

What Are You Trying to Say?

The Interface as an Integral Element of Argument

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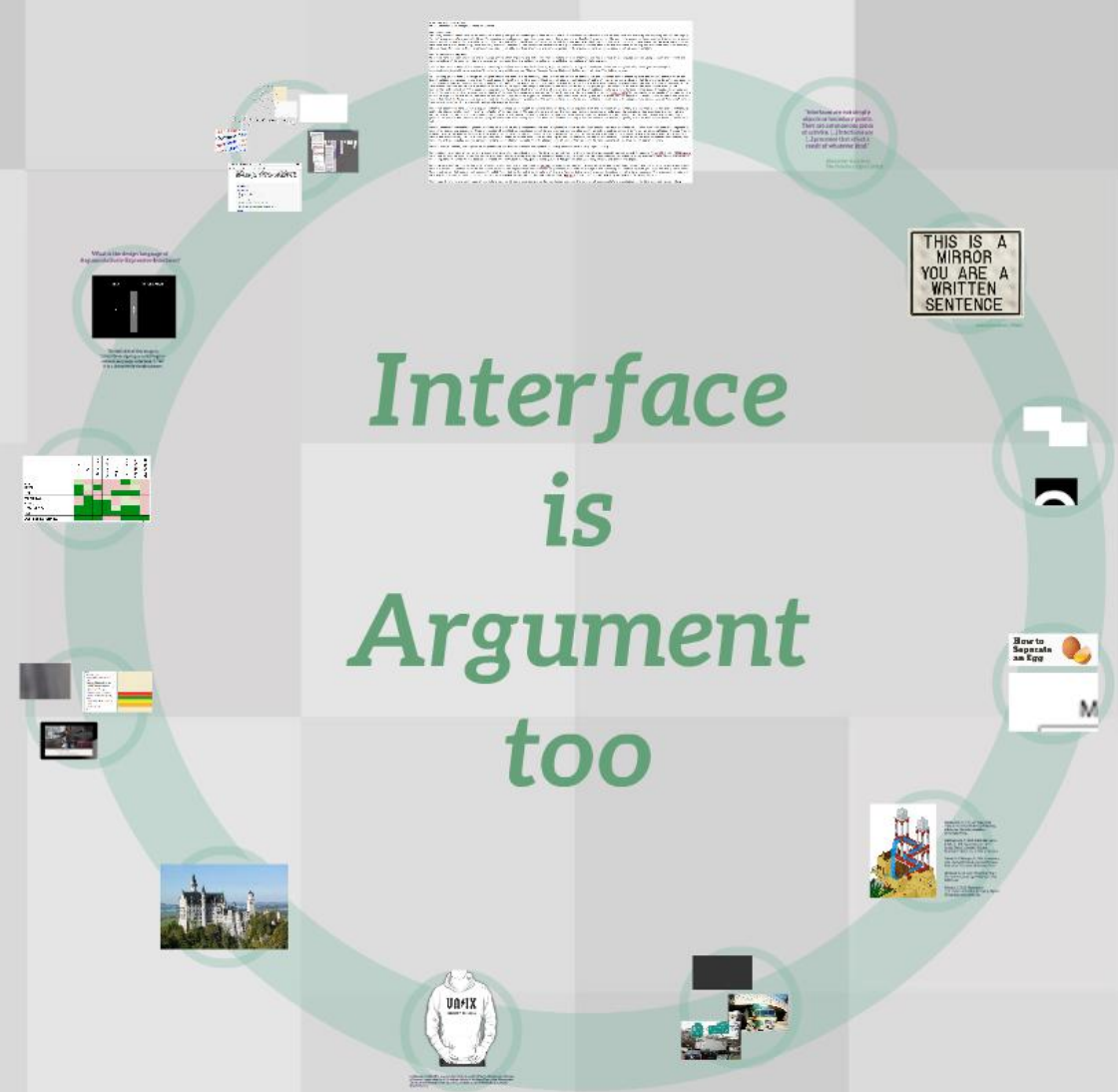


Saturday 24 September 2016 · The Edition As Interface · Centre for Information Modelling · Graz University

The Small Print

Otherwise known as Disclaimer

The small print of this presentation is the fact that the text of the slides is not intended to be a presentation, but rather a collection of thoughts and ideas that are shared through this medium. It is not intended to be a formal document, but rather a collection of thoughts and ideas that are shared through this medium. It is not intended to be a formal document, but rather a collection of thoughts and ideas that are shared through this medium. It is not intended to be a formal document, but rather a collection of thoughts and ideas that are shared through this medium.



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universität
wien



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Are You Trying to Say? -
Interface as an Integral Element of Argument-

roduction-
er) interface often seems to be treated as a mere by-thought or afterthought of that which is actually considered the scholarly effort or work, that is: examining and preparing the text and argument preparation along scholarly lines. The creation and evaluation of user interfaces however, has grown into an (academic) expertise of its own: vivid debates on human computer interaction, graspability, usability, and so forth testify to this. The 'interface effect' (Galloway 2012) that the digital interface exerts on scholarly texts has hardly, if at all, been researched. We know almost nothing about the digital materiality, look and feel, structure, aesthetics, and interaction affordances of digital scholarly editions mean as to the experience of reading and other uses that these scholars have. Moreover: we do not understand very well, if at all, how these interfaces are part and parcel of the argument we want to convey about a text as textual scholars.-

interface as argument-
end here that user interfaces are a language through which arguments are made, even when the makers of these interfaces are not conscious of the language they are using. As such they reflect the representations of the materials they are supposed to represent. They also reflect the culture, the politics, and motives of their designers. -

For instance that there's certainly a striking difference between "La entretenida by Miguel de Cervantes: A Digital, Annotated Edition and an English Translation (The Diversion)" at entretenida.outofthewings.org/text/diversion/princeps/title.html and "Digital Thoreau: Thoreau Digitized. Deliberately" at <http://digitalthoreau.org/>-

Walking quite a fine line though to interpret what we see here, what is happening, what it means and to what it pertains. Do the interfaces express something about the editors' perspective on the edition as a concept, or are they foremost about the text? i.e. is it a text critical point of view or a methodological point of view, or perhaps a mixture, that is presented to us? In any case the interface seems to convey a 'scholarly' perspective, feel, or idea about the text. The reader is taken pretty quickly to a very dense looking representation of the text with lots of annotations. The edition says that the edition's primary aim is to recast, or adjust, the image of Cervantes to the fact that he was also a playwright. The default is to present the Spanish text with English translation and paratext-why? This doesn't necessarily mean *anything* about the view of the editors on the text or on digital editions; could be a sheer funding related issue obviously. In any case the Thoreau gives a nice contrast, the aesthetics of the interface convey much more (to my feeling in any case, is this something that is 'objectifiable?') an experience not merely of the text but of what it signifies to the editor: deliberation and reserve. This notion or suggestion, however, is very superficial. Actually the edition hides the text pretty well, makes it hard to reach, and once you have found the text, it turns out to be just as 'densely scholarly' presented as the Cervantes text. Conjecture: these editions foremost want to be recognised and acknowledged as *scholarly* works. They present themselves in this hermetic and densely annotated fashion.-

Full observation here is that a digital edition's interface is not *just* an argument about the text, but an argument about the 'attitude' of the editor, a window into his or her take on methodology, the digital edition itself, *and* a revelation of the technical skills available to the editor. The interface tells us something not only about the methodology but also about the import of the text. There is a lot of stylistic communication going on in the Thoreau, of exactly the sort of type that we're trying to get at. Argument not just through text but also through colors/mood, layout, etc. In contrast the Cervantes is not trying to communicate such a mood; it's clear that these editors would argue that the interface is beside the point, a more or less neutral technical means to an end.

Interface development is generally treated as a piece of design independent from the interpretative thrust of the actual content, and thus considered to lie well within the domains of engineering, user interface design, and aesthetics. These are considered essential to communicate content to the user, but they are also usually considered neutral and non-interfering, as being explicitly divorced from the content. Most of you will be familiar with the advice that is usually given to creators of digital editions, that for the sake of sustainability of their research data they should take care to separate content and functionality. This is a very good idea for all sorts of reasons when it can be done - up to now, the database that drives your edition is easier to archive than the website functionality. The result, and as a result, whatever scholarly content is not cleanly separable from the display logic of your edition is likely to remain unarchived, and thus be lost sooner or later.-

Full notice, however, that *again* we are pretending that scholarly content and argument is cleanly separable from display logic. If only.-

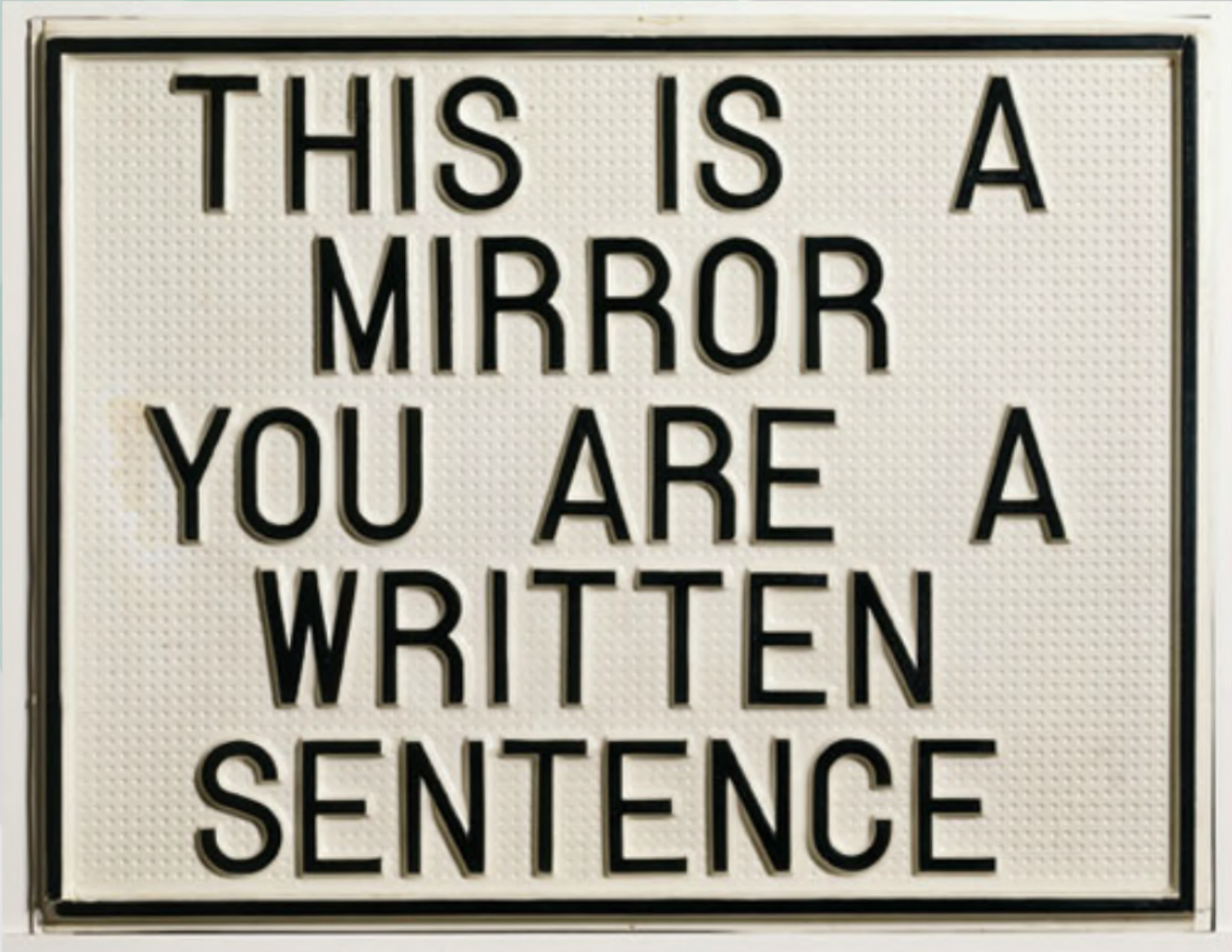
The interface is an integral part of the argument that an edition makes about a text. The idea that an edition is a theory (and thus an argument) has been around for decades (Cerquiglini 1989; Shillington 2000) but in practice this insight has not had much overt influence on how editions are presented, particularly in paper form. We cannot consider the interface of any edition as some neutral visualization of an argument. We cannot do this because interfaces are constructed objects, just as facts (Latour & Woolgar) and data (Gitelman, Drucker) are constructed objects. -

The very word for data derives from the Latin 'given', data are all but given. As Drucker has most notably argued, the data we record are rather taken, formed. This process of forming and becoming data in a scientific context points to the careful selection and argumentation that underlies the presentation of data as meaningful and pertaining to a certain argument (as Latour and Woolgar have shown). It is not to say that data are not potentially solid facts, but it does point to the nature of data and facts as being in part argument themselves part of a larger argument. This argumentative nature of data and fact extends to objects. To put this in a more concrete perspective: bridges may have politics (Woolgar & Cooper 1999) and software code may have too (McPherson 2012). -

The bridges I refer to are the bridges of Long Island that, so it was said, were designed so low that busses that were the mainstay of black people's transportation in the time could not navigate them,

“Interfaces are not simply objects or boundary points. They are autonomous zones of activity. [...] Interfaces are [...] processes that effect a result of whatever kind.”

**Alexander Galloway,
The Interface Effect (2012)**



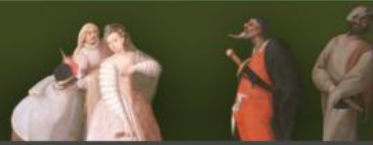
THIS IS A
MIRROR
YOU ARE A
WRITTEN
SENTENCE

Luis Camnitzer (1966)



La entretenida

by Miguel de Cervantes



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The Diversion

Select View in Spanish: [1st edition](#) [ed. O'Neill](#) [unpunctuated](#)

Performance Information: None Track Character: None Go to: Volume Title | [Next >](#)

Eight New Plays and Interludes, Never Performed.

by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra

Dedicated to Don Pedro Fernandez de Castro, Count of Lemos, of Andrade and of Villalva, Marquis of Sarria, Gentleman of the Royal Chamber, Commander of the territory of Peñafiel and La Zarza, of the Order of Alcantara, Viceroy, Governor, and Captain General of the Kingdom of Naples and President of the Supreme Council of Italy.

In quarto
1615

With permission

Printed in Madrid by the widow of Alonso Martin, at the expense of Juan de Villarroel, bookseller, and sold from his house in Plaza de Ansel

Text

- Spanish
- 1st edition (facsimile)
- 1st edition (modern spelling)
- ed. O'Neill
- unpunctuated
- English Translation

La entretenida

Select View: [1st edition](#) [ed. O'Neill](#) [unpunctuated](#) [English Translation](#)

Performance Information: All Track Character: Don Antonio Go to: I. 1 II. 1-158 < Prev | Next >

Jornada primera

168v

Salen Ocaña lacayo con un mandil, y harnero, y Cristina fregona.

Oca. Mi sora ⁵⁰ Cristina denmos, ⁵¹
Cri. qué hemos de dar mi so Ocaña?
Oca. dar en dulce, no en huraña,
ni en tan amargos estremos.

Cri. Querría el sor que anduviese
de pa, y vereda ⁵² contino, 5

The precise meaning of *de pa* y *vereda* has eluded all editors of the play so far. *Pa* may be a contraction of *compás*, in which case the following is illuminating: "Salir de compás, no ir medido ni reglado uno en su modo de proceder y acciones." *Covarrubias* p. 344a, l. 29. The meaning of *vereda* is clearer: "**Vereda.** La senda, ú camino angosto, distinto y separado del real. Dixose de via recta, por ser comunmente camino mas derecho." *Autoridades* VI, p. 463a.

169r

Motes, cuentos, chistes, dichos,
pensamientos regalados,
muy buenos para pensados, 15
y mejores para dichos.

On stage:

Ocaña
Cristina
Quiñones

Costume:

mandil

Props:

harnero
cebada

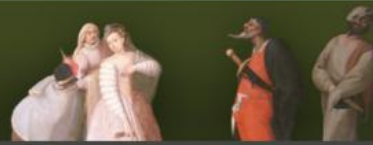


It is not enough, even to be able to speak the language of a nation, to be able to hear the language of that nation by in the spoken and the written language, the language heard and the language read. The one is commonly transitory, transient, a sound, a tongue, a dialect merely, almost brutish, and we learn it unconsciously, like the brutes, of our mothers. The other is the maturity and experience of that;



La entretenida

by Miguel de Cervantes



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The Diversion

Select View in Spanish: [1st edition](#) [ed. O'Neill](#) [unpunctuated](#)

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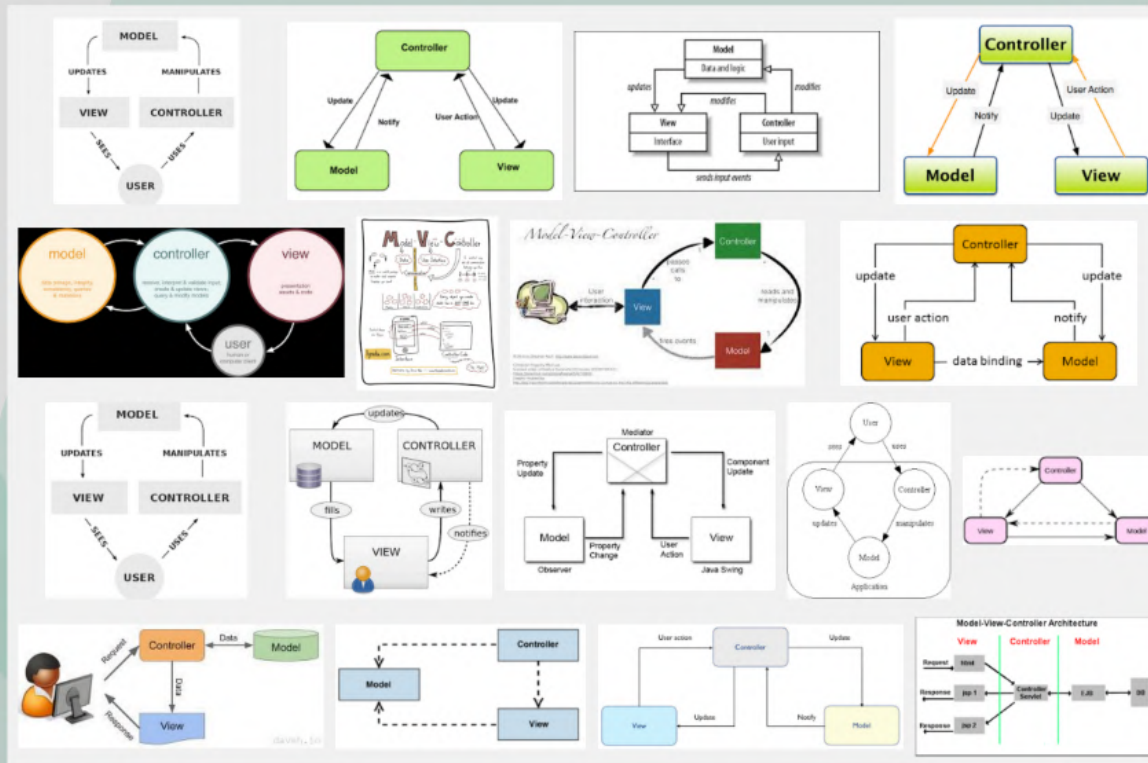
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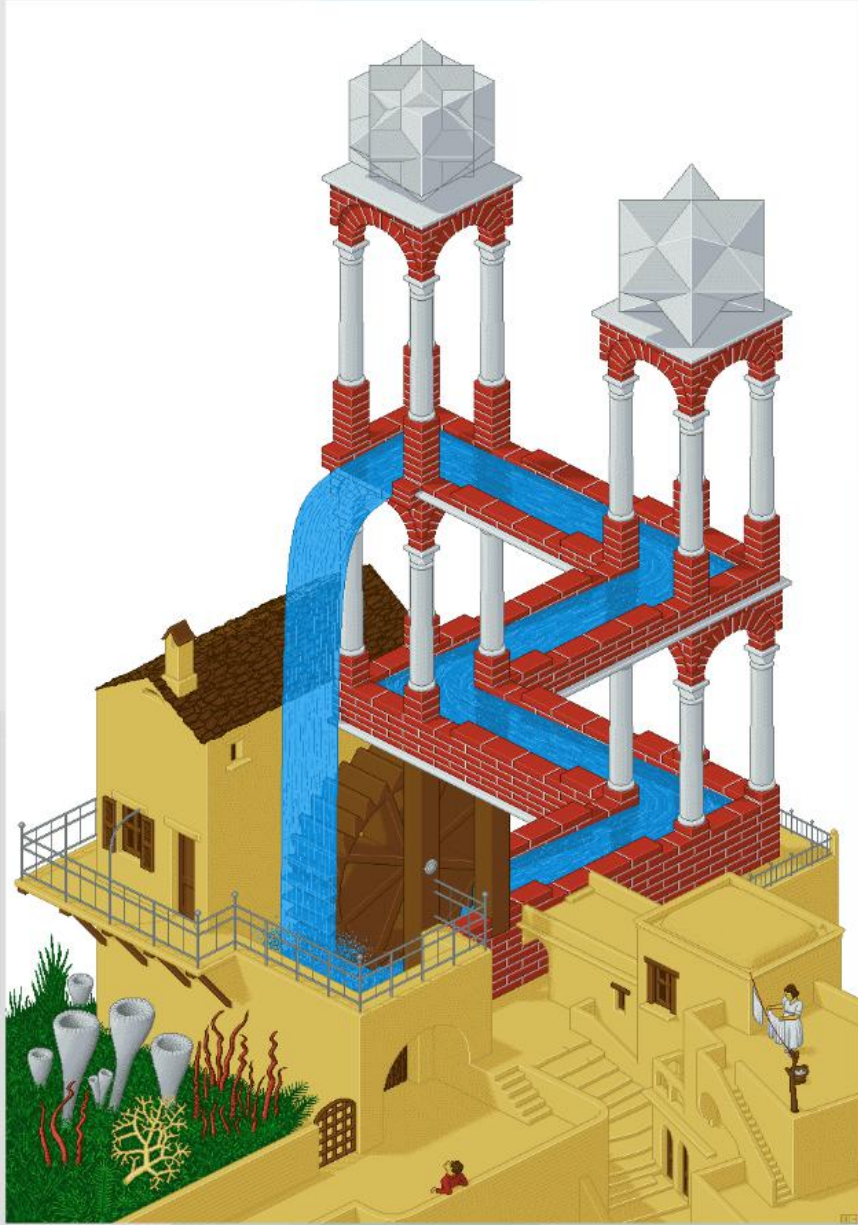
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cebada



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How to Separate an Egg





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GOT STUCK?

Truck Drivers:
**Don't let
this happen
to you.**

Commercial Vehicles, Trucks
and Tractor Trailers are **Not
Allowed** on New York State
Parkways.

IT'S THE LAW!
Be Prepared for your Trip.





McPherson, T., 2012. Why Are the Digital Humanities So White? or Thinking the Histories of Race and Computation. In M. K. Gold, ed. *Debates in the Digital Humanities*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 139-60. Available at: <http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates/text/11>.



the real face of white australia

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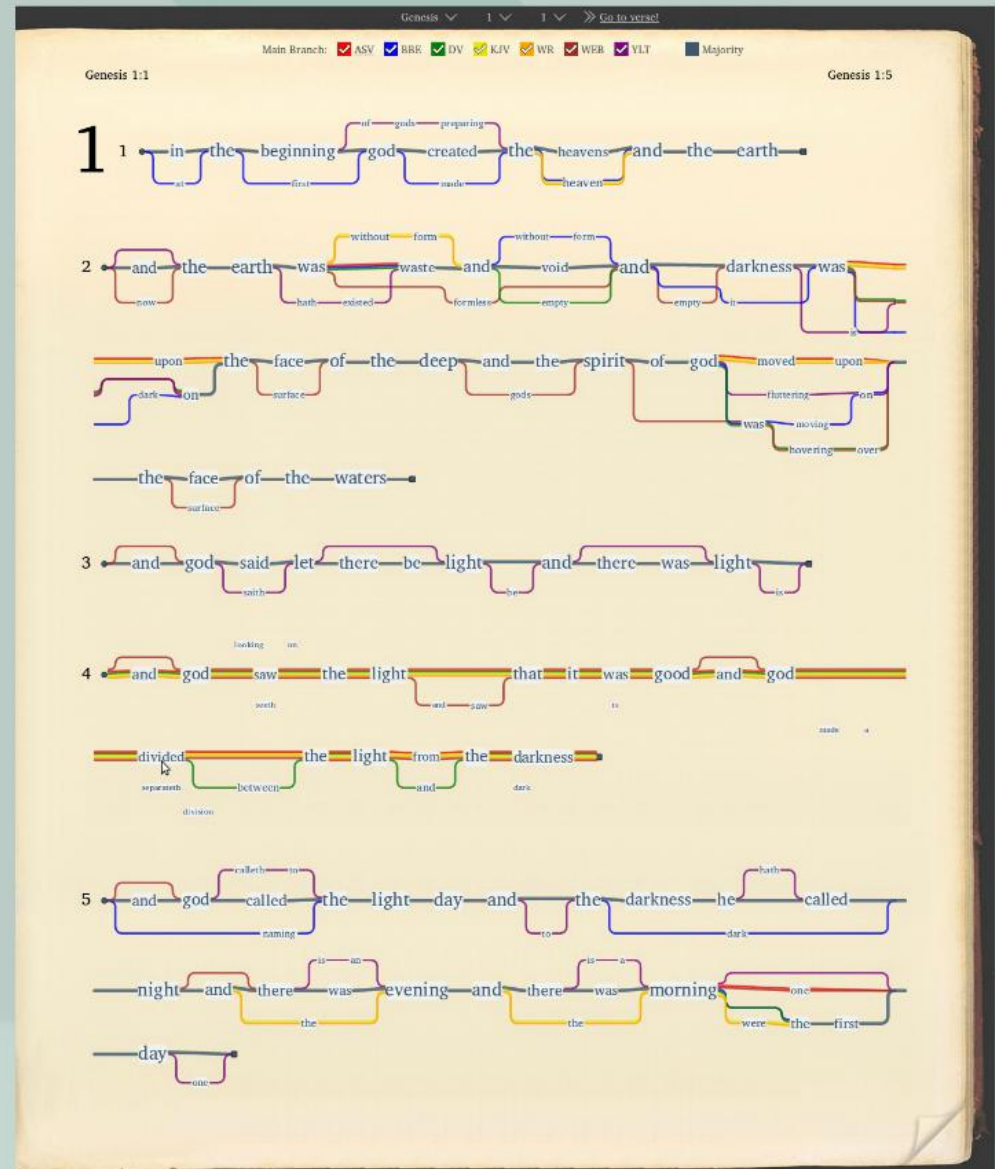
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IV. Death by Water

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,
Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell

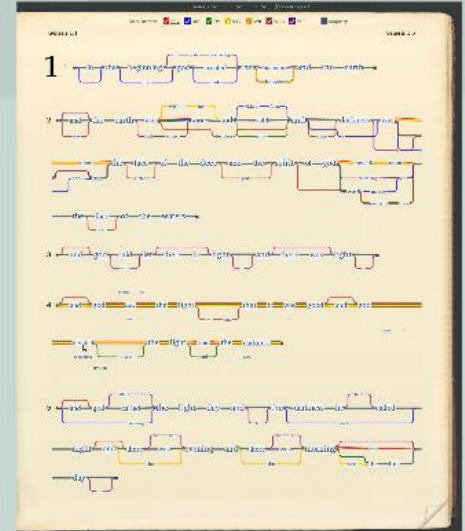
the real face of white australia

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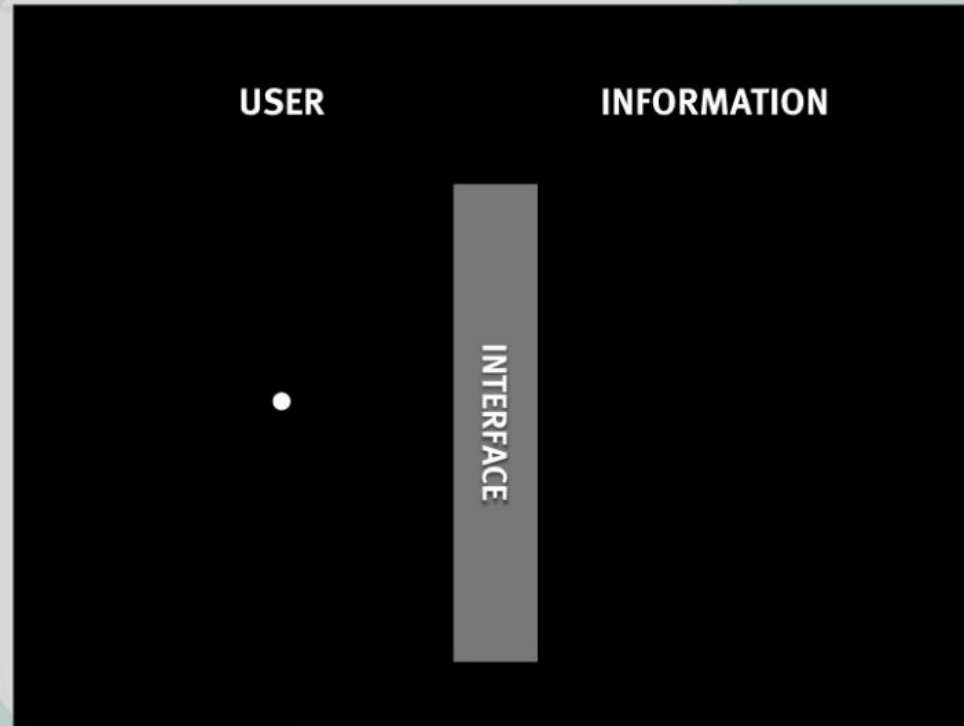


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What is the design language of Argumentatively-Expressive-Interfaces?



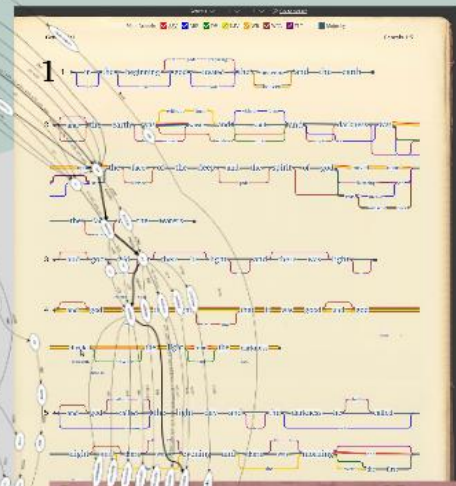
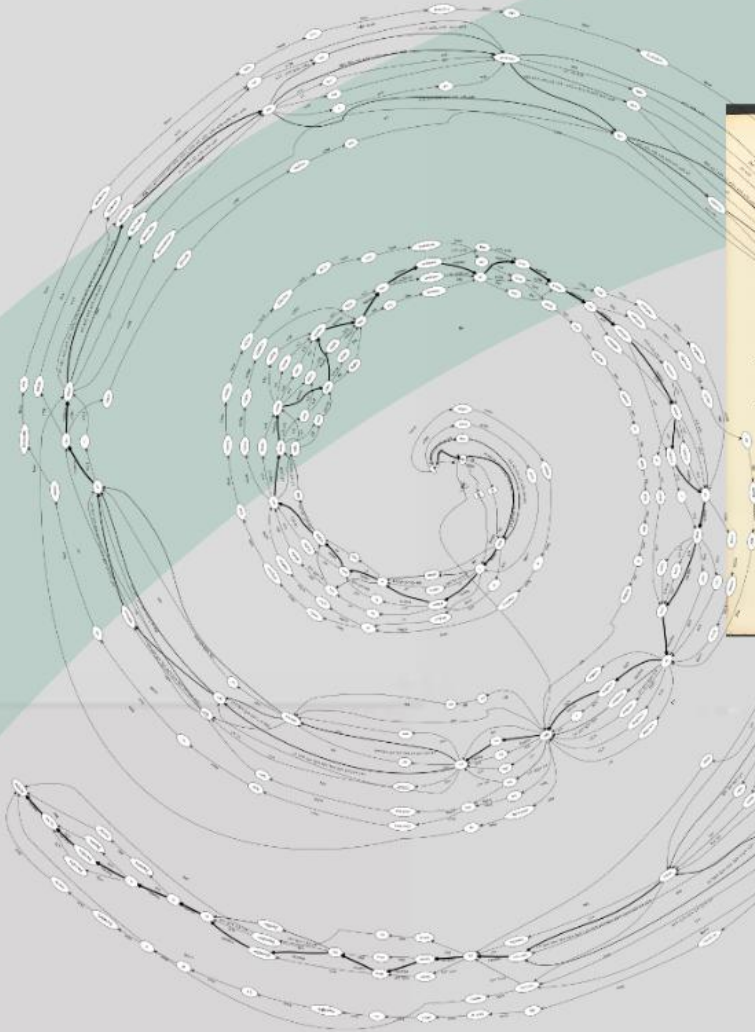
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It is a deceptively simple picture.

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Ժամանակագրութիւն Մատթէոսի Ուղեայեցոյ

Excerpts from the *Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*

Main

About the Chronicle

About this edition

Text and translations

First republication of Yovhannēs Edessā, Armenian era 628 (997/1300)

Second republication of Yovhannēs Edessā, Armenian era 852 (1103/6/7)

Author's prologue to Book Two of the Chronicle

Author's prologue to Book Three of the Chronicle

Source witnesses

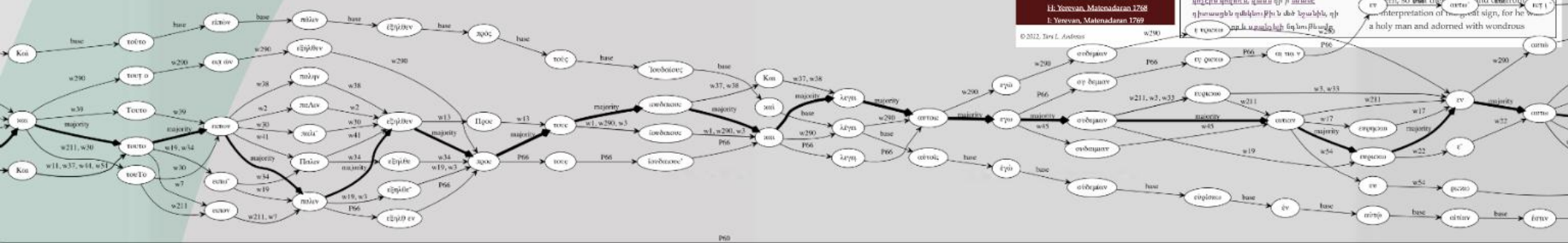
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 I. Yerevan, Matenadaran 1769

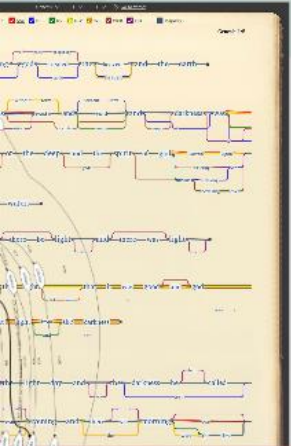
Ինչից ի տեսանիկ զգար ամենայն ողորդ մարդկան, անարեւելայ լինիկն յերկրիկն որոյնս պատեալս:

Then a son cried for his father, and a father cried over his sons; young children frightened from fear fell into the arms of their parents; the mothers, made miserable with a severe inflammation like fire, cried for their children. And thus all creatures were terrified, and they were besieged by fear and they could not find a way out; they wondered fearfully at the marvellous signs, and were terrified all alike.

Եւ որտեալ տէր պետրոս Լայպապոսիկն Եայցոյ և թագաւ որն յովհաննէս յարարիկեալ անս փառաստաքս ան սորոր վարդապետիկն Եայցոյ յովհաննէս, որ կուրիկն կողմիկն վառան զի ի նմանէ զիտապետն զմիկն ի յի նշանիկն, զի էր Եայցոյն յովհաննէսի կնիկն անպէտ, որ և սքանչելի կնիկն անպէտ:

Then Lord Petros the hayrapet of the Armenians and the king Yovhannēs sent respected men to the holy vardapet of the Armenians Yovhannēs, who was called **er** **ny**, so that they **ov** and **ov** **er** **er** interpretation of **er** **er** sign, for he was a holy man and adorned with wondrous





Մատթեոսի Ուղեւորութիւն
 in the Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa

Ինչպէս ի ստուանկ զայս ամենայն որոշաց
 հասարակ անարեղակ լինեն յարեղակ
 որպէս անուանայ:

Յայնժամ լայր որդի առ հոր իւր, և
 լայր հոր ի միջոյ զստուց հառա, որպէս
 զարմարեաց ի սոճեն անկեղեկ ի գիրկս
 թողանց ի նշտն անկեղեկ աստուի
 վարձար իրն հոռո, յայն զպայս
 ի թիակց, և ազարե անարեղակ կայն
 ամենայն արարածք, և յերկն որն
 չարարեալ կայն և եւ իրացն ոչ
 գտաներն ըստ աստուի նշանն
 զարմարեալ նշանայն և անարեղակ
 կայն սո հասարակ:

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 հայր և թողարեոն յայնժամ
 յարարեալ անք ժողովարա աստուի
 վարձարեոն հայր յայնժամ, որ
 կայն կայն և վարձար ի նշանն
 անտուցն զմիկողմեն ձեռն կայն, զի
 զարարեալ ի նշանայն և անարեղակ
 կայն սո հասարակ:

Then a son cried for his father, and a father
 cried over his seven young children
 frightened from fear fell into the arms of
 their parents; the mothers, made miserable
 with a severe inflammation like fire, cried for
 their children. And thus all creatures were
 terrified, and they were besieged by fear and
 they could not find a way out; they
 wondered fearfully at the marvellous sign,
 and were terrified all alike.

Then Lord Petros the huzrapet of the
 Armenians and the king Yovhannés sent
 respected men to the holy vardapet of the
 Armenians Yovhannés, who was called
 "the venerable", for he was
 an interpretation of the great sign, for he was
 a holy man and adorned with wondrous

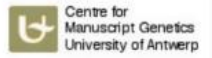
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ճանաչեալ ի նշանայն և անարեղակ
 կայն սո հասարակ:

SAMUEL BECKETT

DIGITAL MANUSCRIPT PROJECT

L'INNOMMABLE / THE UNNAMABLE: DEMO



ABOUT ▾ DOCUMENTS ▾

Search

◀ back to Synoptic Sentence View

prev | next

COLLATEX RESULTS: [0002]

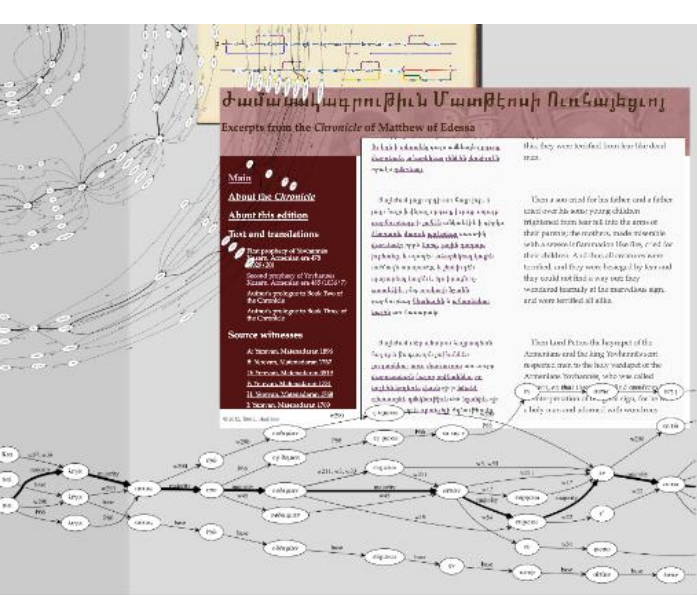
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Version 1 Version 2 Version 3 Version 4

Version 1: MS-HRC-SB-5-9-1	When	know	?
Version 2: MS-HRC-SB-5-10	When	now	?
Version 3: MS-Spectrum	When	now	?
Version 4: MS-1958	When	now	?

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Ժամանակագրության Մատթեոսի Ուղեւայելույ

Excerpts from the Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa

Main

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Text and translations

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back to Synoptic Sentence View

COLLATEX RESULTS: [0002]

variant, invariant

Version 1 Version 2 Version 3 Version 4 Recognize

Version 1: MS-HRC-SB-5-9-1 When know ?

Version 2: MS-HRC-SB-5-10 When now ?

Version 3: MS-Spectrum When now ?

Version 4: MS-1958 When now ?



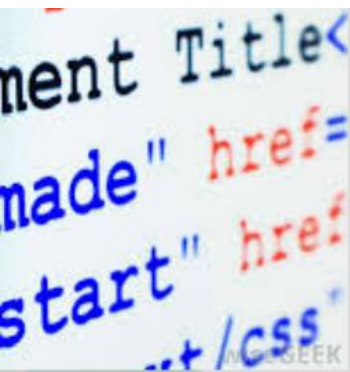
Collatex is a software collation tool developed by the Interedition Development Group. Go to <http://collatex.net/> for further information.

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aved changes)

Ruby 2.2.1

the Word class to be able to annotate an individual word. For now as you can gauge word that if its surface makes up the word 'willem' it should go and find the sentences



Jupyter 06 Combining and Mining Last Checkpoint: 06/08/2016 (unsaved changes)

File Edit View Insert Cell Kernel Help

Ruby 2.2.1

CellToolbar

The AnnotationGenerator of the last chapter needs to be integrated with the Word class to be able to annotate an individual word. For now as you can gauge from the code comments I will do so in a bluntly naive way. I just tell any word that if its surface makes up the word 'willem' it should go and find the sentences in the introduction of our first source ([see chapter 5](#)) and use them as annotations. This is naive in at least three ways. First it will potentially yield a lot of false positives if we broaden the search to more source (that will yield sentences of or about different Willems). Secondly, the fact that one finds a 'Willem' in a sentence does not imply directly that it is a sentence *about* that willem, although it is likely that the sentence is at least related to a 'Willem' at least. The third naive aspect is that as to object modeling this is probably not the right place for the AnnotationGenerator to make its performance. It is probably not the task of a word to know or mine annotations on its denotation (it would be more correct if it would be tasked with finding lexical or syntactic information I suppose). Knowing about 'Willem die Madoccke maecte' seems to me to be a task that should be bestowed upon a Person object that represents this actual 'Willem'. However, for the purpose of this chapter and notebook, this will do for the moment.

```
In [3]: class Word

  attr_accessor :surface
  attr_accessor :next_word
  attr_accessor :denotation

  def initialize( str )
    m = str.match( // )
    if m != nil
      index = str.match( // ).end(0)
      @surface = str[ 0..index-2 ]
      @next_word = Word.new( str[ index..-1 ] )
    else
      @surface = str
    end
    # This is utterly simplistic, yet I have no better
    # idea at the moment...
    # Probably this should also be done by models such as Person.
    # E.g. Person would determine if this Word is that Person.
    # That would also allow for competing interpretations btw.
    if surface.downcase == "willem"
      @denotation = Person.new( "Willem" )
      @denotation.annotations = AnnotationGenerator.get_annotations_for( "willem" )
    end
  end

  def as_text
```

CRUISES

How did all this go? How did we? What did the earth and the heavens come from? And people?

There must be certain questions, because they have been answered over and over through the ages, with answers that have been made and varied. Some of the answers are called "religions," because they answer gods and the life and cause of the universe. Some have been called "scientific," because they have been answered by evidence. They have been for a long time.

The number of possible answers compares to give with a certain progress and in the growth of new religions and their variants. While the number of religions grows, the number of scientific religions, and of the general religions, are also greater than ever. The scientific and religious religions continue to grow with it.

The origin of the universe is one thing, the origin of people is another. Together they come to be the earth, and these again that the universe came first, before the people. But the Creation stories are very different.

THE FIRST CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE AND PEOPLE

Modern accounts begin with Bibbia, the religious books begun by the Hebrews and called by Christians. All the Bible has a certain amount of a new work when the universe, and the human race, were created by a God who came down from heaven.

The creation of the universe is described in the King James Bible like this:

IN THE BEGINNING God created the heavens and the earth.

And the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, Let there be light, and there was light.

And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness, and God called the light Day, and the darkness Night. And there was evening, and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters above from the waters below. And God made the firmament, and God called the firmament Heaven. And God separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and God called that which was under the firmament Earth, and that which was above the firmament Heaven.

And God said, Let the waters under the firmament be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear. And God said, Let the dry land be called Earth, and the gathering together of the waters be called Seas. And God called the Earth Land, and the Seas Oceans. And God said, Let the earth bring forth vegetation, every herb that be seed, and every tree that beareth fruit, which shall be to you for food.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth a living creature after his kind, cattle of the earth, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowls of the air, over the beasts, and over all the earth.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them: and named them Adam and Eve.

And God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet unto him. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowls of the air, over the beasts, and over all the earth.

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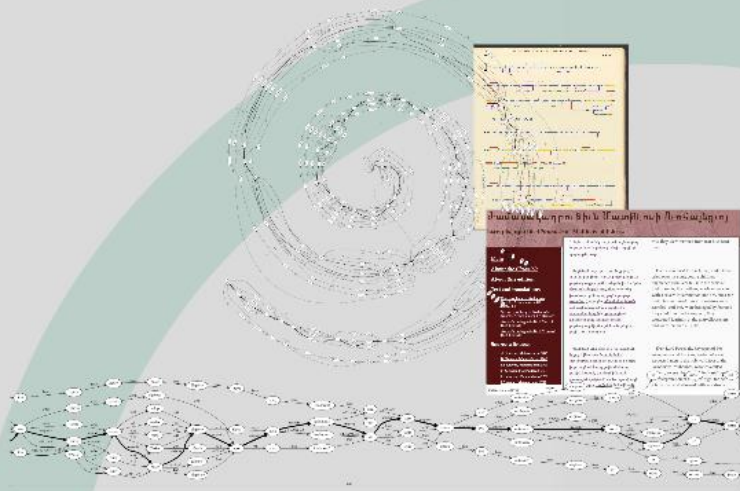
And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowls of the air, over the beasts, and over all the earth.

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And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowls of the air, over the beasts, and over all the earth.



SAMUEL BECKETT *UNNAMABLE / THE UNNAMABLE: DYNMO*

Admin - Dashboard - Search [] [] []

Collate > Reports > Generate > View

COLLATEX RESULTS: [00002]

View 1 View 2 View 3 View 4 View 5

Version	MCU	PTC	SD	Q	Q	Q	Q
Version 1	MCU 100	PTC 100	SD 100	Q 100	Q 100	Q 100	Q 100
Version 2	MCU 100	PTC 100	SD 100	Q 100	Q 100	Q 100	Q 100
Version 3	MCU 100	PTC 100	SD 100	Q 100	Q 100	Q 100	Q 100
Version 4	MCU 100	PTC 100	SD 100	Q 100	Q 100	Q 100	Q 100

CollateX is a software development tool used by the Intel Development Group. It is used to generate code for the Intel Architecture.

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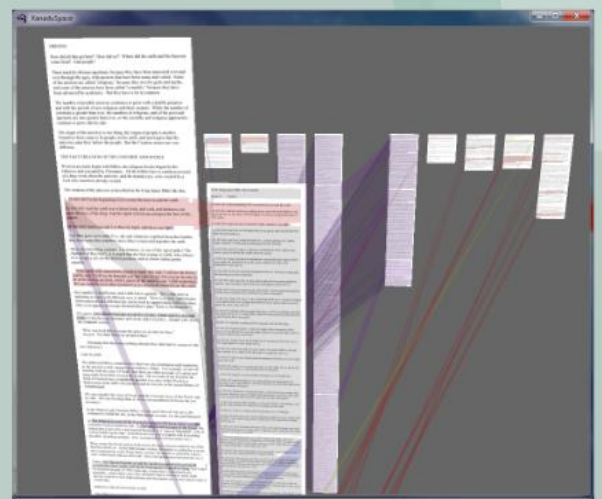
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>Document Title<

rev="made" href="..."

rev="start" href="..."

.../css/...



jupyter 06 Combining and Mining Last Checkpoint: 06/08/2016 (unsaved changes)

File Edit View Insert Cell Kernel Help Ruby 2.2.1

In [3]:

```
class Word
  attr_accessor :surface
  attr_accessor :next_word
  attr_accessor :denotation

  def initialize( str )
    n = str.match( // )
    if n != nil
      index = str.match( // ).end(0)
      @surface = str[ 0..index-2 ]
      @next_word = Word.new( str[ index..-1 ] )
    else
      @surface = str
    end
    # This is utterly simplistic, yet I have no better
    # idea at the moment.
    # Probably this should also be done by models such as Person.
    # E.g. Person would determine if this Word is that Person.
    # That would also allow for competing interpretations btw.
    if @surface.downcase == "william"
      @denotation = Person.new( "William" )
      @denotation.annotations = AnnotationGenerator.get_annotations_for( "william" )
    end
  end
end

def aa_text
```

Are You Trying to Say? -
Interface as an Integral Element of Argument-

roduction-
er) interface often seems to be treated as a mere by-thought or afterthought of that which is actually considered the scholarly effort or work, that is: examining and preparing the text and argument preparation along scholarly lines. The creation and evaluation of user interfaces however, has grown into an (academic) expertise of its own: vivid debates on human computer interaction, graspability, usability, and so forth testify to this. The 'interface effect' (Galloway 2012) that the digital interface exerts on scholarly texts has hardly, if at all, been researched. We know almost nothing about the digital materiality, look and feel, structure, aesthetics, and interaction affordances of digital scholarly editions mean as to the experience of reading and other uses that these scholars have. Moreover: we do not understand very well, if at all, how these interfaces are part and parcel of the argument we want to convey about a text as textual scholars.-

interface as argument-
end here that user interfaces are a language through which arguments are made, even when the makers of these interfaces are not conscious of the language they are using. As such they reflect the connotations of the materials they are supposed to represent. They also reflect the culture, the politics, and motives of their designers. -

For instance that there's certainly a striking difference between "La entretenida by Miguel de Cervantes: A Digital, Annotated Edition and an English Translation (The Diversion)" at entretenida.outofthewings.org/text/diversion/princeps/title.html and "Digital Thoreau: Thoreau Digitized. Deliberately" at <http://digitalthoreau.org/>-

Walking quite a fine line though to interpret what we see here, what is happening, what it means and to what it pertains. Do the interfaces express something about the editors' perspective on the edition as a concept, or are they foremost about the text? i.e. is it a text critical point of view or a methodological point of view, or perhaps a mixture, that is presented to us? In any case the interface seems to convey a 'scholarly' perspective, feel, or idea about the text. The reader is taken pretty quickly to a very dense looking representation of the text with lots of annotations. The edition says that the edition's primary aim is to recast, or adjust, the image of Cervantes to the fact that he was also a playwright. The default is to present the Spanish text with English translation and paratext-why? This doesn't necessarily mean *anything* about the view of the editors on the text or on digital editions; could be a sheer funding related issue obviously. In any case Thoreau gives a nice contrast, the aesthetics of the interface convey much more (to my feeling in any case, is this something that is 'objectifiable?') an experience not merely of the text but of what it signifies to the editor: deliberation and reserve. This notion or suggestion, however, is very superficial. Actually the edition hides the text pretty well, makes it hard to reach, and once you have found the text, it turns out to be just as 'densely scholarly' presented as the Cervantes text. Conjecture: these editions foremost want to be recognised and acknowledged as *scholarly* works. They present themselves in this hermetic and densely annotated fashion.-

Full observation here is that a digital edition's interface is not *just* an argument about the text, but an argument about the 'attitude' of the editor, a window into his or her take on methodology, the digital edition itself, *and* a revelation of the technical skills available to the editor. The interface tells us something not only about the methodology but also about the import of the text. There is a lot of stylistic communication going on in the Thoreau, of exactly the sort of type that we're trying to get at. Argument not just through text but also through colors/mood, layout, etc. In contrast the Cervantes is not trying to communicate such a mood; it's clear that these editors would argue that the interface is beside the point, a more or less neutral technical means to an end.

Interface development is generally treated as a piece of design independent from the interpretative thrust of the actual content, and thus considered to lie well within the domains of engineering, user interface design, and aesthetics. These are considered essential to communicate content to the user, but they are also usually considered neutral and non-interfering, as being explicitly divorced from the content. Most of you will be familiar with the advice that is usually given to creators of digital editions, that for the sake of sustainability of their research data they should take care to separate content and functionality. This is a very good idea for all sorts of reasons when it can be done - up to now, the database that drives your edition is easier to archive than the website functionality. The result is that, and as a result, whatever scholarly content is not cleanly separable from the display logic of your edition is likely to remain unarchived, and thus be lost sooner or later.-

Full notice, however, that *again* we are pretending that scholarly content and argument is cleanly separable from display logic. If only.-

The interface is an integral part of the argument that an edition makes about a text. The idea that an edition is a theory (and thus an argument) has been around for decades (Cerquiglini 1989; Shillington 2000) but in practice this insight has not had much overt influence on how editions are presented, particularly in paper form. We cannot consider the interface of any edition as some neutral visualization of the text or argument. We cannot do this because interfaces are constructed objects, just as facts (Latour & Woolgar) and data (Gitelman, Drucker) are constructed objects. -

The very word for data derives from the Latin 'given', data are all but given. As Drucker has most notably argued, the data we record are rather taken, formed. This process of forming and becoming data in a scientific context points to the careful selection and argumentation that underlies the presentation of data as meaningful and pertaining to a certain argument (as Latour and Woolgar have shown). It is not to say that data are not potentially solid facts, but it does point to the nature of data and facts as being in part argument themselves part of a larger argument. This argumentative nature of data and fact extends to objects. To put this in a more concrete perspective: bridges may have politics (Woolgar & Cooper 1999) and software code may have too (McPherson 2012). -

The bridges I refer to are the bridges of Long Island that, so it was said, were designed so low that busses that were the mainstay of black people's transportation in the time could not navigate them,

Interface is Argument too

"Interfaces are not simply objects or boundary points. They are autonomous arenas of activity [...] Interfaces are [...] processes that affect a result of whatever kind."

Alexander Galloway
The Interface Effect

THIS IS A MIRROR YOU ARE A WRITTEN SENTENCE



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This book is a translation of the book 'The Interface Effect' by Alexander Galloway, published by MIT Press in 2012.



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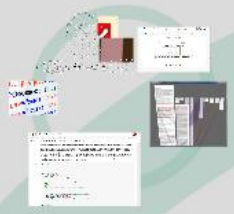


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What is the design language of Argumentatively-Expressive-Interfaces?

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The Small Print

Otherwise known as Disclaimer



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What Are You Trying to Say?

The Interface as an Integral Element of Argument

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