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► **To cite this version:**

Anaïs Guilet. AT THE BOOK'S THRESHOLD: ANDY CAMPBELL'S HYPERMEDIA WORKS (THE RUT, SURFACE, PAPERWOUNDS). Cherchez le texte: ELO 2013, 2013, Paris, France. hal-03256834

HAL Id: hal-03256834

<https://hal.science/hal-03256834>

Submitted on 10 Jun 2021

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AT THE BOOK'S THRESHOLD: ANDY CAMPBELL'S HYPERMEDIA WORKS (THE RUT, SURFACE, PAPERWOUNDS)

by Anaïs Guilet

Summary

In a time when cyberculture is becoming an ever-increasing part of each and everyone's culture, the book can easily be perceived as dying, or at the very least as an outdated format. Nevertheless, a closer look at contemporary web practices reveals a proliferation of figures of the book. Andy Campbell's hypermedia works can be particularly enlightening on this matter. Through various hypermedia works available on his website Dreaming Methods, Campbell produces a genuine poetics of book and paper through various hypermedia works. The analysis of Paperwounds, Surface, and, most importantly, The Rut, will unveil the fact that Campbell's work not so much pay homage to book, as it deconstructs its figure.

Introduction

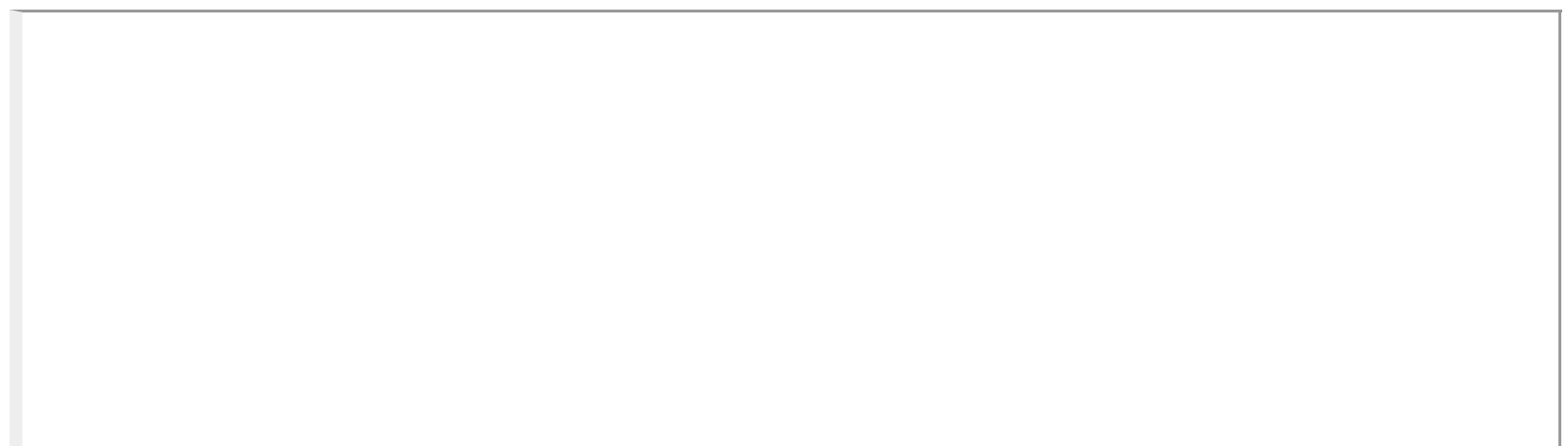
In a time when cyberculture is becoming an ever-increasing part of each and everyone's culture, the book can easily be perceived as dying, or at the very least as an outdated format. This perception is erroneous. Indeed, the book is not dead, and is still very much relevant. Furthermore, the book remains an influential paragon omnipresent on the Web. For example, to think of the publishing processes or even of literature outside of the cultural book paradigm is uncommon; we describe and even qualify the latest digital reading devices as "ebooks". The range of the literary analogies is pervasive in the digital environment: computer desktops display icons of

analogies is pervasive in the digital environment: computer desktops display icons of "bins", "files", and "pages", in which we can "cut" and "paste".

As far as Web is concerned, surprisingly, the book in all its symbolic and material implications is neither discarded, nor weakened; rather, and against all odds, we are witnessing a proliferation of figures of the book. Indeed, the book is employed and repurposed as a sign and as a symbol by numerous popular digital publishing websites such as *Calaméo* (<http://fr.calameo.com/fr.calameo.com/>) or *Issuu* (<http://issuu.com/>). Most of the time, figures of the book are used as a visualisation mode, but one can also find them in the rhetoric of the website's presentation pages. The book is also very present in many hypermedia works. For example, books are at the core of "Principes de gravité

(<http://www.chambreblanche.qc.ca/documents/principes/main.html>)," (2005) created by Sébastien Cliche and they can be found in Nick Montfort's *Trade Names* (<http://www.wordwork.org/tradenames/index.html>," (2001) as well as in Zoé Beloff's "The Influencing Machine of Miss Natalija A. (<http://www.zobeloff.com>)" (2001). On his website, entitled *Dreaming Methods*, Andy Campbell elaborates a genuine poetic of book and paper in hypermedia. This poetic is omnipresent in "Fractured (<http://www.dreamingmethods.com/fractured/>)" (2004), "Inside: A Journal of Dreams (<http://www.dreamingmethods.com/inside/>," (2004), in "The Scrapbook of Anne Sykes (<http://www.dreamingmethods.com/scrapbook/>)" (2006) or in "Surface (<http://www.dreamingmethods.com/surface/>)" (2007) and "Paperwounds (<http://www.dreamingmethods.com/paperwounds/>)" (2001). We will briefly explore all these hypermedia works before focusing more precisely on "The Rut (<http://www.dreamingmethods.com/therut/>)" created by Campbell in 2005.

Book persistence on the Web is not without ambivalence. In his Ph.D. Thesis, Olivier Ertzscheid writes:



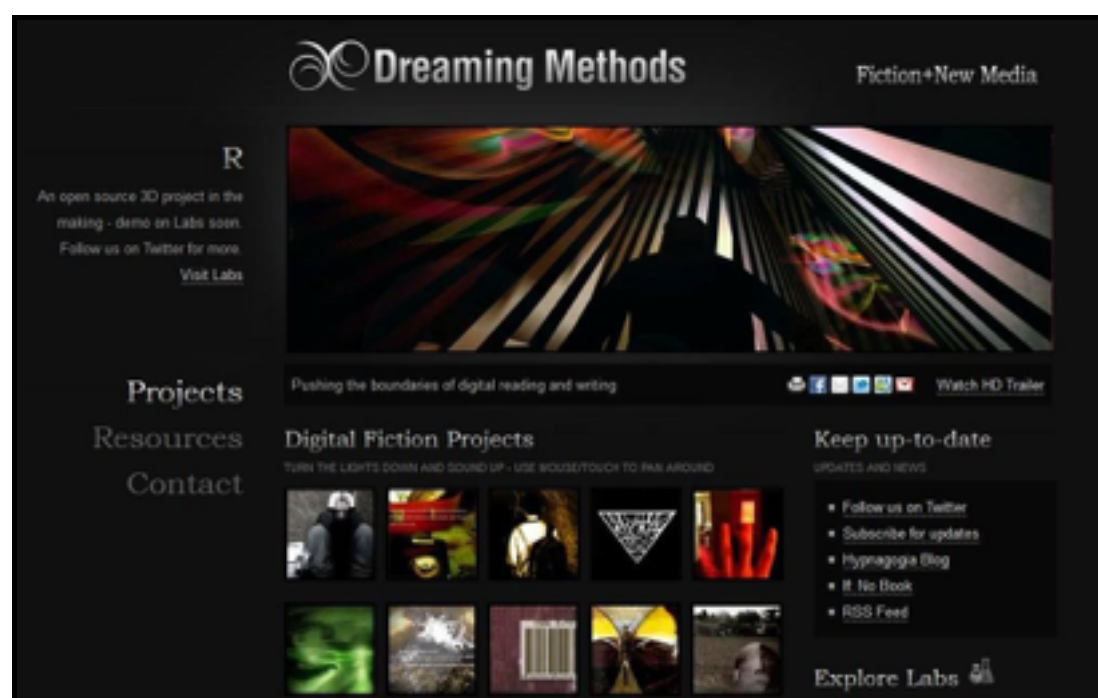
Indeed, it is necessary to think of this figure as reassuring for readers who have to face a shift in media paradigms, and whose daily reading practices oscillates between book and screen. However, the figure of the book proceeds from a double logic: of course, it demonstrates a symbolical persistence, but as representation, it is standing in for a void, an absence. As Bertrand Gervais states, every figure of the book « [...] seems to

echo a certain anxiety concerning its longevity. » (Gervais 2007, 159) And, as we will demonstrate, in Campbell's works, the book is less the object of a tribute than it is a figure that hypermedia is deconstructing.

I) *Dreaming Methods*: figures of the book and paper in hypermedia

a) Andy Campbell's dreamlike world

There are numerous figures of the book in Andy Campbell's hypermedia works available on his website *Dreaming Methods* (<http://www.dreamingmethods.com/>). Since 2000, this multimedia artist, writer and Web designer has been promoting fictional hypermedia works. *Dreaming Methods* is a showcase for more than twenty-five pieces of works in Flash, created by Campbell and his co-workers (Judi Alston, Lynda William, Martyn Bedford).



DESCRIPTION DETAILS CITATIONS SOURCE FILE


At the Books Threshold-1

Figure 1: Screenshot of the welcome page of Andy Campbell's *Dreaming Methods*, visited February 2nd 2015.

Campbell's artistic project is to produce new pieces of work merging story-telling and new media as well as mixing texts, sounds, images and animations. His goal is to construct a new reading experience thanks to a fair balance between gameplay, multimedia, typography, and narrative. In a text, entitled *Undreamt Fiction*, Andy Campbell explains his approach:



Dreaming Methods's pieces offer a wide range of fictions, where writing style and narration are not minimized in favor of hypermedia effects.



Many of Campbell's works are playful with regards to rules and conventions of the literary and print establishment; so much so that we can state that Campbell constructs a genuine poetic of the figure of the book and paper within hypermedia form.

b) Crumpled paper and book burnings: "Surface" and "Paperwounds"

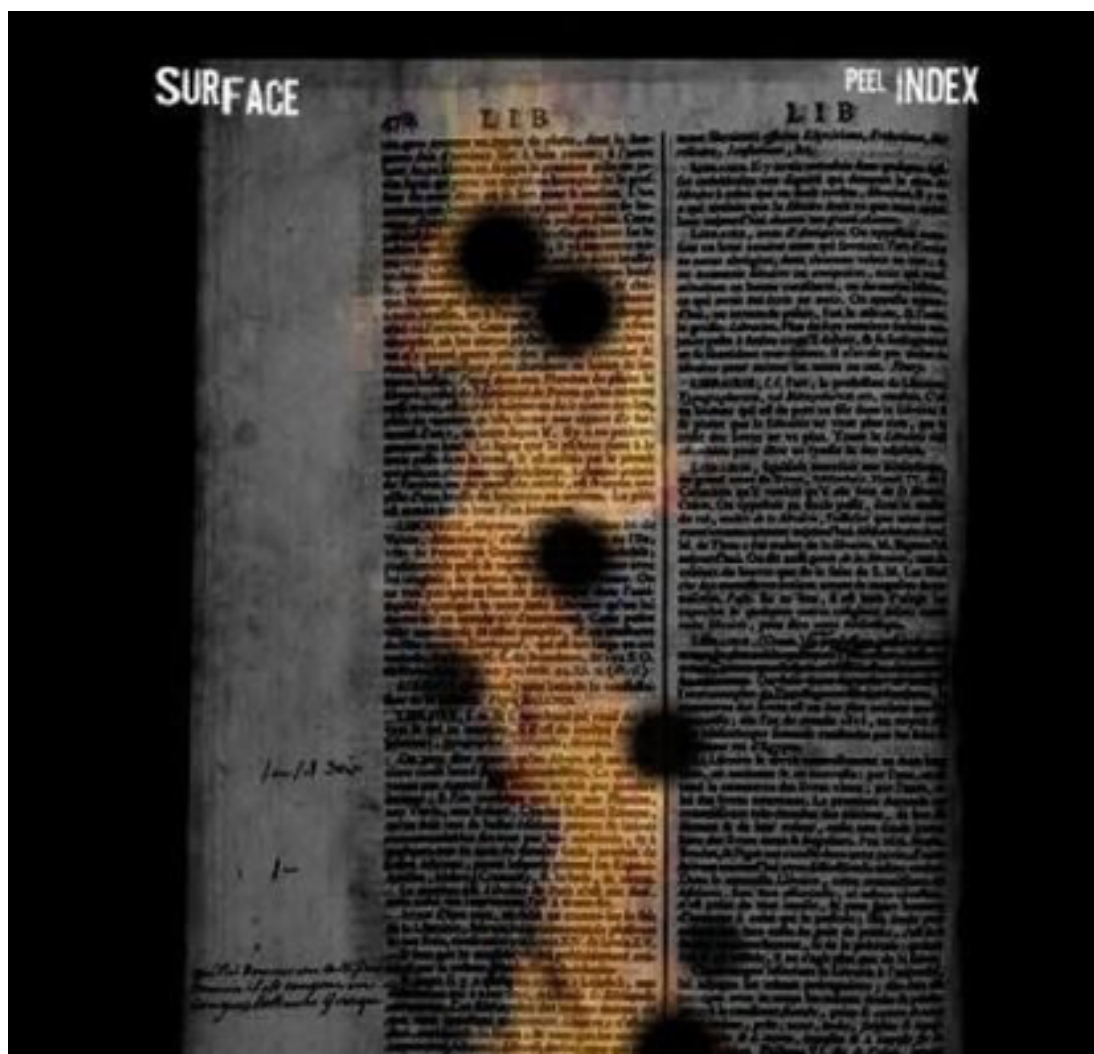
Book and paper, in Campbell's pieces, are the object of quotation, they are symbols that hypermedia tends not so much to undermine than to deconstruct. In 2001, in "Paperwounds," a bowl of crumpled paper is put at the center of the work. By clicking on the bowl, the reader quickly discovers that it contains a suicide note. Some of the

few words that are still readable are also clickable and trigger animations. These animations display floppy disks, CR-ROMs and books, thus representing the wide range of media available for contemporary texts. Bundles of sentences accompany every animation, informing the reader of the protagonist's distress that is also conveyed by the very anguishing and repetitive soundtrack. To refer to the work's title, this piece of paper contains the words of a wounded person, but the paper and the text themselves are also wounded: the paper is crumpled and the text is unreadable more often than not.



[DESCRIPTION](#) [DETAILS](#) [CITATIONS](#) [SOURCE FILE](#)

At the Books Threshold-2





[DESCRIPTION](#) [DETAILS](#) [CITATIONS](#) [SOURCE FILE](#)

At the Books Threshold-3

Figure 2 and 3: Screenshots of Andy Campbell's "Paperwounds" (2001) and "Surface" (2007), both visited February 2nd 2015.

The problematic of illegibility is as ominous as the figures of the book throughout Campbell's works. This may be because, for this artist, both are inextricably linked. Most of his works offer a "quality" mode that allows altering the visual rendering of the works and its typography so that writings become barely readable. This mode is present in "Paperwounds," as well as in Surface.

In "Surface," launched in 2007, the reader witnesses a "real" digital book burning. Indeed, the piece of work opens on a simulated book page to which a crackling fire is superimposed. The animation is an oppressive and repetitive sound of a breeze accompanying the animation. In addition to flames, which seem on the verge of annihilating the book, grey bands are blurring the image and moving according to the cursor's movements. The page at the center of the work is composed of two columns of text at the head of which we can read the letters LIB. It might be the first letters of the Latin word liber, which means book. There are also annotations written in cursive script on the margins. However, the text, just like its annotations, remains illegible: it is a pure image of text. Then, in Campbell's works, figures of text, because of their flagrant illegibility, are superimposed to figures of the book. The main goal of the text, which is to be read, is thus undermined. In "Surface," like in "Paperwounds," the narration is driven by the different animations that the reader is driven to trigger. The narrative is thus kept away from its ancestral media to be reconstructed elsewhere, in hypermedia. The paper sheet is just a "surface", a peel, and an interface. Thanks to position captors, some areas of the sheet appear to be active and animations pop up. In Surface, these active areas vary in number and place each time the reader refreshes the page on his browser, entitled « phone », « never happened », « lost letter to », « somewhere in », « I will always », « Gone », « letter », « nothing », « reduced », every one of these areas is an entry in the hypermedia work that is composed of forty-nine screens in which we can discover memories of an anonymous character scattered between pieces of thoughts, letters, poems or dream stories. These bundles are most of the time barely legible, either because they are half burnt, or because the text flies by very quickly, making it impossible to read. The expression « No Signal » comes back several times to punctuate the work and to signify the

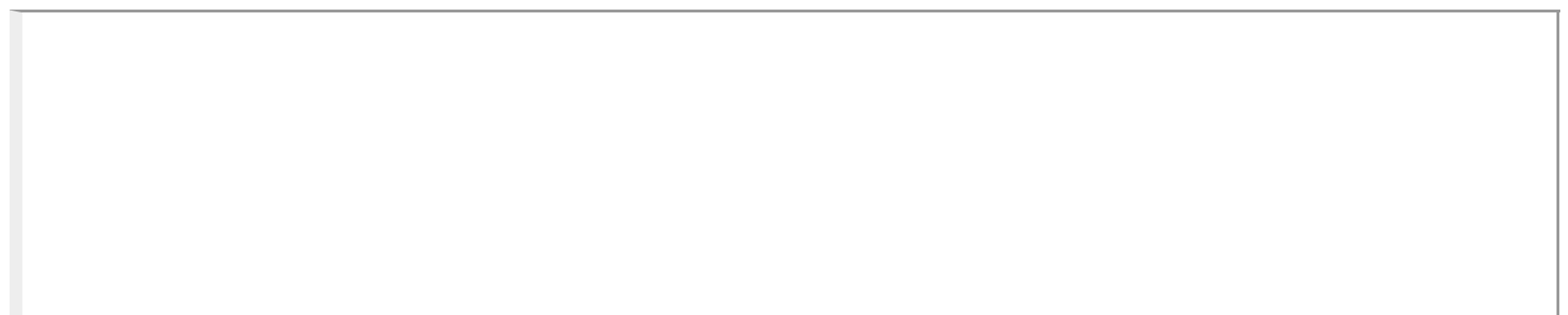
No signal" comes back several times to punctuate the work and to signify the impossibility to go further, to access the content, that is to say, the impossibility of reading.

c) Simulation and figures

"Paperwounds" like "Surface," superimposes book and/ or paper figures to a virtual simulation of book and/or paper. Simulating can be defined as faking through adopting appearances and behaviours of someone or something. Campbell's works definitely proceed from a form of imitation; they result from a digital emulation of former media. Simulation and figure are rather similar insofar as both are linked to the imaginary and are based on an absence. Actually, the figure is always anchored in an imaginary of loss; this loss is the loss of that which it represents. A figure is an object that belongs to the world; its semiotic value has been shifted and reinvested in order to reflect an effort of reconstruction work. "Paperwounds" and "Surface" simulate paper and play with the imaginary of the book. These works do not claim their affiliation with book culture as much as they digitize it, playing with its features. In the terms of Baudrillard, in *Simulacra and Simulation*, one would say that that they annihilate book "reality". By relying on book simulation, figures of the book constitute a double, as Baudrillard theorized it in his analyses of cloning or holograms:



The double, the simulation of an object, is a figure of the imaginary, which relates to my hypothesis of the superimposition of the figure with simulation within the works I focus on. For Bertrand Gervais,



Thinking about how book figure and book or paper simulations, as doubles, superimpose in "Surface" and "Paperwounds," Baudrillard's words seem all the more

accurate:

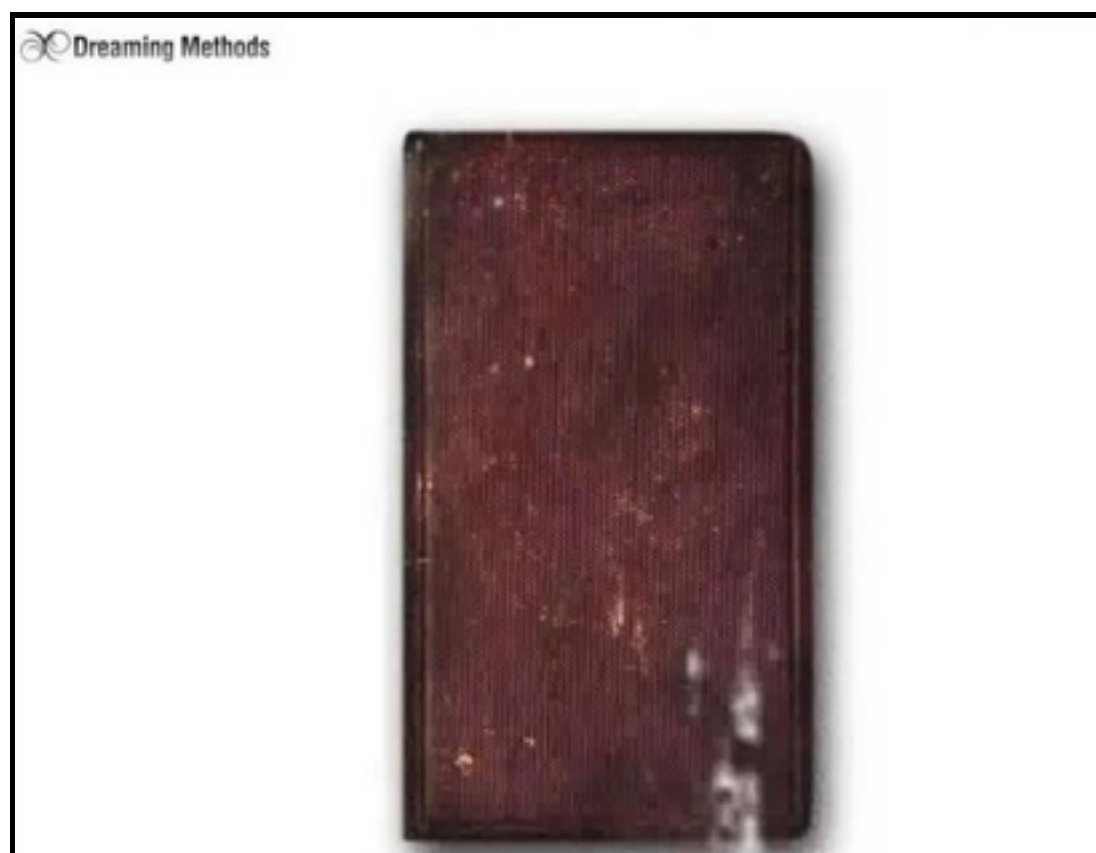


Indeed we can also consider the digitized book in "Surface" or the crumpled paper in "Paperwounds" as something that is more cheerful, more authentic, in the light of their model. In Campbell's works, books are augmented with flashy technological illuminations, becoming books that are nearly more authentic than the original, books which paper creases and burns. We are faced with book simulacra that interrogate the disappearance of their founding object. We will follow these reflections through the study of *The Rut*. The whole work is constructed around the digital simulation of a book. At first, *The Rut* seems to be a book without contents, whose narration is transferred into a fictive peritext, to use Gérard Genette's terminology (1997), that is displayed over and over again: an empty book figure.

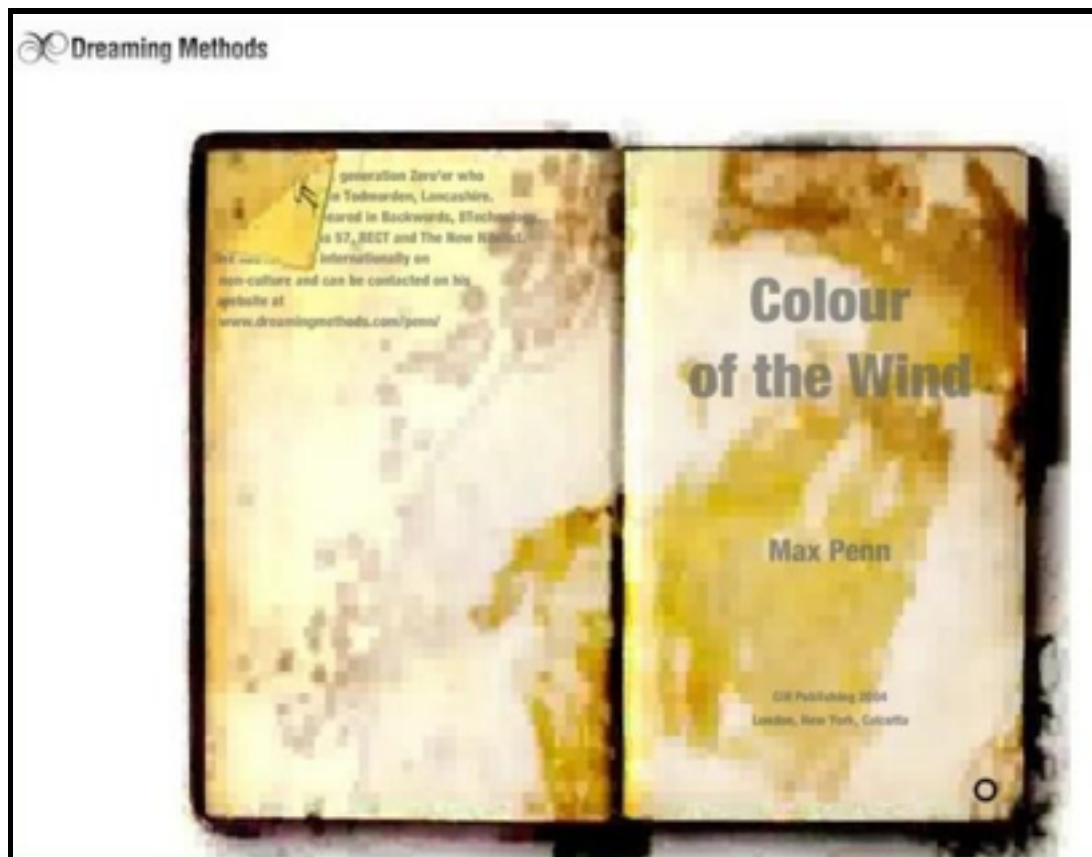
I) "The Rut:" fictionalizing peritext

a) "I have to tell you this"

"The Rut " opens on a closed book. The work is presented as: « A self published book that never gets back the front cover ».



At the Books Threshold-4



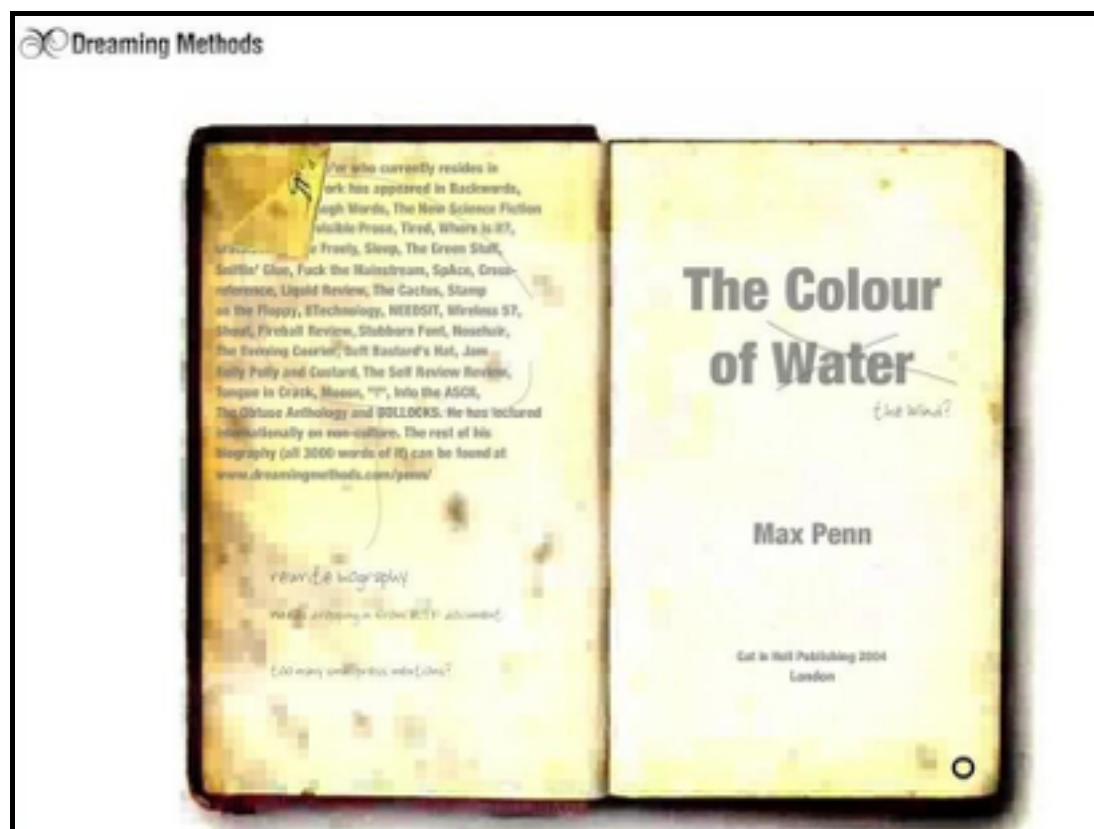
At the Books Threshold-5

Figure 4 and 5 : Screenshot of Andy Campbell's "The Rut," (2005), visited February 2nd 2015.

Alongside pixelated images of this book, one can hear a melodious music that seems slightly deteriorated. When the reader clicks on the front cover, the book opens to unveil the title page. The image displays stroboscopic light effects. According to publishing tradition, the colophon page follows the title page, where one can find technical publishing information as well as a list of other books published by the author. Here the page is slightly turned down, hiding the text a bit. The book is entitled *Colour of the Wind* and its author is Max Penn. It appears to have been published in 2004 by CiH Publishing, « London, New York, Calcutta », which may appear as an awkward trio of publishing places. If Max Penn's novel is just as fictional as its author, its publisher happens to be very real. CiH Publishing stand for Chelsea International House Publishing. On the left page, one can read:



According to these few truncated information on Colour of the Wind's author, he is English and belongs neither to generation X nor Y: he is a zero'er, a kind of neo-nihilist specialized in non-culture. If the reader decides to click on the circle on the right corner of the title page, she will not access the body of the text as could have been expected. Instead she will watch the book flip back to the front cover. This time, a few words and numbers in grey cursive writings are present on the right side of the book. They look like handwritten annotations. A sequence of ten digits can be read, which corresponds probably to an ISBN, « CiH Publishing », the title under which lies the abbreviation (TBC) signifying « to be confirmed ». Clicking on the front cover, a new title page appears, different from the one before. The content of the colophon has changed and it is now circled by a pencil drawing and these few "handwritten" words: « Rewrite biography/needs dropping in from RTF document/ too many small press mentions? ». The title has changed, now it's « The Colour of Water ». « Water » is crossed out and annotated: « the wind? ».

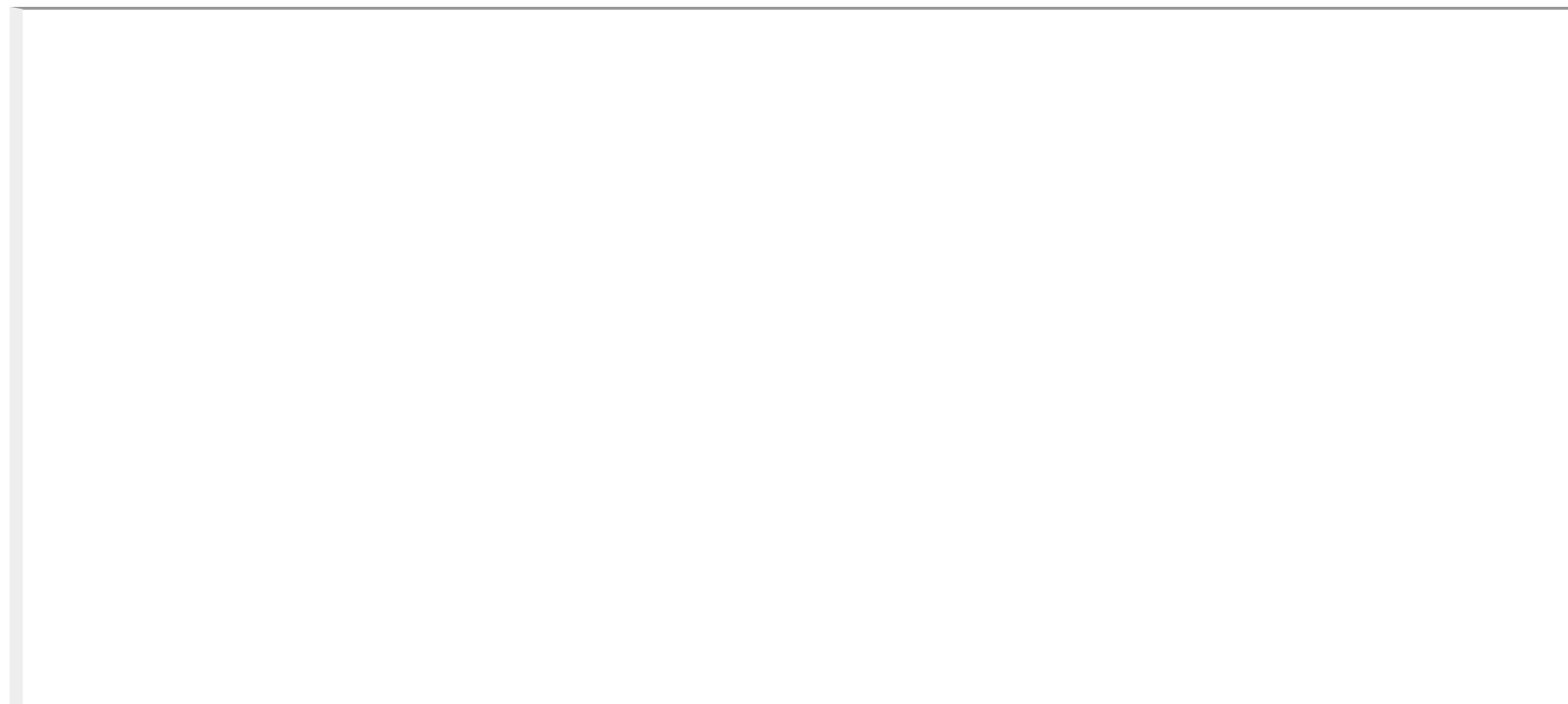


DESCRIPTION DETAILS CITATIONS SOURCE FILE

At the Books Threshold-6

Figure 6 : Screenshot of Andy Campbell's "The Rut "(2005), visited February 2nd 2015.

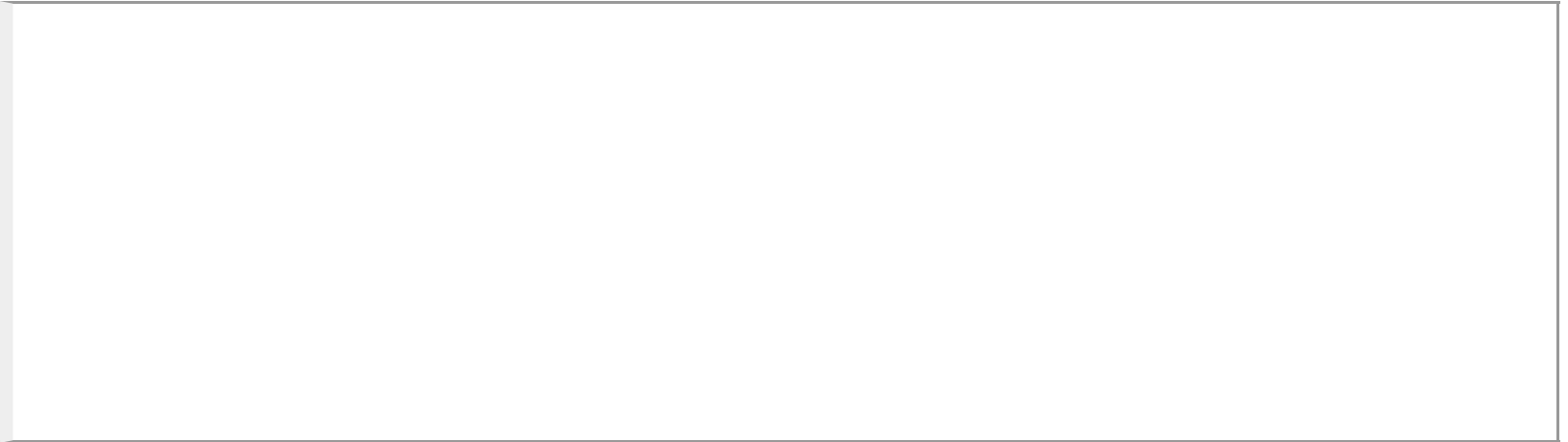
The reader is confronted to different versions of Max Penn's publishing project. CiH Publishing has humorously become « Cat in Hell Publishing». On the left page, the author's biography has been modified and lengthened by a list of journals and books in which Max Penn is supposed to have been published:



These journals' names turn into a joke and a parody because of their accumulation and their absurdity. If the reader clicks once again on the circle at the left of the page, the book flips once more. The text of The Rut is composed of the fictional peritext of a digitized book. There are fifteen different versions of the book. Once the reader has seen them all, she is taken back to the first one. Each new version becomes more and more absurd and through the process they deconstruct the rules of peritext until there is no title, no publishing date and place, no author name anymore. In the last version, there is only a few words left on the page: « I HAVE TO TELL YOU THIS. » This final sentence is a parody of what peritext stands for. Indeed, in framing the body matter, it does nothing more than presenting what the author has to tell to his readers.

However, in The Rut, the author never says anything since in the content of the book is never accessible. Narrativity is transferred to this fictional peritext which seriousness and formality disintegrates more and more as one version follows another. The story lies in the repetitive opening of the ever-changing title and colophon page. The hypermedia work relates the publishing story of a book written by a character whose psychological integrity seems to deteriorate more and more with each version. Typography, author's name, work's title, length and location of the publisher peritext change with every reader's click. This way, the title change successively from « The Colours of the Wind » to « The Colour of Water », then to « The Colour of Dark Water », « Colour of Water », « Unknown Colours », « The Colour of the Heart », « The Heart of Colour », and more and more incongruous: « Lepidoptera », « My Arse and other stories », « I need to tell everyone how shit my life is but how great I am » even reaching the point in a version where the only title

me is but now great I am », even reaching the point in a version where the only title provided is the mere mention « Title ». In Campbell's work, the main character is literally in a rut with his publishing project, which appears to be just as destroying for him that it for the book itself. He turns from being a proud writer to an anonymous one who keep on repeating on the colophon page:



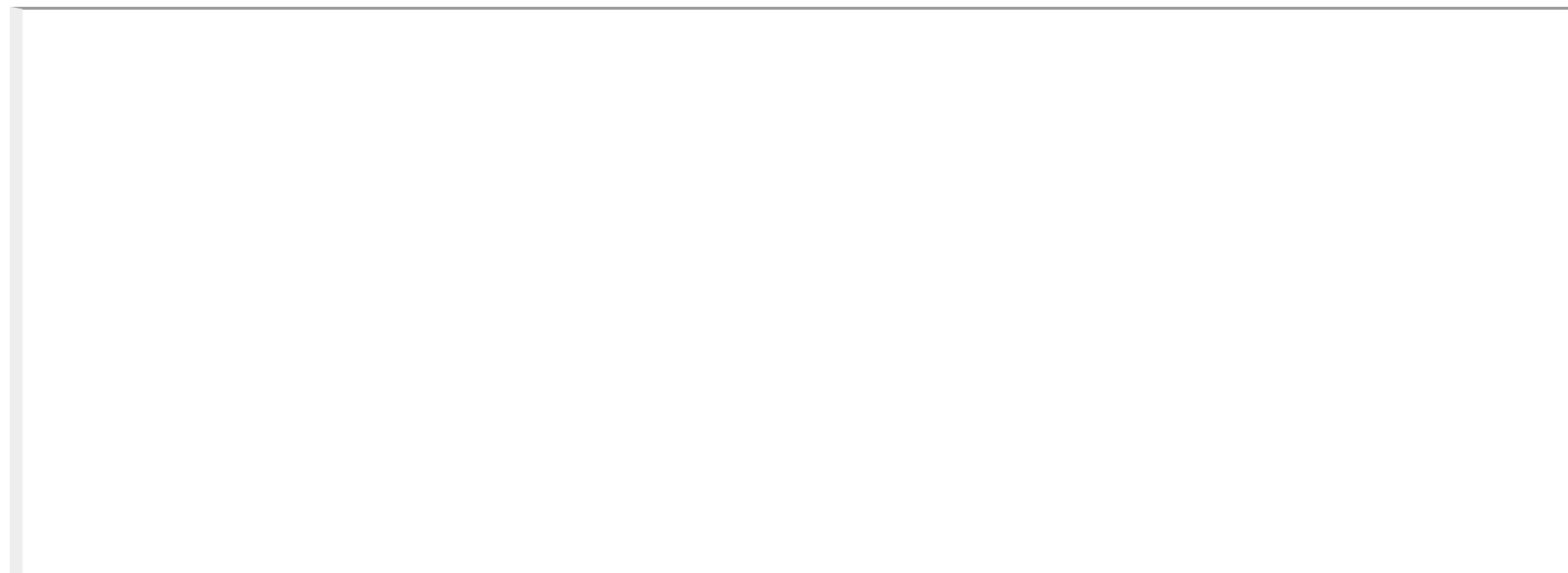
b) "The Drug Tunnel by Max Penn"

In the first two versions of the The Rut's simulated book, the reader can access a web address to contact the author: <http://www.dreamingmethods.com/penn/>. The attentive and curious ones who will click on this address will be redirected to a web page with an opened tab entitled « The Drug Tunnel by Max Penn ». Nothing but black text on a white background is present on the screen, aligned to the left in a narrow column. Is this the content of the digital book of which the reader could only access the peritext? The only thing one can say is that it is a text from Max Penn, who the reader knows to be a fictional character in Andy Campbell's "The Rut." The title of the text is not similar to the one in the book, however in so far as the book's title have changed more than ten times already, there remains some uncertainty on the nature of the text, so it could be ventured that this is the content of the digital book. The text is narrow and very long; it is also truncated. Every beginning and end of each line is missing. The text is divided by a few dotted lines, these divisions do not seem to form meaningful units, as would chapters do. There are forty-two pieces of texts that seem to coincide with the amount of words book pages can usually contain. So there is a sense of dealing with the content of a book presented at length on a Web page. Whenever the reader types the URL of "The Drug Tunnel by Max Penn" or refreshes the Web page, the text layout changes: column appears more or less large and the amount of missing words in each line varies. Here are the opening words of the text in two different versions loaded one after the other:



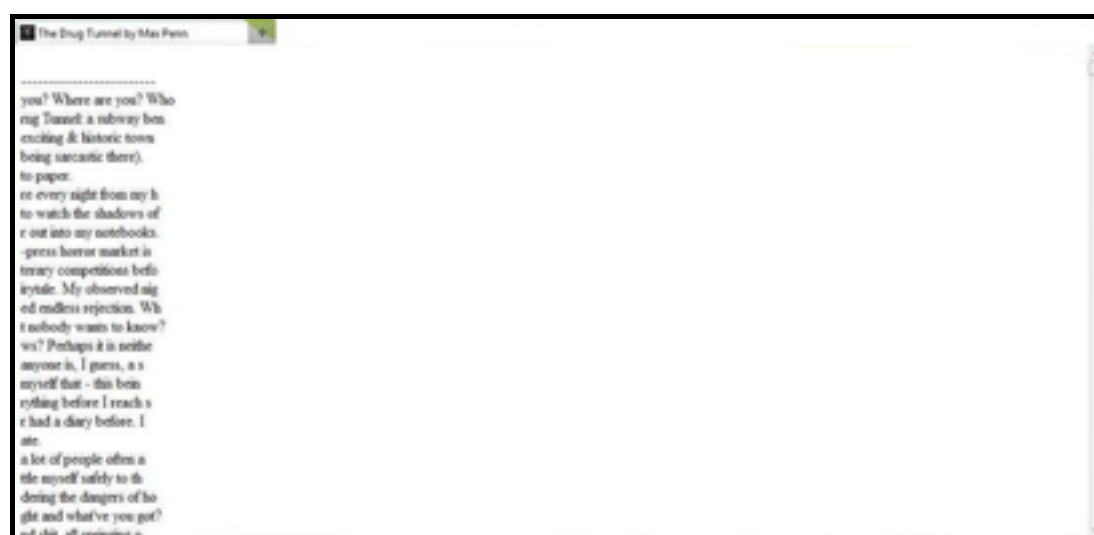
The original text is the same; only the line breaks are different, therefore lost bits of text in the left and right margins varies accordingly. A PHP script generates a random cutting of the text, using a different number of characters. In loading the page several times, the reader can find the broadest version of the text, which is the one with the least missing words, and try to read it. Nevertheless, she will never gain access to a full version. Her patience is then very much challenged since he should fill the gaps in the text by herself and extract its meaning. She may try to enrich her reading by trying several versions of the text in different browser tabs, thus displaying as many of the word accessible as possible. However, this reading is extremely laborious, and does not allow to view the integral text or to find each and every words and sentences. The reader is allowed nothing more than a partial view of the plot and meanings. Yet there is a real story in "The Drug Tunnel" and the reader may capture its mainlines only by relying on her deductive power. The text is written in first person singular. A narrator is introduced in the first paragraphs, he is called Stuart Chester and what the reader is discovering is probably his diary: « forgot something: Chester Stuart I'm 19. » The diary is a pattern that we can find in several pieces of work of *Dreaming Methods* website: from "Inside: a Journal of Dream" to "The Diary," as well as "Fractured." "The Drug Tunnel" is the diary of a teenager in crisis: he hates his mother, talks about his love problems and wants to become a writer. The character attends writing courses at a university and he used to seek inspiration at night walking around a tunnel located under a road leading to Halifax (UK). His family denigrates his ambitions of becoming a writer. In the middle of the text, two poems can be

identified:



Rhymes lead to believe that it is a poem, even though there are a few feet missing. The words at the end of each line reveal the character's depressive tendency as well as the diary's cynical tone. This atmosphere is reminiscent of Max Penn's books. The Rut is a metafictional piece of work where Max Penn, Campbell's fictional character, is an asthenic man who creates a teenage character at his image: a self-destructive rebel writer. The *mise en abyme* thus unfolds on several levels. Andy Campbell's fictional hypermedia portrays Max Penn's book that leads to Stuart's diary.

From a media standpoint, on the reader's screen is a simulated book, which content is not accessible in the way that seems most common, that is to say by clicking on virtual pages, as it is done on publishing websites like "Calaméo," for example. The content of Penn's book is available through a Web address and an interface characterized by its typographical sobriety.



[DESCRIPTION](#) [DETAILS](#) [CITATIONS](#) [SOURCE FILE](#)

At the Books Threshold-7

Figure 7 : Screenshot of Andy Campbell's "The Drug Tunnel by Max Penn" (2005), visited February 2nd 2015.

The narrow column of text requires a constant scrolling down in order to be read, which adds to the already laborious reading process. If the reader looks at its source code, she realizes its extreme simplicity. Nowadays every source code on the Web contains CSS (Cascading Style Sheet), which defines visual appearance of website: layout, background color, text font, etc. However, the HTML code of the page entitled "The Drug Tunnel By Max Penn" does not contain any CSS. Usually the text is inserted in the code with the <p> tag, which is absent here. So this is a plain text where the only omnipresent tag is
 that defines line break. This text and its layout that makes it unreadable could be the result of an error well known by Web designers: the text has been cut and pasted from a RTF document (Rich Text Format, from text processing software) directly into a HTML page. This creates a conflict between two different computer formats, which, most of the time, deconstructs the text layout, inserting unwanted lines, truncating words. Besides, the RTF file format is alluded to in one of the annotations of the second version of Penn's book: « Rewrite biography/ needs dropping in from RTF document » (Cf. Figure 6). Andy Campbell is far from being a computer newbie. Through such a use of computer language, he promotes a poetics of the bug while at the same time he highlights the importance of code aesthetics, on which depends text legibility. In « Le récit numérique à la frontière de la disparition », Bruno Scoccimaro notes the importance of code for hypermedia works design, in which texts on screen are always the result of computer codes:

Writing digital texts requires complex skills that appeal on both linguistic and computer knowledge. Writing for the screen, is writing with code, it's sometimes even writing the code. Thus writing on screen is never immediate. It is always a deferred writing. The construction of a digital text is always twofold: there is the time of writing, then the time of its realization. There are actually two texts: on the one side there is the "source code" on the other side the readable text. Once more, to write such work is to write facing the absence of the text. (Scoccimaro 2008, 132)

In the display of an empty digital book, Campbell's work emphasizes both the importance of code and the absence of text. The digital work is built on a tension between what we see on the screen and code that is more or less hidden, more or less secret, and is the very condition of existence of what we see, of what is legible, and sometimes, what is illegible, as it is the case in « The Drug Tunnel ».

Moreover, Max Penn's text is typographically poor, which contrasts with the visual richness of the first part of "The Rut," realized in Flash. « The Drug Tunnel by Max Penn » is a Web page that does not have the usual finesse of hypermedia, interactivity and multimedia aspects among others. This text is very tedious to access, its reading is not at all intuitive and it is too long to be easily read on screen. It could be the perfect counterexample for what web publication should look like. However, there is no doubt that in the eyes of Andy Campbell, text on Internet is meaningful only as

long as it belongs to hypermedia projects. To be accessible to Internet users, hypermedia works should have intuitive interfaces; text should be used in complementarity to images, animations and videos, without which their online presence has no purpose. Without these multimedia and interactive artefacts, they are unreadable. Raw text, given on the screen by the kilometer, makes no sense in a Web 2.0 context. Text, just like storytelling, should be hypermedia or should not be. Media and its contents are then resolutely inseparable. Thus, in *Dreaming Methods*, Andy Campbell creates fictions exclusively for hypermedia. Furthermore, if Penn's text is unreadable on the Web, what about this book simulation without content? What about the eternal peritext displayed by Campbell? We are in front of an empty book figure or, if we assume that "The Drug Tunnel" is another title of Penn's book, we are in front of a book whose (illegible) content is only accessible via a URL. In both cases, the book is devoid of content or meaning. It becomes a useless object; it is only a picture, a figure.

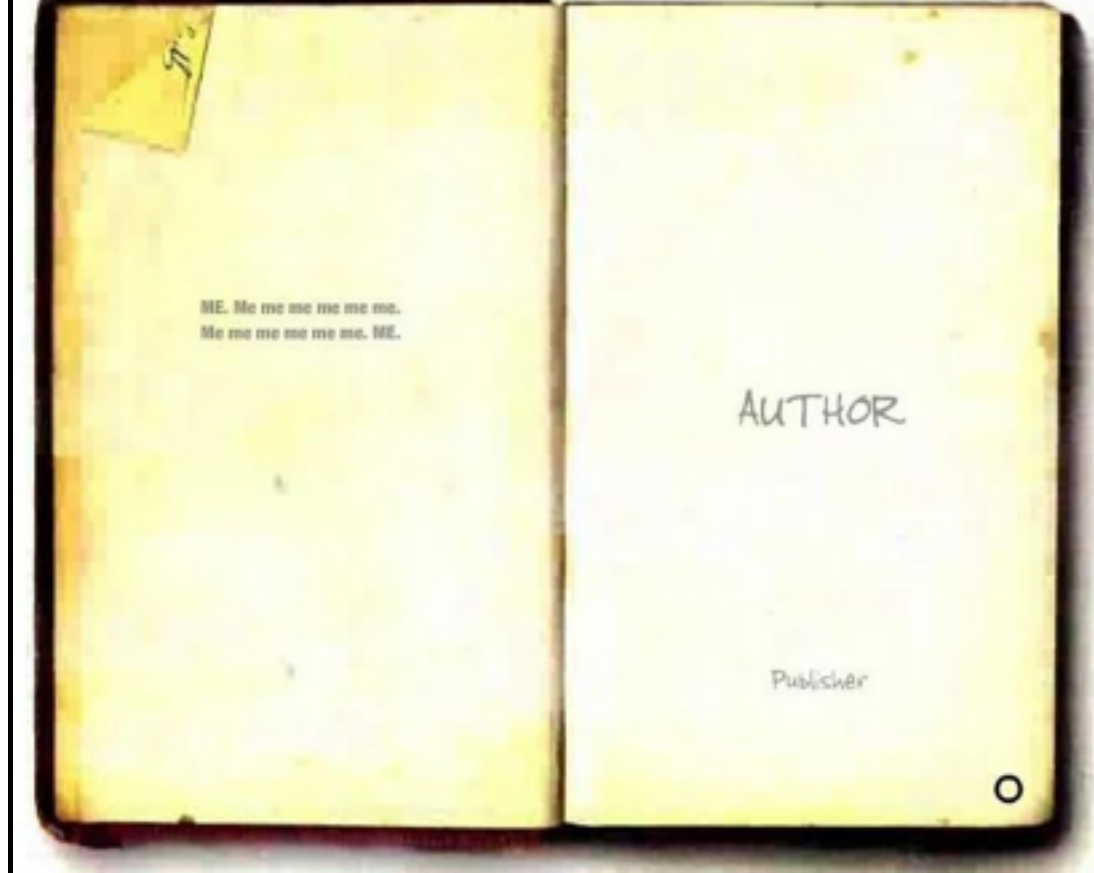


Traditional reading, text and book seem to be undermined in *The Rut*. The book only exists as a symbolic object.

c) Metafiction and metamediation

The *Rut* is a metafictional and metamediated work. Different degrees of fiction contaminate each other, as is the case in the various media within the work. The reader moves from a figure of the book displayed in Flash to a HTML page and from Campbell's fiction to Penn's to Chester's. She navigates between these fictional and media layers in a flexible yet disordered way, since they contaminate each other so much that nobody can distinguish one from another. Thus, from a fictional standpoint, one can only offer reading hypothesis that connect Penn and his character. Indeed, the digital book written by Penn includes a version in which the colophon page shows a repetitive sequence of the pronoun « me »:





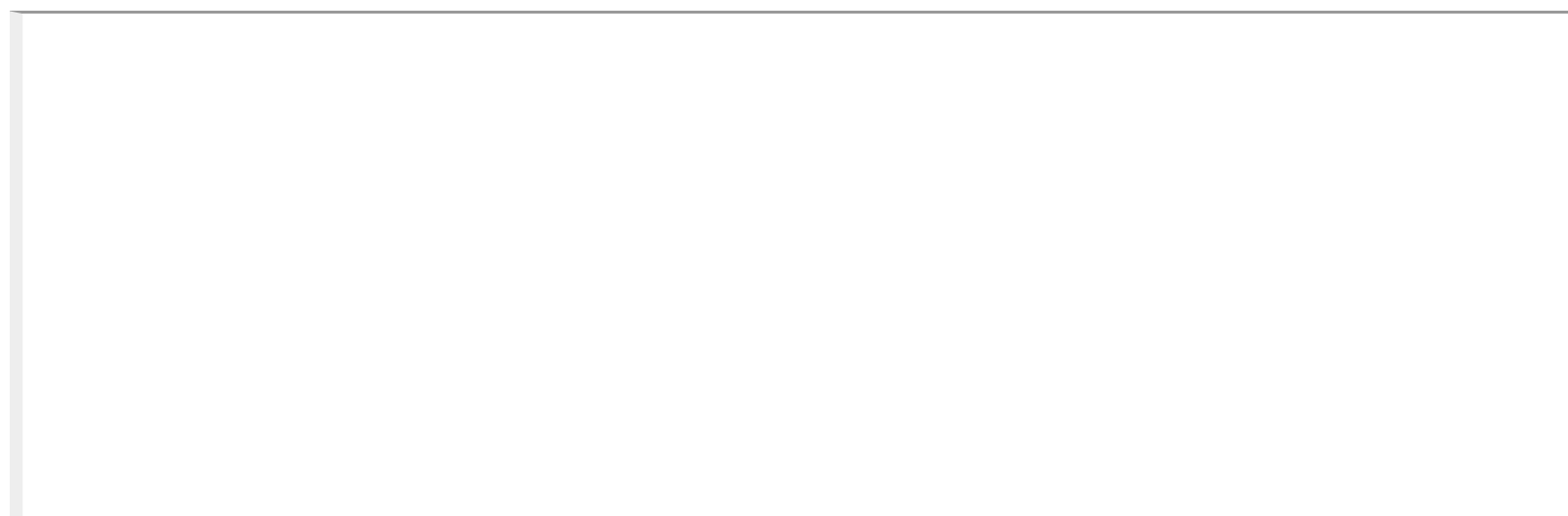
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At the Books Threshold-8

Figure 8: Screenshot of Andy Campbell's *The Rut*,

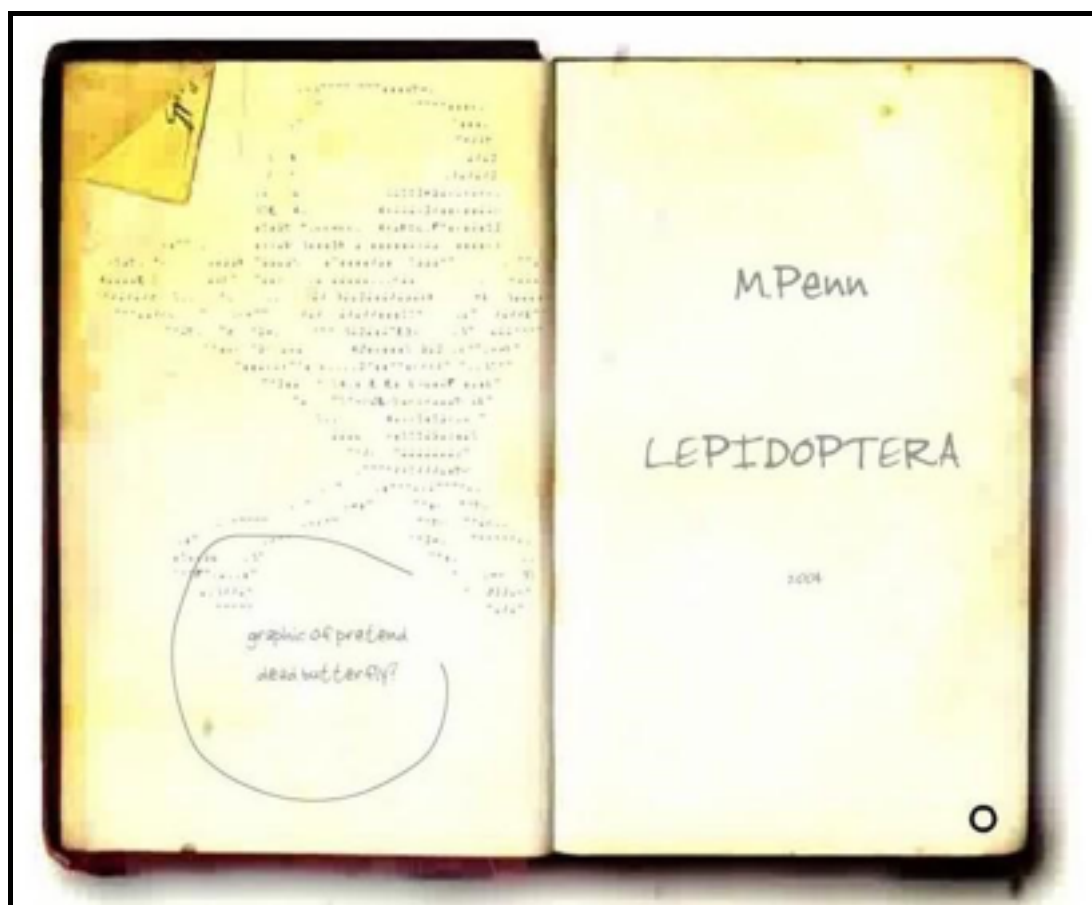
www.dreamingmethods.com/therut/, 2005. Visited February 2nd 2015.

This page echoes the text of "The Drug Tunnel": « my own lack of self-/f-belief self-power self self self self /sel-] ». Like successive editions of Penn's book, Stuart Chester's text decays until not only the beginnings and ends of every line are missing, but letters in the middle of most of the words as well. The layers of fiction overlap. The fiction of Stuart Chester created by Penn collides with Penn's fiction created by Campbell. Issue of distinction between fiction and reality is treated in *The Drug Tunnel*'s text:



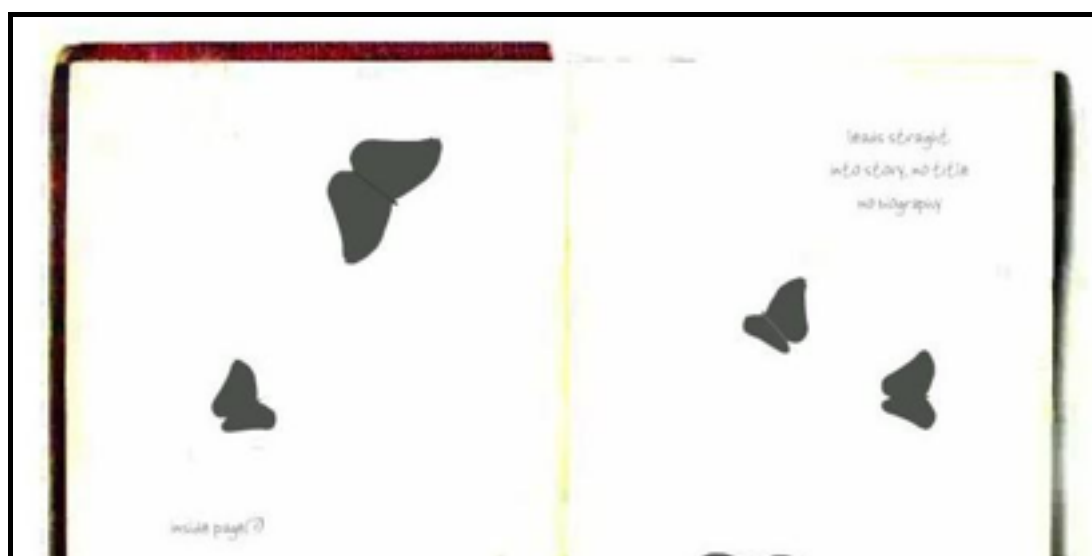
The reader also gets lost in this fictional *mise en abyme*, this fiction in a fiction, which features a media in the media. In *The Rut*, characters and media are so much superimposed that they merge. The last "words" written by Stuart are: « e my f ckIng pen's run » (my fckIng pen's run out). From « pen » to Penn there is only a letter

pen's r n ou » (my fucking pen's run out). From « pen » to Penn there is only a letter to add. And one could wonder which of the pencil or the character is the most elusive in this work? Links between embedded fictions are numerous but a butterfly pattern could be the common thread in the maze created by Campbell. In *The Drug Tunnel* by Max Penn, there is many evocation of moths: « hadows of the moths dance across my stories / y notebooks ». In front of this sentence the reader might think of the two versions of Penn's book that depict butterflies. In the first one, six black butterflies (that might be moths?) are scattered on the page; they are supposed, according to Penn's annotations, to guide the reader to the main text, thus replacing the usual editorial peritext. In the second one, the text entitled *Lepidoptera* (the adult form of *Lepidoptera* is commonly called butterfly) shows the back of colophon page where a skull is drawn. Penn annotates: « Graphic of pretend dead butterfly ».



DESCRIPTION DETAILS CITATIONS SOURCE FILE

At the Books Threshold-9



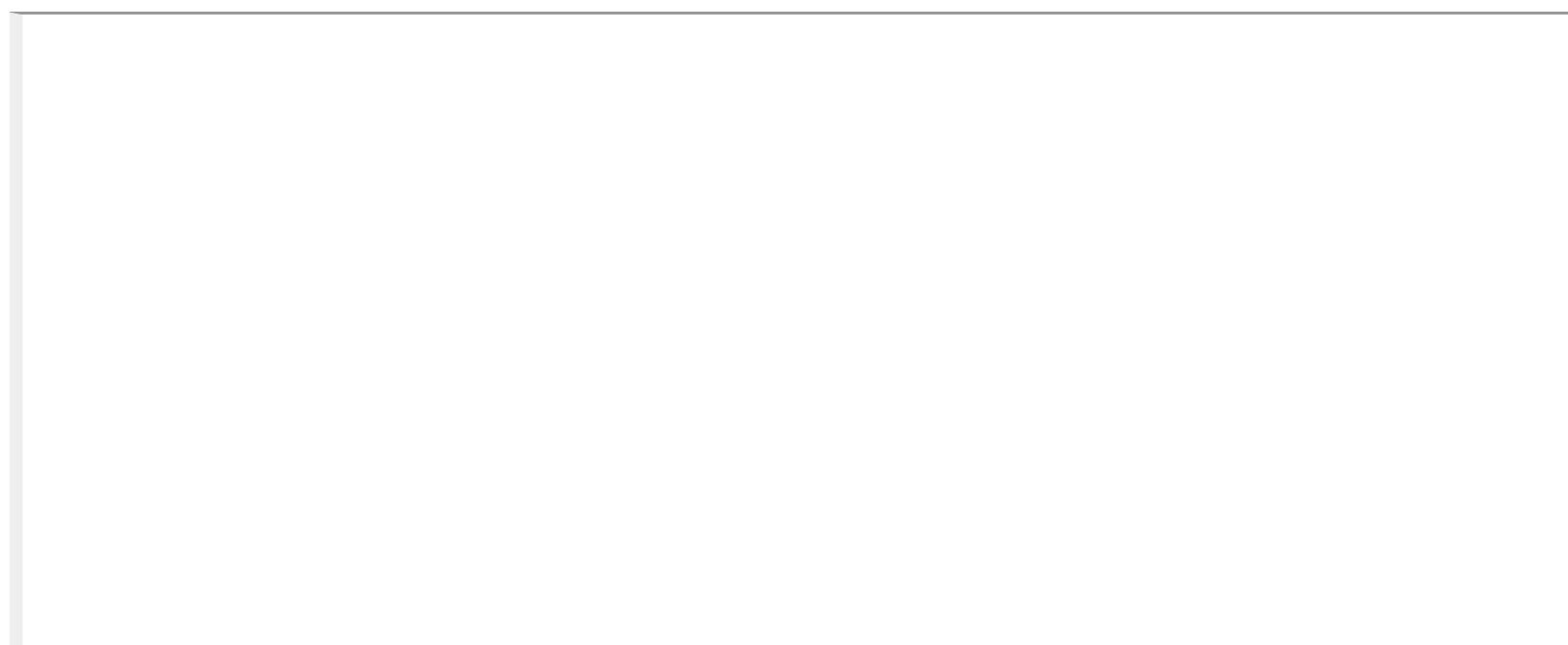


[DESCRIPTION](#) [DETAILS](#) [CITATIONS](#) [SOURCE FILE](#)

At the Books Threshold-10

Figure 9 et 10 : Screenshots of Andy Campbell's "The Rut" (2005), visited February 2nd 2015.

Moreover, the book form and its two open pages, has the appearance of the wings of a butterfly. But beyond this similarity, the butterfly is a symbol very dear to Andy Campbell. The graceful and fragile butterfly, whose beauty is not tarnished by its ephemerality, is a symbol very often used in Dreaming Methods' website. Campbell himself uses the butterfly metaphor when he talks about his website:



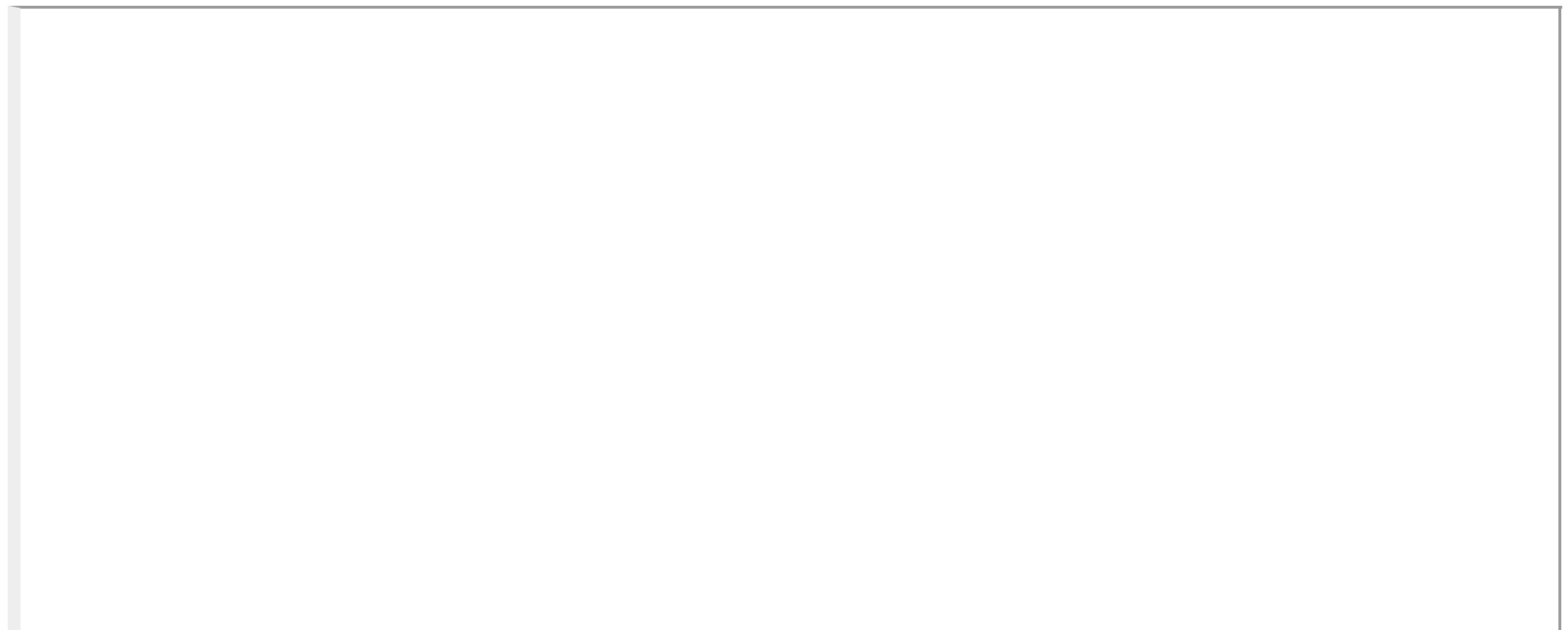
With strange beauty and uncertain longevity, Lepidoptera is also an insect characterized by its ability to transform: from an egg, it becomes a caterpillar and then a butterfly. The butterfly also characterizes the media paradigms transition of which The Rut and every figures of the book in hypermedia are as many examples. In Campbell's work, the usual editorial peritext is replaced by butterflies and, more importantly, by dead butterflies placed in the shape of a skull. These butterflies appear as new symbols of the book transition to hypermedia while the dislocation of book and its peritext appear as figure of the end of the book imaginary.

At the beginning of his essay "*Dérives de la fin. Science, corps et ville*," Jean-François Chassay writes that the imaginary of the End "concerns representations of a world about to end, the thought of a progress, a shift to, and the unthinkable, the medical

about to end, the thought of a passage, a shift towards the unthinkable: the radical transformation for the subject of his own universe" (Chassay 2008, 9). The figures of book in hypermedia characterize this crucial point where we raise the question of a possible disappearance of the book. In this article, the end of the book is mentioned as an imaginary and as a figure, which does not imply that this end will happen. The book is still alive, well and omnipresent, thus references to books appear less paradoxical or anachronistic as they are proof that, historically speaking, there is no replacement logic caused by emergence of new medias. Rather we witness a proliferation of media that cohabit, nourish and inspire each other. The Web does not abolish the book culture, it refers constantly to it, plays with it, recreates it, bringing it up to date. The book as a symbolic figure remains structuring. Jacques Derrida already discussed this fact in 1997. The philosopher was speaking about paper, its modeling properties (*propriétés modélisantes*) and its possible withdrawal, never of its disappearance:



Derrida speaks of an "earthquake" to describe the changes in progress, but he also calls for putting into perspective this visceral fear of book disappearance.



Olivier Ertzscheid in *Le lieu, le lien, le livre : Les enjeux cognitifs et stylistiques de l'organisation hypertextuelle*, talks about the post-bibliocentrism era to describe our period. That book is no longer the central media paradigm nowadays is a fact that our daily reading practices, between book and screen, proves. However this does not exclude that the book remains important:

Today, book and its culture are integrated to the so-called cyberculture. For literary works, like for publishers and designers, being contemporary means to be hybrid, to identify with both persistent book culture and cyber culture that we have no choice but to acknowledge.

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