile as well. It 'hits' its users, makes an impact on them with its high-tech effects, but the readers are also in a position to touch the interfaces: to click mouse, operate switches and tap keyboard. Direct tactility can be achieved by using heavy technical machinery of the virtual reality technologies (one of the main challenges for its constructors has been just the question of how to achieve the successful tactile force feedback).

However, it can also be achieved in a more subtle way, for example in electro magnetic poetry, which employs a "virtual sense" of touching and collecting the words. (Eduard Kac's holographic poetry designed in the 3D medium of holograms should be mentioned here as well.) Word-image-body is also gaining more and more energy, with its movement stimulated to reach cinematic features, which is demonstrated in visual and kinetic poems by Loss Pequeño Glazier and Miekal And.

*Computer screen instead of printed page.* On the printed page the words are contrasted with the whiteness of the background, while the computer screen has a much more complex structure which enables the realisation of moving and non-linearly organised texts. (As an example I would like to mention the *Fidget* by Kenneth Goldsmith and Clem Paulsen, in which we can even change the colours of the background.) PC window has its own source of light, texts can be read in darkness, the light is shifted from the reader's place to the text-film itself. Revolt against the "typographic harmony of the page", discussed by Marinetti in his manifesto *Typographic Revolution* (1913, quoted in Drucker 1994, 114), is realised precisely by the visual and kinetic literary objects.

*The subordination of the semantic and the syntactic to the visual and the kinetic.* Not only the authority of the line and the metric organisation of textual material (in poetry), as well as plot and closure (in fiction), but also the semantic and syntactic features of texts are destabilised in digital literary objects. The semantic and the syntactic are interdependent with the visual, the tactile, the audible, the kinetic, the interactive, and the immersive effects. Web literary objects are also designed with respect to visual contrasts and oppositions like empty-full, light-dark, vertical-horizontal, upright-oblique, etc. Web literary objects are part of conceptual art, which is why they are placed beyond the relations, complex in themselves, between description and narration, as well as beyond those between fictional and non-fictional components.

*Moving (flickering) signifier.* In kinetic web objects the clearly structured word stands on its own; it may be decomposed down to its elementary matrix of letters and punctuation. It appears and disappears in computer screen, the traces of its nomadic path indicate the smooth space (as defined in *Thousand Plateaus* by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, 1987), for which the inter-being is essential, rather than setting any stable points of arrival and departure. The word in web literary objects is also a technical word, which is not in a simple relation to the external referents, but through

cybernetic feedback loops refers to the purely conceptual, i.e. the abstract relations constituting verbal communication.

*Coding/decoding is based on the relation between cyborg-author, computer, digital textual object and cyborg-reader.* Computer as an artificial intelligence device has enriched the traditional relationship between the author and the reader. The latter not only becomes more competent ("the empowerment of the reader"), but is also connected to the system as a co-author. This alters her to a cyborg-reader (this expression is modelled after the term cyborg-author, coined by Mark Amerika). Text as flickering and temporal textscape is actually created in co-operation with the computer and the reader. By introducing smart devices to the process of text creation the traditional poststructuralist approach to issues such as intertextuality, transtextuality, paratextuality, etc. has been changed and revised. Entering digital textscapes we do not only face Roland Barthes' dichotomy of the author and the reader, but a situation where they both have been redefined due to their interaction within a text as a digital networked machine.

*Text as Virtual Reality.* Digital literature presupposes a text in the form of a subtle version of virtual reality, clearly distinguished from the established VR technology. It demands sophisticated, state-of-the-art interfaces, being designed for immersive effects which accompany user's activity in the 3D-world of computer graphics. The basic demand of VR is a feeling of *being there*, a kind of artificial telepresence which the reader-user of web literature can experience on the basis of her identification with the cursor (as for instance in *Electro Magnetic Poetry* by Maria Winslow). At the moment of clicking and picking the words (as a form of real time intervention), she finds herself in a certain place in textscape, marked by the cursor. We are witnessing here the unencumbering type of VR usage, a term introduced by Myron Krueger. In his book *Artificial Reality II* (1991, xv) he writes about unencumbering artificial reality which is environmental in the sense "that the technology for perceiving the participant's action is distributed throughout the environment instead of being worn". This means that the user does not have to apply traditional VR interfaces such as data gloves and head-mounted displays.

*Techno-suspense and techno-surprise.* Navigation through digital textscapes is in some cases (depending on the nature of the web work) done by clicking a mouse (or other pointing device), and this clicking requires something "more" than does the turning of pages of a printed book. When reading a book the reader is safely guided through the text<sup>5</sup>, while the

clicking act is accompanied by creative uncertainty. This uncertainty can also be expressed using the cinema theory term techno-suspense. The term for the final effect of clicking can also be borrowed from media aesthetics, namely techno-surprise. It signifies the user/reader's sensations after landing at a distant, vertiginous point in the textscape, a place which is completely different from the intended destination of her clickual adventure. It seems that the artistic value of such works of digital literature depends on the units of the textual network being arranged and designed in a way that enables the user/reader to move as far as possible from the stable horizon of expectations. That kind of design produces a maximum amount of techno-suspense and techno-surprise.

*Hazardous reading.* Digital literature in computer screen destabilises not only the institution of the printed codex book, but also the traditional literary genres and their theories. For example, the traditional form of novel is not anymore accepted as something eternal, nature-like and self-evident for storytelling. Traditional literary devices such as plot and closure are also abandoned, or substituted with new ones, more appropriate for the digital medium. The reader has to consider very complex temporal dimensions (see Eskelinen 1998) within the processes of reading/viewing/clicking. The reading time is no longer unlimited, instead the reader often has to decode the "moving text" in a very short time. In case of failure to react within the given time the reader is rejected<sup>6</sup>; she is classified as an unsuccessful reader.

*Event-space as a field of reception.* A text with certain rules which, at the same time, offers the reader alternative possibilities between which she has to choose on her way through a "textscape" leads to a game-like reception. Thus, web literary objects are close to the trends of today's *ludic culture* (i.e. the culture of games, spread between the principles of *agon* and *ilinx* – as defined by Roger Caillois (1967)), and also close to the techno-sensitivity of today's trendy *homo aestheticus*. She is often a true high-level adrenaline junky, in need of an ever increasing amount of stimuli from different sources in the shortest possible period of time - an overexcited woman in the sense of Paul Virilio's concept of *l'homme surexcité*. Increasingly her basic tools are devices such as the simulator, bungee jumping rope, and cyberspace interfaces. An aesthetic being is stimulated not only by such activities and attractions, but also by encountering different forms of cyberarts. These highly unpredictable and unusual experiences and sensations can also be experienced in works of web literature, which

require the reader curiously, and even hazardously, to navigate her way through a "textscape". In a web literary object the main thread is easily lost not only on the referential level, but also on the visual and tactile ones. The authority of the sentences, pages, and images, the evident concepts of "now" and "later", up and down, beginning and end, are all destroyed.

The objects in the "textscapes" of web literatures enable an atmosphere of thrills and creative disorientation, which stimulates the *homo aestheticus*, a being defined as an unstable node of links and data streams, hi-tech stimuli and vertiginous voids. These are the issues of programmed uncertainty, devoted to seducing and beguiling the gaze. The reader's/user's competence of reading is challenged by the fast cut movie of unstable words flowing across the screen. We are facing the stream of moving, even raving words and letters, which enable an experience non-comparable to the reading of the print text. (Examples: some of Komninos-Zervos' and Miekal And's poems.)

The user encounters web literary objects in the action-space defined by ludic events which are often random and formed in a distinctively individual fashion. There are no pre-determined instructions for experiencing such digital works; different users create different *concretisations* (Roman Ingarden's term), depending on their individual ways to read and navigate. The reading of web literary objects sometimes comes close to the actions in the computer game worlds, which are highly unstable event-spaces formed in real time, according to the user's actions. The user/reader is able to choose between various readings, and these choices are non-trivial, since the user does not only consider the available options (paths in the game-like textscape) but also the ones outside the synchronic sequences of signs.

*Reading/perception from a deterritorialised point of view.* Words a computer screen moving in different directions often form objects, which are difficult to read or even completely unreadable. They usually demand vertical or diagonal reading/decoding, sometimes reading backwards, or they challenge the eye to take a deterritorialised position of perception (see Deleuze 1981, 37). The eye is, metaphorically speaking, dislocated from the body and set somewhere in the background, on "the dark side of the text", from where it is challenged to perceive the textual object as a whole. This is the eye of the *homo aestheticus*, which is called upon to do the impossible, namely to take a look at different parts /screens of a textscape at once and to read in a "vertiginous" fashion.

## *The revival of the verbal*

The question being raised now is, whether in view of the web literary objects we can talk about the renaissance of literature within the web, and about the revival of the verbal? Could it be that the computer and web mediums are, after all, stimulating us to withdraw from the promises in the field of the mere visual and multi-medial, and directing us back towards the word? The answer to this question is certainly not simple. It is affirmative, but in the sense of us being the witnesses to the revival of the verbal within radically changed conditions. The verbal once again, yes, but in a completely different form. That is, the word which we find in the web literature medium is no longer a word within its traditional syntactic and semantic role in the process of representation, neither is it simply a word within the postmodern play of signifiers (as it has been defined by the poststructuralist theory). It is a word which has turned to a new generation of moving, techno-accelerated words-images-bodies, which are units in the immersive environments of artistic and non-artistic web projects. It is a word with *kinematic energy* (term coined by Paul Virilio) that is put into cyberspace in a way which resembles the code of film and video more than that of literature in the printed codex book. The word entering the field of second-order digital literatures (a phenomenon which will continue happening for a while, since the present situation in this field is certainly a pioneer-like and experimental one) has not slept through the 20th century and its technical and new media related advances. It has mutated into this kinetic and visual state-of-the-art verbal expression, which is becoming the basis even for the mobile phone messages (SMS).

Having dealt with different web-literature objects, we can see that they are kinds of digital textscapes set beyond the concepts, devices, forms and genres of the literature-as-we-know-it. These projects seem to be responding to the following questions: How is the word possible at the beginning of the 21st century, in a society defined by technology and new media communication? How does the word respond to the challenges of the mainstream visual, aural and tactile culture? Why even today words, and not merely the jostling and overlapping images of music video? How to preserve the authority of the word today, and how to approach it? How to rescue the word from the stream of triviality and mere game of special effects? How to form environments and thus the contexts for presenting

words-images-bodies without turning them to a Disneyland of words? How to escape the Macdonaldisation and MTVsation of the verbal in a time of globalisation and its consequences, in the field of art and literature?

Problems concerning the web literary objects presented in this essay are actually aspects of the broader phenomenon of the new digital textuality that is becoming extensively available due to the Internet. We are witnessing the formation of a field which is a dry run for our comprehension of not only modern individuals and communication, but also of the new sensibility, sociality and even politics. It is, therefore, reasonable to try and bring this very special field of literary objects into the broader context of modern digital textuality, bound up especially with the Internet.

### *From the codex book to the moving digital text*

For many decades it seemed that the stable, conventional, and even old-fashioned institution of the book guaranteed stability, durability and self-evident identity also for what was kept between the covers, for the text itself. Printed pages and their placement between the covers should provide the text a home, and therefore also protection, safety and stability. Everything that is included in a book can therefore be considered as some sort of a monument that defies change, time, and influence from varying environments. What is placed in a book deserves, surely, the attention and the interest of all those institutions that focus on it, that is, theories, special histories, critics, criticism, libraries, education, etc. Writing for the book bears a deep meaning within the European-American world, it is more than just writing; bound printed texts are better appreciated than non-bound texts. It seems as if in every printed book the Holy Book is repeated (as the book of all books, the book of the selected holy words), and this should be reflected on the level of content as well, on the level of the message; the text of the Holy Book is, metaphorically speaking, also repeated in them.

It may take some time before the distant light, pointed on the last few decades of the second millennium, will form traceable shadows of them, from which it will be possible to see what is (or was) essential for the highlighted subjects, especially for the non-compromised key ones. It is very likely that one of the things we will find is the destabilisation of all

the present statutes, relativisation of everything at any cost, demystification of everything which has served as the basic images of the world. The process of relativisation, thus, has already left notable traces not only in natural sciences (post-Euclidian geometry, quantum physics, general relativity theory, second order cybernetics, molecular biology, genetics), but is more than that: we can talk of special relativity theory also in the field of art and literature. In the same way as the new theoretical views of time, space and materiality have relativised Newton's physics and Euclid's geometry, artistic and literary avant-garde has relativised Aristotle's theory of tragedy, the structure of the traditional novel, the metrical structure of the poem, the institution of flat painting, and musical tonality. This relativisation and destabilisation have definitely had an impact on the above-mentioned institution of the book, too, and on the main literary genres found between the book covers. At the moment we are witnessing a double destabilisation, one component of which was first performed by literary avant-garde practice and is now continuing and getting radicalised in digital textuality, while the other was realised by the structuralist and poststructuralist literary theory (which has even been ahead of literary practice in many ways).

The text over which the printed book and the author-god are losing their power is the non-bound text. It takes its place after the symbolic death of the author and the institution of the bound book. Especially with his text *The Death of the Author*, theorist Roland Barthes comes close to Friedrich Nietzsche, at least as far as the Book and the Author are mentioned. Barthes' (1977, 146) claim which is essential for understanding the meaning of the non-bound text is, "We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture." This quote is also one of the starting points for the modern deconstructivism in literary theory, and it is originating from the hypothesis that the alliance between language itself and the world has come to an end in the literary modern. This theory also critically discusses the unity of the work, the self-containedness of the text, and the originality of the authorship.

The meaning of literary text, in the context of Barthes' theory, can never be totally stabilised by the reader. Quite the opposite, we are witnessing various ways of reading a text and its interactions with other texts, all

of which was described by the theories of intertextuality, paratextuality and transtextuality. It seems that the only way to get to the meaning of an individual text is to take into consideration its relations with all other texts. We are witnessing the transition from the work to the text, from the author to the language that speaks and performs itself (the founder in this field was poet Mallarmé). When poststructuralist theorists and their critical followers developed the theory of (new) textuality, for which the position and the name of the author was no longer of any importance, they often had serious problems in searching for references in the contemporary and also in the past literature. It seems they were actually creating anticipative theory, as their rather provocative studies only coincided with the movements in the field of literary avantgarde.—

It was only the development of digital, and particularly Internet textuality that enabled their viewpoints to gain more strength with regard to current phenomena. However, there can be no straightforward application of these earlier theories to the theory of digital literature, and conflicts cannot be avoided. In a way it was natural for the early hypertext theorists to borrow many things from this tradition of literature-as-we-know-it, but this procedure is in many ways violent and simplifying. Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Julia Kristeva and Gérard Genette, after all, have never analysed digital literature; their theoretical outlines are therefore in some cases applicable only within the frame of the broader theory of new textuality. What they could not predict was the introduction of a smart machine, which the computer definitely is, into the process of textual production, and its influence on the reading procedures. Due to the computer a new reader was formed, with a higher competence and an active role in the reception of the text as event space. The use of the computer also implies the introduction of appropriate theoretical frameworks, namely cybernetics, as well as the theories of artificial intelligence and artificial life. Text as a place for the activities of the cyborg-author, cyborg-reader and smart devices can also be understood as a genre of its own, in the paradigm of digitalisation and cybernetics; this is the genre of digital networked text, composed of words-images-bodies that coincide with the "clickable" and hypertextual sensitivity of modern individuals. It is also a text written in a fashion totally different from the traditional text shaped by means of the typewriter.

Has the digital text taken over the former place of the elite (codex, printed) book? Definitely not. The new digital textuality is a new medium

with its own specificity, and it should be judged according to the specificity of this new media (if the specifications do not yet exist, we have to define them or make them up). This textuality belongs to the modern techno-modelled and accelerated sensibility, formed for the purposes of the new communicational and narrative spaces; its user is a modern individual (even in the form of a high-adrenaline *homo aestheticus*) who needs, as much as possible, stimuli from different origins within the shortest possible unit of time. We are thinking here of an individual who lives among smart machines, who is constantly clicking on the mouse, hitting the keyboard, and switching the smart machines; she is also sitting in a simulator for adventure rides, or is playing computer games in digital arcades. "Being digital means being able to reinvent yourself at the click of a mouse..." as Steven Johnson has written in his book *Interface Culture* (1997, 147). Today we can even talk of the therapeutic nature of the new technologies<sup>7</sup>, since they enable us to adapt to the rhythm of modern life in the digitally coded artificial worlds. These technologies with their own special effects, devices, and procedures evidently also influence the nature of textuality. Digital (cybernetic) texts are actually texts with special effects, that is, places where textual and paratextual forms are interwoven.

Digital and especially Internet textuality is articulated in textual networks and objects that are no longer of the same order as the traditional objects. A far-reaching notion by Martin Heidegger should be mentioned with respect to this issue; in his book *The Principle of Reason* Heidegger (1996, 33–4) describes the modern era as a time without any objects: "Strictly speaking, we may indeed be barely able, as we will see, to speak of objects any more. If we pay attention, we see we already move in a world where there are no more objects (...) That in such an age art becomes objectless testifies to its historical appropriateness, and this above all when nonrepresentational (*gegenstandlose*) art conceives of its own productions as no longer being able to be works, rather as being something for which the suitable word is lacking."

The destabilised objects (as no-longer-objects but something that still lacks a proper term, something "unnameable") belong to the world in which another destabilisation and relativisation has occurred, namely the decentralisation of the modern subject who in the postmodern era (a term used here only in a technical sense, denoting the most recent time) experiences her/his own destabilisation and is changing into a networked ego (or multiple-ego within a network). Within this constellation the cards are shuffled anew, and Barthes' distinction expressed as "the birth of the reader

must be at the cost of the death of the author” (1997, 148) is now actually exceeded. With the new digital textuality both reader and author are newly defined and are experiencing transformation into the cyborg-author and the cyborg-reader, who cooperate with smart devices in order to produce texts for which computer programming, logic of music videos, computer games, as well as e-mail and SMS communication, are becoming more and more significant.

It seems that we are on the threshold of new textual communication which is already familiar to the modern teenagers, as well as to those who have grown up with mobile phones, personal computers, laptops and palms. Although a part of this textuality will continue searching for its placement in the institution of literature and arts (due to their prestige as contexts), this kind of textuality is probably something else, for which the proper term is still lacking. The ”literary” of web literary objects (as well as the term for the objects themselves) could therefore be applied only in a very limited sense. The creativity in this field will continue to try to generate projects which we can only imagine; especially with the use of mobile textuality (which is enabled by the mobile phones and can transform the reader into a ”walk-writer-reader”) a new possibility will be offered: the possibility to abandon the stable place of textual articulations in cyberspace (for example the web page), and the possibility to start using the web media as a smooth, nomadic space for writing-as-crossing.

## NOTES

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1. "The temple-work, standing there, opens up a world and at the same time sets this world back again on earth, which itself only thus emerges as native ground." (Heidegger 1975, 43) New generations of cyberarts tied to non-material bearers, really do not have 'earth' in the sense of this notion; instead, the role of the earth is now being taken over by a web, or more precisely, by the webs and especially by the World Wide Web. The tension ratio is now transferred from the pair earth/world to the pair web/world. Following the principles of Heidegger's analysis the 'webness' itself is what is now at issue.
2. This term is coined with reference to the second order cybernetics, and indicates literary-coded cybertextuality.
3. With regard to "iconicity principle" in Czech avantgarde poetry Malynne M. Sternstein (1998, 82) claims: "The technological innovations of modernity accelerated and 'justified' the need for a new mode of the word which could keep up with newly invented syncretising mechanisms of film and photography."
4. This conceptual genre (self-reflexion on the medium of the book in book form) is discussed in Johanna Drucker's *The Century of Artists' Books* (1995).
5. "A conventional novel is a safe ride," as Shelley Jackson writes (1998, 530).
6. This statement is formed according to E. J. Aarseth's claim "The cybertext puts its would-be-reader at risk: the risk of rejection." (1997, 4)
7. "...rave is really a sort of dry run or acclimatization phase for virtual reality; it is adapting our nervous systems, bringing our perceptual and sensorial apparatus up to speed, evolving us towards the post-human subjectivity that digital technology requires and engenders." (Reynolds 1997, 108)

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