

POETIC MACHINES: *an investigation
into the impact of the characteristics of the
digital apparatus on poetic expression.*

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“Poetry is always on the limit of things. On the limit of what can be said, of what can be written, of what can be seen, even of what can be thought, felt and understood. To be on the limit means often for the poet to be beyond the frontier of what we are prepared to accept as being possible” (Melo e Castro, 1996: 140).

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Abstract

This thesis aims to investigate digital methods of signification in order to examine the impact of the apparatus on poetic expression. This is done through a critical analysis of the translation process from analogue to digital, in the sense that even as we read a page we are in fact translating sight into sound. The resulting effects of this change in form are explored in order to understand their impact on meaning-making in the digital realm. Through this interrogation the comprehension and definition of ePoetry (electronic poetry or digital poetry) is extended, by exposing the unique affordances and specificities of digital expression.

Digital poetry theorists such as Loss Pequeño Glazier posit that the emerging field of electronic literature is composed of interweaving strands from the areas of computer science, sociology, and literary studies. This is reflected in the interdisciplinary nature of this thesis, which necessitates an engagement with the broad areas of translation, literature, and digital media studies. Currently the pervasiveness of digital technology and access to the Internet means that the creation and consumption of online content such as ePoetry is becoming seamless and apparently effortless. Whilst recent studies have explored electronic literature as a field, there is a noticeable deficit of research that specifically focuses on ePoetry, a deficit that this thesis seeks to rectify.

Within this work cybernetic and technosocial theories of communication are drawn on which provide as much emphasis on the apparatus, as is afforded to the author and reader. Traditional poetry criticism is problematised with reference to its suitability for application to online works in order to develop a comprehensive ePoetry rhetoric that explores not only what is being said, but also crucially how it is being said. Theories of translation are also used as a context in which to analyse the transposition of poetry from analogue to digital. This framework then forms the basis for a study that explores the move from print to pixel by analysing qualitative ePoet interviews as well as their corresponding ePoems.

Chapters' Synopsis

Chapter 1 – Introduction. This chapter provides a rationale for this research as well as introducing the broader issues at play in relation to the academic analysis and structure of this study. The very nature of the Internet and its tools as a context for shaping the evolution of ePoetry is explored.

Chapter 2 – Digital Theory Literature Review. This chapter provides a comparative review of the relevant literature from digital theorists. This situates this study within digital theory before moving to the specifics of ePoetry translation and meaning making. This chapter seeks to define the ePoem as an object within the field of digital studies. Most notably the technosocial theories of Weight (2006) are discussed in relation to the ‘technical and social’ restructuring that has taken place in eMedia and their corresponding relevance to the ePoem.

Chapter 3 – ePoetry Past and Present. An overview of the field of ePoetry past and present is provided in this chapter. It begins with a timeline and a brief account of the history of ePoetry. An explanation then follows regarding what exactly ePoetry is as well as how it is defined and categorised within this thesis. Subsequently the methods and rationale for the ePoet interviews are laid out. This chapter is essential as an introduction and explanation of ePoetry within the emerging field of electronic literature as well as providing an understanding and rationale of where this thesis is placed within this developing field.

Chapter 4 – Poetry Transformations. This chapter looks at the extent to which traditional poetry criticism can still be applied to ePoetry. It begins by providing a broad overview of poetry and societal changes towards situating the development of ePoetry within a broader social and historical context. Various forms of poetry criticism are then outlined and reviewed in light of the specific affordances of ePoetry. In particular this chapter examines the impact that interactivity and the digital environment have on Orr’s (1996) form giving temperaments of story, structure, music and imagination. Responses from ePoet interviews are also used to assess practice and its underpinning theory.

Chapter 5 – ePoems as Translations. This chapter asks to what extent the process and theories of traditional poetry translation can be applied to the creation of ePoetry. Holmes' (1994) theories of translation are used most especially as a framework in which to analyse the process of creation of ePoetry, along with first-hand evidence from ePoet interviews carried out specifically for this thesis.

Chapter 6 – Meaning Making in ePoetry. This chapter is concerned with an in depth analysis of ePoetry examples, and ePoet interview responses in order to develop an understanding of the specific methods of signification used in the ePoetry examples examined in this investigation. The broad characteristics of ePoetry are identified in order to understand how they impact on meaning making. In addition to this, other practitioners and theorists whose work is central to the question of both the creation of ePoetry and the potentials for translation of existing poetry into the eMedia, are examined. These discussions take place in order to elucidate how the affordances of the digital apparatus impact human expression in the ePoetic space. Consequently this allows for an identification of the affordances of the digital poem as a new literary artefact and their implications for poetic expression.

Chapter 6 – Conclusions. This chapter synthesises previous chapters' discussions and conclusions in order to contributing to ePoetry rhetoric, which helps define the ePoem as a new object. Within this the importance of the apparatus to human expression is highlighted. The impact of the characteristics of the digital apparatus on multi-modal digital poetic communication are also exposed and future research potential as well as its anticipated impact is outlined.

Chapter 1. Introduction

In 1986 I was 11 years old and my eldest brother, who had recently secured an Apple Macintosh computer dealership in County Cork, Ireland brought home a Macintosh Plus computer for Christmas. As the youngest in my family, when the excitement of Christmas was over and all had returned to their adult lives elsewhere, the Macintosh and I were left to our own devices in rural Cork countryside. Whilst the dog clearly doubted the machine's potential for fun, I was hooked. I explored the innovative game *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?* (Brøderbund Software, 1985) and software such as MacPaint and HyperCard.¹ I began to transcribe poems that I picked out from books onto the computer, eventually composing my own. I stretched and enlarged the font of the poems as far as it would go despite not have the capability to print as we did not yet own a printer. That essentially was how it started, the experience was completely different to loading games from tape on the Commodore 64 computer, which involved hours of staring at the myriad of colours and patterns on screen in the vain hope that this time the game had loaded correctly. Comparative to my previous computing experiences at this stage, the Macintosh was easy to use and most importantly allowed me to use the computer creatively without knowledge of a programming language.

Creativity was foremost in my mind when I chose to study Imaginative Writing and Theatre Studies six years later at Liverpool John Moore's University in the United Kingdom. After graduation I worked as a junior programmer in a multimedia company called Intowhite based on campus at Limerick University in Ireland until, like most multimedia companies in the late 90s, it went bust. Then in 2000 when I joined the M.Sc. in Multimedia at Dublin City University it looked like technology had really arrived at the point where harnessing the full creative potential of the computer was no longer exclusively for computer scientists. Following on from this I lectured in multimedia authoring and writing in the Department of Creative Media in Dundalk Institute of Technology. In 2007 I began my PhD part time and it seemed a natural culmination of my life experience and academic studies to pursue it in the area of ePoetry (electronic poetry or digital poetry). I now hold the position of Digital Media Faculty in the Centre for Media Studies in the National University of Ireland,

Maynooth, where I teach computer science and media students media programming and digital media theory.

It is clear that the proliferation of technology and Internet use in today's society has provided a new and varied means for human expression. Humans have passed the stage of experimentation in the digital environment and are now at the point where we can begin to recognise characteristics or traits of the work that is appearing in this realm. The relative infancy of this field means that to date there is a dearth of comprehensive academic analysis of digital creative content such as ePoetry. Digital technologies continue to change and develop at a rapid pace and the use of these technologies to create new literary experiences is something in which we, as both producers and consumers, can and will become more expert. This research meshes existing theories from the fields of game, communications, literature, and translation studies as a framework in which to analyse the process that transposes a poem from paper to pixel.

The main focus of this thesis is an examination of the impact of the characteristics of the digital apparatus on poetic expression. The vast array of content that is currently available online and is being produced every day means that the body of work that can be defined as ePoetry is extensive. Therefore for the purposes of this thesis the specific ePoems that will be discussed in detail are non-commercial works that have been created on a computer within the artistic literary field, with a concentration on ePoems that existed in print before being transformed into digital form. It is also important to note that the digital apparatus, with which the ePoetry examples that I discuss in this work have been created, is essentially the computer. The ePoems themselves can also potentially at least, be experienced on other digital apparatus such as smartphones or tablets. In fact, as quoted in the taxonomy of ePoetry found in the appendices, Tallon Memmott (2006: 293) believes that, the "actualities of poetic practice in the digital environment are too diverse to permit a comprehensive or coherent taxonomy". This thesis has therefore through necessity focused on a small sample or cyberspec of the potential digital poetic content in existence.

Of the ePoems selected some have been made using animation, others using video software, and others code; all have explicit visual elements either text and/or graphics,

some have movement, and some contain audio. For more detailed information on each of the types of ePoems focused on in this thesis please refer to the taxonomy listed in the appendices.

Certain ePoems found online are created entirely in eMedia and others involve translations from print into digital form; some are interactive, some are not. Usually they are made in Flash but there are other forms as well, such as hypertext and video. The incorporation of motion graphics, video and audio in ePoetry translations is often done through the use of Flash authoring software, in which continuity of visual or audio narrative is typically achieved by embedding such within the original *fla* file, or downloading it via a *swf* upon execution of the code. In these ePoems interactivity is most usually incorporated via Flash's programming language, *ActionScript*.

Undoubtedly experimentation in poetry and indeed in writing has long been evident even before computers. For example Morris (2006: 24) tells of the activity that Kenneth Goldsmith referred to as “uncreative writing”, that is work that “forces the writer to swerve from the authenticity of self-evaluation and/or self-justification, the mystery of beauty and truth, and the aura of creative genius and timeless masterpieces” (Morris, 2006: 24). Similarly Simanowski (2011: 98) cites Raymond Queneau's work recombining each line of ten sonnets in *Cent mille milliards de poèmes*, as well as William S. Burroughs's *cut up* technique whereby a text is literally cut up and rearranged to make a new text. While it is important to recognise these movements as historical precursors of the ePoem, it is also important to note that the work with which this thesis is primarily concerned is poetry that is created and experienced through the digital apparatus, i.e. the computer, smartphone, or digital tablet. Correspondingly this new media form will then provide us with information regarding how the digital apparatus can impact on human poetic expression.

This thesis provides an investigation into the impact of the apparatus on poetic expression. This is done through a comparative study of what changes when a print poem becomes a digital poem. *Translation theory* is used as a filter to look at the process of transposition of a poem from print to pixel. *Poetry theory* is also used in order to be able to identify the differences between the traditional analogue form and

the ePoem. *Digital Media* theory is then incorporated in order to explore the communicative loop from ePoet to apparatus then to human.

This research is not so much concerned with the technology-society-change relationship but more so with the impact of the apparatus on poetic expression. Nonetheless just as Lev Manovich (2001: 50-51) relies on parallels between histories of cinema and the eMedia in developing the “first rigorous theorization” regarding the language of the eMedia, we can make some initial cursory comparisons of a somewhat similar nature in order to locate the questions of the present research in a wider cultural and historical perspective. The potential for literary expression is ever defined by the historical and cultural context in which it occurs, which of course includes the technology available for achieving such expression. Poetry in particular is the most appropriate selection for a contemporary study such as this because the interpretive freedom inherent in poetry as a result of its mutable signifiers is also present in the digital medium. In both poetry and the digital world the potentialities of meaning are mutable as the construction of meaning is dependant on the context, background, platform and socio-cultural situation of the viewer/reader/user/listener. While a similar study in relation to prose would be meritorious it is specifically the extended potentialities of poetic interaction and interpretation inherent in the digital realm due to its interactive nature that is the interest of this research. Poetic expression has long been considered emblematic of the human condition and as such studying the impact of the apparatus on human poetic expression is significant. It allows us to begin to critically examine and understand the implications of a move to an age in which a “networked cybernetic system is installed as the medium of communication and knowledge” (Hayles in Dewdney & Ride, 2006: 30).

The effectiveness of poetry whether electronic or analogue relies on its emotional impact or connection, therefore looking at and analysing these ePoems allows us to more accurately comprehend how best to use the electronic technologies to evoke specific desired reactions and emotions. The potential application of such knowledge is clear in relation to areas such as interactive entertainment or game based learning. We can learn for example to what extent interactivity can contribute to or take away from a user’s engagement of a piece. The logic being that the dimensions at play in

making an effective ePoem could similarly be used to create engaging content for the contemporary digital realm. For instance allowing school students to interactively explore a poem on their English literature syllabus can, if done effectively, enhance their engagement with the text and therefore gain a better understanding. Information on both technical and creative methods can be gathered in order to inform digital content creation. However in order to do this effectively current practice needs to be studied. If we can understand and specifically analyse why a particular ePoem has a greater poetic impact than another ePoem, through looking at both the end result and the process of translation itself, then we can use this knowledge to create effective eMedia content, not just for poetry but many other genres in the electronic realm.

A current example is *iF Poems* the latest iPhone app to knock the hugely successful *Angry Birds* off its perch as one of the most popular paid for iPhone apps. *iF Poems* contains an anthology of poetry from traditional poets such as Auden and Blake which are illustrated and read aloud by contemporary actors such as Helena Bonham Carter (Angelini, 2011).

In the app the poems are divided into age categories, subject matter and poetic form. For every poet featured there is a lively biographical sketch and a dictionary function that defines each word used in the poems.

And...you can also record your own rendition of a poem and then email it to a friend (Angelini, 2011).

Evidence exists that poetry still has the potential to connect with its audience but it is also equally clear that the advent of the digital has impacted greatly on audiences. Today's audiences consume across multiple platforms and the content depends heavily on consumers' active participation (Jenkins, 2006: 3). Reflecting this, poetry has found renewed life and vigour in the digital world. This thesis sets out to focus on the creation of ePoetry, most specifically ePoetry that began its life in print. An examination of this transposition to the digital medium along with evidence from ePoet interviews can allow us to draw conclusions regarding the changing form of literature in the digital age. Through further analysis and the application of poetry, digital, and translation theories this leads us to specifically identify what has and has not changed together with the more totalising transformation of form. It is important

to note however that this research does not seek to diminish the importance of traditional analogue poetry but rather desires to understand and identify its changing form in a digital age.

I approach this research from a Western perspective, from my position as a Digital Media Faculty member engaged in the field of the eMedia and I, like Sarah Sloane (2000: 13), “am a woman trained in rhetorical and literary analysis... who is living through the transition from late print culture to early silicon culture”. As a university lecturer in this field already engaged in the practice and teaching of the creation of online content, I look forward to the knowledge gained from this in depth analysis of contemporary online poetry pieces, informing both my own and my students’ future practice.

This thesis takes into account existing research and theory relevant to traditional, analogue poetry translation and likewise in relation to the corresponding characteristics of what has been termed the eMedia. This research draws on theories from postmodernism, communications, literature, translation, and game studies. This broad range of disciplines is necessary in order to open up the implications of the eMedia as a new form of communication by focusing on a ‘cyberspec’ of it, namely that of the dimensions at play when a print poem becomes an ePoem. Needless to say there is a wide range of literature to be considered however, for purposes of clarity and ease of presentation, these reviews will be organised around and focused through the work of a major theorist in each area. These include: Weight (2006) in relation to the eMedia, Holmes (1994) in relation to translation and Orr (1996) in relation to poetry. Based on this review of relevant research literatures this thesis will then investigate, via interviews with ePoets and analysis of ePoems, the process of ePoetry creation and the evolving practice of translating print poetry into ePoetry.

It is important to note that in ePoetry the written poem comes first in a manner similar to music in music videos as purported by Vernallis (2004: x). Before a music video is made the song exists independently, and in ePoetry before the ePoem is made the poem exists independently in print, either as a printed out word document or scribbled on a scrap of paper. This move from paper to pixel can be viewed as similar to the

translation of a poem from one language to another such as for example French to English. This is explored further in this thesis by placing traditional poetry translation theories into a framework within which this process is investigated. There is however one exception and that is the category of *Generative ePoetry*.² In this instance the computer code *generates* the poem and each experience is unique based on a series of variables at each instance of play. The code will however use variables such as text to generate a poem so in a sense it still exists in print first but not to the same extent as in *Interactive ePoetry* (ePoetry that requires interaction greater than an external click to play to proceed) or *Video/Animation Linear ePoetry* (linear ePoetry either animated or video whereby no action other than a click to play [external to the piece itself] is required to proceed) where a definite written poem exists which is then translated into ePoetry.

The focus of this research is primarily on *Interactive ePoems* but nonetheless in doing so it is essential for me to discuss other types of ePoetry such as *Generative* and *Video/Animation Linear ePoetry*.³ This is why when my research began I chose to focus on those poems that began their life as print as through a comparative study of print and digital poetry we can see what, if anything, has changed in human poetic expression. However as my research progressed I found it was also important to include discussions regarding ePoems that began their life in code. Framing my analysis around ePoetry created by humans proved to be insufficient as a criterion because humans also create *Generative ePoetry*, in the sense that a human must write the code that produces the ePoem.

The anticipated outcome of this research is an increased critical knowledge and understanding of ePoetry which can then, as the next stage after the submission of this written thesis, be used to inform the production and creation of an ePoem. While pursuing this goal it is anticipated that a reconsideration of both the theory of poetic expression and that of translation as they relate to ePoetic expression will come about. An important factor to consider is how essential the apparatus has become to human expression. Morris suggests that “we are not the bounded, autonomous, coherent, and fully self-conscious beings imagined by Enlightenment thinkers, but cybernetic organisms joined in a continuous feedback loops with media and information

technologies” (Morris, 2006: 4). Similarly Slack and Wise (2006: 143) tell us “neither we nor technology are slave to the other” and they remind us of Langdon Winner’s argument that, “as the devices, techniques and systems that we commonly understand to be technology ‘become woven in to the texture of everyday existence’, they shed their tool-like qualities to become part of our very humanity” (Slack & Wise, 2006: 145). Therefore a study such as this which affords as much importance to the apparatus as to the message is necessary.

This thesis seeks to identify the affordances and specificities of ePoetry towards the goal of understanding ePoetic expression. Murray (2012: 2) purports that “all things made with electronic bits and computer code belong to a single new medium, the digital medium, with its own unique affordances”. *Affordances* is a term first used by Gibson (1977) in his book *A Theory of Affordances* and is employed extensively in the field of human-computer interaction (H.C.I.) (Murray, 2012: 409-410). O’Neill (2008: 58) believes that affordance theory can help to deconstruct interactive media in terms of understanding how we physically interact with our environment. Affordances relate to the properties of objects and our perception of them, which then determines their usage. This too can be applied to digital objects. Although O’Neill (2008: 58) admits to the importance of affordance as an idea within the field of H.C.I. he also warns “it should be considered in its entirety rather than plundered for useful bits”. Nonetheless as Murray (2012: 51) looks at the computer as a new single medium and therefore defines its representational affordances so too can a similar investigation be conducted for ePoetry.⁴ Murray (2012) views interaction design as cultural practice and believes that “designing any single artifact within this new medium is part of the broader collective effort of making meaning through the invention and refinement of digital media conventions” (Murray, 2012: 2). This position (Murray, 2012) concurs with the goals of this investigation as through critical examination and analysis of the affordances of the digital medium in terms of their relation and impact on poetic expression, a deeper understanding of meaning-making in the digital realm can be gained. Within this discourse McLuhan’s (1964) theory regarding the medium and the message is an important building block in terms of how it has been developed and extended within Weight’s (2000) technosocial framework (a trilogical relationship

involving the human programmer or artist, the executing apparatus, and the human interpreter).

However it is important to remember Slack and Wise's (2006: 141) warning, that a common tendency when discussing new technologies is "to treat them as if they were completely revolutionary, capable of (*sui generis* as it were) changing everything and likely to do so". In this manner they recommend cultural studies as particularly suited to help critique and understand the relationship between technology and culture. The analysis of a phenomenon, they tell us, is in itself contextualising it and this therefore helps to map it. This then is what is being accomplished in this body of work; through the study of poetry and traditional poetry translation models we are able to analyse and critique the impact of digital technology on poetic expression and therefore recognize the digital poem as a new literary object of investigation. Similarly Slack and Wise (2006: 145-146) critique Clark's (2003) concept of the mind and the technological scaffolding, found in *Natural Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies, and the Future of Human Intelligence*, instead they see the mind as scaffolding which is in fact a more appropriate metaphor conducive to a symbiotic concept relating to humanity's relationship with the machine.

In the past the concept of cyberspace and most things related to the computer and the machine have been considered dangerous, cold, and emotionless. For example the Borg in the films *Star Trek: First Contact* (Frakes, 1996) and Skynet in *The Terminator* (Cameron, 1984), both futuristic representations of networks and technology depicted as cold and efficient leading eventually to the ultimate efficiency decision to eliminate the human race. Yet now evidence exists that the man versus machine view is fading as technology permeates through all aspects of our lives. As we develop mastery of the medium it is becoming clear that we are as much a part of this machine as the processor chips and buttons. This is a view more in keeping with the symbiotic relationship of man and machine working towards a mutual benefit as represented for example in the final of the Matrix films, *The Matrix Revolutions* (Wachowski & Wachowski, 2003) when Neo and the machines broker a deal to save humanity. Also *Tron: Legacy* (Kosinski, 2010) where Sam, a human, and Quorra, a computer program work together to defeat the bad guy. These representations reflect a

changing attitude, without us, these apparatus would not exist nor would they function so we too are part of the circuit. This echoes McLuhan's (1964: 193) contention that media is an extension of man. As the ePoet Dinmsore (Sapnar: 2004) asked herself before she began to create ePoetry "how could something so cold ever be a tool of expression"? and now she tells us that what she loves about the medium is the fact that there is "something so alive in this machine because there is so great a human touch in it, or so infinitely many different human touches" (Sapnar: 2004).

This infinite amount of human touches has been able to come about thanks to the seemingly unlimited freedom that currently exists in the digital realm. Also the manner in which the Internet is contributory and collaborative means that any attempts to harness it to date have been the equivalent of trying to capture water in a net. However, should a venture such as that of Google and Verizon's 2010 commercial proposition for the Web (Google & Verizon: Online), which suggests a paying tiered system for Internet access, be realised it will change cyberspace as we know it. Google and Verizon tell us it is necessary for safety and regulation (Davidon & Tauke: Online), whereas other sources tell us it is an attempt to tier the Internet to enable more profit for the companies involved (Newtiz: Online). This in turn will reduce the freedom currently inherent in cyberspace. All attempts however up to this point such as for example those of *Facebook* (Online) founder Mark Zuckerberg to harness the digital realm for profit or even to censor it have proved to be problematic. This is because there will always exist individuals with the time and desire to programme loopholes and free software to cloak for example a computer's identity so it is impossible to trace where or who the computer accessing the data actually is.⁵ The result of all this is that the Internet is decentralised in a way that previous media have not been, for example broadcast television is highly centralised with a one – to many model and is prone to elite control in a way that the Internet is not (Slack & Wise, 2006: 150).

How long this freedom may continue is unknown as in 2009 the United States of America formed the U.S. Cyber Command, a military unit whose remit is U.S. cyber security, and this has sparked enough paranoia on the world stage to prompt other countries to look into doing the same (Jackson: Online). In 2010 there emerged in

cyberspace the international threat of the *Stuxnet* virus, with a design so complex that it is believed that it could only have been built using the resources of a nation or nations. The virus targeted Iran's nuclear facilities and it is alleged that the U.S. Cyber Command were part of the development team (Gross, 2011: 102). In cyberspace borders are forming, Demchak & Dombrowski (2011) believe that the transformation from frontier to regulated substrate across cyberspace has begun. Similarly Lessig warns of a "change from a cyberspace of anarchy to a cyberspace of control" (Lessig, 2006: 5). He argues that if the Internet is to continue on its current path "much of the 'liberty' present at cyberspace's founding will be removed in its future" (Lessig, 2006: 5).

The struggle to control the Internet is evident in current debates regarding the *Stop Online Piracy Act* (S.O.P.A.) and the *Protect Intellectual Property Act* (P.I.P.A.) in the U.S.A. These acts seek to place the responsibility on Internet Service Providers (I.S.P.s) to ensure their customers do not engage in copyright infringement. As a result I.S.P.s will block access to sites suspected of copyright infringement. The proposed introduction of these acts provoked widespread debate in the U.S.A. Websites such as most notably *Wikipedia* (Online) and *Google* (Online) engaged in digital blackouts on Wednesday January 18th 2012 in protest to the S.O.P.A whereby they "blacked out" some or all of their online services. Critics of the acts say they are too severe and in the wake of widespread protest their proposal to the Senate has been delayed in order for them to be redrafted following further consultation with stakeholders (Puzzanghera: Online).

In Ireland similar legislation is being put forward called *S.I. No. 337/2011 – European Communities (Electronic Communications Networks and Services) (Universal Service and Users' Rights) Regulations 2011* or, as it is also known as, S.O.P.A. Ireland. However in Ireland there is no vote on the law, instead it is being enacted by ministerial order as it is being prepared in the form of a Statutory Instrument (Solon: Online). Despite online petitions and protest it looks set to be passed as the Irish government is under serious legal pressure regarding copyright infringement from the big four record labels, E.M.I., Sony, Warner, and Universal (Kennedy: Online).

However no matter what the outcome of these legislative wranglings is, systematic evidence of a technological capability to control and patrol cyberspace effectively has yet to reveal itself. Shutting down individual sites that have been found guilty of copyright infringement such as *Napster* has not stemmed the flow of online piracy (Kennedy: Online).⁶ This is due to the very nature of the Internet, it is a borderless decentralised space and its denizens are extremely fluent in the language of their world and quite attached to its non-centralised nature. This corresponds to Lister et al.'s (2003: 12) schema in which is listed “new patterns of organisation and production”, as a constituent part of new media. This means “wider realignments and integrations in media culture, industry, economy, access, ownership, control and regulation” (Lister et al., 2003: 12). This can clearly be applied to the Internet and its vast linkages of information, places and people.

Landow (2006: 13) tells us that when Bush conceptualised the Internet in *The Memex* in his 1945 seminal paper *As We May Think* he created what are essentially *poetic machines* that is, machines that work “according to analogy and association, machines that capture and create the anarchic brilliance of human imagination. Bush, we perceive, assumed that science and poetry work in essentially the same way” (Landow, 2006: 13). It is at this intersection of science and poetry that this research finds itself and it is these *poetic machines* creating ePoetic works of analogy and association, that are the realisation of our electric dreams. Sarah Sloane (2000: 109) describes how Joyce & Moulthrop, authors of hypertext fictions, believe that for digital fictions and new digital texts perhaps a new reading process is required and that this “requires an entirely new way of understanding the self and the world, a change in perspective that is, in essence a paradigm shift”. It is this paradigm shift that I look to understanding through this research.

Currently eTechnologies are continuing to change and develop at a rapid pace and as a result our fluency in their language of expression, the language of the eMedia, is also developing. This research provides an analysis of ePoetry examples in an effort towards expanding our knowledge and mastery of this language through an examination of current practice. As T. S. Eliot (1920: 53-54) suggests, the mind of the

mature poet differs from that of the immature one not because of any difference of depth of emotion or ‘personality’ or even of having ‘more to say’ but it is rather by “being a more finely perfected medium in which special or very varied feelings are at liberty to enter new combinations” (Eliot, 1920: 54). As Eliot spoke of the medium of poetry so too can we draw similarities with the eMedia, in a similar manner to McLuhan’s (2011: 86) suggestion that all media are translations. It is not that we have anything new to say rather it is that we are becoming better at saying it, forming new combinations of text, graphics, visual, audio and interactivity. This is apparent in the more complex attempts at expression in the online realm of which ePoetry is a part.

As Seth Giddings (2011: 2) states, “new media are the product of digital transformation of communication, information, entertainment media, including television, the press, cinema, telephones, photography and so on. However, these new media rarely exist as a straightforward remediation or digitization of earlier media”. Giddings (2011: 2) instead cites Hjorth’s (2011: 437-448) assertion that “the contemporary mobile phone is already much more than a portable version of old fixed-line telephones”. As we become more adept consumers and producers of ePoetry these differences from what has gone before become more apparent and it is through the recognition of the differences and specificities of the eMedia that the true potential of the electronic dynamic environment can become known. This then is the overriding goal of this research: to identify through teasing out the differences, potentialities, and characteristics of the new in order to inform future practice.

As Strehovec (2010: 70) states, digital poetry “is a new medium with its own specificity, borrowing only some basic characteristics of the print-based poetry”. However in order to examine the nature of this digital specificity it is first necessary to provide an overview of digital theories from the fields of digital media and culture in order to locate the ePoem as an object within a field of research. This is provided in the next chapter, Chapter 2. *Digital Theory Literature Review*, where a comparative review of the relevant literature from a number of digital theorists is provided.

Chapter 2. Digital Theory Literature Review

- A. ePoetry as eMedia**
- B. Beyond Remediation**
- C. Interactivity**
- D. The Apparatus**
 - i. The Interface**
 - ii. The Database**
 - iii. The Algorithm**

This chapter explores the applicability of digital technology characteristics to ePoetry. Notably Giddings (2011: 1) points out the difficulty in separating human culture from technology, that all of human culture and society was made possible by technology in one form or another, whether the technology is a stick or the haptic screen of a smartphone. Giddings suggests a solution to this in the introduction to *The New Media and Technocultures Reader* (Giddings & Lister, 2011) and it is a solution that is also appropriate for this investigation, which has also “happily plundered other disciplines and cultural practices that address technology, culture, society and media, from film studies to philosophy, sociology to cybercultural studies, science and technology studies to media activism” (Giddings & Lister, 2011: 2).

Nonetheless despite the dizzying scope of potential entry points into the field of digital theory Lister et al’s (2003) schema on new media is a useful and commonly cited starting point. Lister et al’s (2003) schema breaks down the term *new media* into constituent elements in order to form a more detailed and accessible understanding of what exactly it is. Also useful are Flew’s (2008) characteristics of digital media which I shall discuss with reference to ePoetry in the succeeding section of this chapter.

A. ePoetry as eMedia

This section uses Lister et al (2003) and Flew (2008) to prove that ePoetry is eMedia and therefore appropriate vehicles for the application of digital media theory. To begin by looking at the specific terms used the term *media* is one we are familiar with and it is used to refer the ‘communication media’ namely “the press, the cinema, broadcasting, publishing and so on and the cultural and material products of those institutions” such as for example newspapers and books (Lister et al, 2003: 9). These are primarily regarded as stemming from analogue technologies, that were unchanging and non-mutable. Once a magazine is published it doesn’t change,

everyone gets to see the same pictures and read the same articles, they remain fixed. Similarly once a radio programme is recorded and broadcast it remains unchanged. As traditional media can be seen to stem from analogue technologies correspondingly we can therefore view eMedia as the products of eTechnologies which are mutable by nature. For example my *Facebook* (Online) profile page differs from yours, and is in fact changing all the time, I can contribute to the discussions relating to a news article online, I can contribute to a *Wikipedia* (Online) article should I wish. Or, as was recently recounted to me at a conference by a tenured American professor, an expert on a subject may find themselves locked in a cyberbattle with a 12 year old who refers to themselves as 'the warlock' and keeps 'amending' the professor's academic entries on *Wikipedia*.

Flew (2008: 3) for example suggests that new media or digital media are characteristically:

- Manipulable – by this Flew (2008: 3) means mutable, easily changed and adapted,
- Networkable – information is shared and exchanged across large distances among many people,
- Dense – information is stored in small spaces, such as entire libraries on a hard disk,
- Compressible – information can be compressed or decompressed as needed to take up more or less space,
- Impartial – the information is indifferent to whom, how or for what it is used (Flew, 2008: 3).

As the ePoems I discuss in this research are all only found online it is clear how they, as per Flew (2008: 3) are:

- Manipulable – their digital nature allow us to manipulate them in a manner that we cannot with print poems,
- Networkable – they are available online and so can be viewed from Mexico to Antarctica,
- Dense – it is possible to store a catalogue of ePoems on a small usb memory stick,

- Compressible – for example those ePoems that use video have the option of allowing creators⁷ to view them at full quality or low quality depending on their internet bandwidth.

Lister et al. (2003: 12) also suggest a schema for understanding the new media or eMedia. Part of this schema, *new relationships between subjects (users and consumers) and media technologies*, refers to “changes in the use and reception of image and communication media in everyday life” (Lister et al., 2003: 12). Such as for example the way *Facebook* (Online) has now changed the way people use the Internet to interact with each other as part of their everyday life. As I will explicate, much evidence of this can be seen to be apparent in the ePoet interview responses and so supports the premise that ePoems are eMedia.

Extensive use of digital technology is also clearly apparent in the process of translation of the ePoems. For example the ePoet duo SamuelChristopher, consists of Sam Tootal and Chris Turner who are based in London and New York respectively. When discussing the working arrangements between himself and Chris Turner, Sam Tootal, referring to the creation of the ePoem *Hunger* (Collins & SamuelChristopher: Online) states, “With this project we had the additional geographic hurdle of The Atlantic Ocean with New York. But hey, time difference, FTP and “yousendit” all help things flow!” (Tootal, 2009: 4). So here we have in essence an ePoem in which not only the creative process but also the end result could not have taken place without eTechnology. In this instance eTechnologies allowed the creative partnership of Chris Turner and Sam Tootal to collaborate, despite being based in different geographical locations and furthermore but Tootal (2009: 5) tells us that they created the ePoem “all on our laptops in our own time”. This corresponds to Vos’ view that ePoetry is “innovative poetry created and experienced within the environment of new communication and information technologies – and it could not have been created nor cannot be experienced in other environments” (Vos, 2007: 199).

However not everyone in the interviews state only the advantages of eTechnology, Young-Hae Chang (2009: 4) tell us that the “technology can be frustrating, but everyone’s in the same boat there”. This shows that while as in SamuelChristopher’s

case the eTechnology allowed them to work in a manner not previously possible sometimes the eTechnology can also restrict the creative process or vision. Nonetheless it is clear that ePoems are the products of eTechnologies and as such can be considered as eMedia.

It is important to note that ePoetry is not only created using digital technologies but also displays some of the same characteristics of digital technologies. Strehovec (2010: 67) for example, contends that digital poetry is “characterized by new media features such as digitality, database, software, interactivity, immersion, hypertextuality, dispersal, customization, remixing, repurposing, and virtuality”. These features themselves then logically impact on the poetic expression of ePoetry. Therefore identifying and analysing digital media characteristics in relation to ePoetry and how they contribute to and impact on meaning-making is an essential part of ePoetry discourse.

B. Beyond Remediation

Bolter & Grusin however argue in *Remediation* (2000) that comparison to earlier media is the only way we are able to perceive a new medium as a medium (Fagerjord, 2003: 1). This process attempts to either “make the medium disappear” (Bolter & Grusin, 2000: 22) *Immediacy*, or alternatively reminds the viewer of the medium and “emphasizes process or performance rather than the finished art object” (Bolter & Grusin, 2000: 31) *Hypermediacy*. When the eMedia is used in such a manner as this so as to make the reader aware of it, the resulting effect is typically to pull the reader out of the poetic experience.

Larissa Hjorth (2011: 442) observes that Bolter and Grusin’s (2000) remediation theory in fact builds on McLuhan’s (2011: 86) suggestion that the content of new media is that of the previous technology; he suggests that all media are translation and that in the electric age we are continuously translating ourselves into more forms of information. So rather than, as we initially perceive, new technologies leaving the past behind, in fact in each of them, we see echoes of the past (Hjorth, 2011: 442).

However Lister et al. (2003: 12) maintain the eMedia offer *new textual experiences*, this refers to “new kinds of genre, textual form, entertainment, pleasure and patterns

of media consumptions (computer games, hypertexts, special effects cinema)” (Lister et al., 2003: 12). EPoetry is indeed a new textual experience and new form of entertainment or media consumption. Concurrently Kerr et al. (2006: 78) suggest that, the “pleasures of new media cannot be understood simply by adopting existing approaches and concepts.... rather these concepts need to be carefully adapted to reflect the specificities of new media text, the experiences they engender and their varied concepts of use”.

This then weakens Bolter and Grusin’s arguments that *Remediation*, or “the representation of one medium in another...is a defining characteristic of the new digital media” (Bolter & Grusin, 2000: 45), as it purports that nothing is new, that everything is a reworked or a remediated version of what has gone before. Bolter and Grusin (2000: 272-273) believe remediation is a necessary part of the evolution of media and has taken place before as photography remediated painting, film remediated stage production and photography, and television remediated film, vaudeville, and radio. We now find some evidence of the same process occurring in relation to poetry online but while there are elements that can easily be recognised from older forms of media, such as buttons, pages, and screens, there is also evidence of something entirely new at play here. It is in this sense that we can see that Lister et al. (2003) and Kerr et al.’s (2006) arguments are more appropriate for application to today’s eMedia towards the goal of understanding their new patterns of consumption, pleasure and entertainment. Although this research focuses more on the creation than the consumption of eMedia (namely *Interactive ePoetry*), nonetheless these dimensions are interlinked.

Similarly Pat Brereton (2000: 121) claims in a review that while Bolter and Grusin’s theory of remediation is an attempt at an all-inclusive meta-theory it fails to adequately deal with postmodernist discourse(s) and as a result fails to deal with several difficult questions as is evidenced in my discussions in Chapter 4 *Poetry Transformations* regarding representation versus simulation. While on the surface Bolter and Grusin’s (2000) remediation theory does seem to apply to ePoetry, such as the manner in which many of the examples of ePoems reproduce the layout and linearity of a poem in print form, there is also evidence of something entirely new at

play. N. K. Hayles (2004: 67-90) position is particularly relevant here. Hayles instead proposes a *media specific analysis* and states that it is due to the effectiveness of the computer as a simulation machine that it is seductive to think of text on the screen as similar to text on the page. However, she continues, it is imperative to recognize the differences inherent in this new medium and that these very differences from print that are the reasons that the computer is such a good simulation machine, that is the dynamic processes at play in the machine (Hayles, 2004: 71). Manovich (2006: 216) also describes the computer as a simulation machine and that as such it is often used to simulate other media.

It is these dynamic processes of the computer that allow for the trilogical cybernetic relationship within digital creative practice and communication as outlined by Weight (2006) and Aarseth (1997). The interactive communication loop (as opposed to the linear transmission afforded by traditional media) present in electronic texts (ePoems, games, hypertext fictions) is not something that can be identified as a remediated form of what has gone before. It is therefore in these shadows that Bolter and Grusin's (2000) arguments fail to shine enough light. It becomes clear that while on the surface ePoetry may look like older forms of media with its simulations of page turning and screens that look like picture frames and book pages, beneath the surface similarities it is a very different beast. This is reiterated by Giddings (2007) who posits that though it is often argued in both academic and popular criticism that electronic and digital screens capture the surfaces of objects and phenomena in fact "their essence, their reality, their intangible and invisible operation (economic, social, political) are jettisoned" (Giddings, 2007: 422). Similarly Chun (2006: 1) states: "new media depended heavily on computerization, new media was not simply "digital media": that is, it was not digitized forms of other media (photography, video, text) but rather an interactive medium or form of distribution as independent as the information it relayed". In all cases human expression in the eMedia has come a great distance from the realm of traditional media.

Hayles in her paper *The Time of Digital Poetry: From Object to Event* suggests that a digital poem is in fact a process, an event that is brought about through different factors such as software and hardware (Hayles, 2006: 181). As in the Greek

philosopher Heraclitus' belief that you cannot step in the same river twice, neither can the same digital poem be repeated as each time a process is carried out and variations in that process are inevitable (2006: 186). Perhaps the platform or software is different; perhaps the machine lags. This differs to print poems in that though there is a process to arrive at the poem, once the end result is achieved they do not change, a printed poem is not an event in the sense that a digital poem is produced through and is an end result of programs being run each time the piece is loaded. There is a process to the production of the poem such as writing and printing however once the poem is printed and produced in a book or magazine its material structure does not noticeably change (Hayles, 2006: 183). Aarseth (1997: 3) posits that cybertexts are machines for the production of varieties of expression, in other words, there is in each piece the potential for a variety of different experiences. Unlike print where there is only one path and one potential though the nuances of the same may differ slightly depending on the reader and their unique experiences.

The variety of forms that ePoetry can take means that the difference not only lies in the poetic experience but also in the coding used by the ePoet to prepare information for display on the apparatus. The code is the link between the *wetware* (humans) and the *hardware* (computers) (Morris, 2006: 8). So as the poetic experience can change depending on the human's "coding" the ePoem itself can also change depending on the computers "coding" (such as the version of browser or plug-in installed). The hardware's coding can change but so too can the wetware's, so it seems that we are not so different from the machines that we have created.

C. Interactivity

While it is clear that ePoems are the products of eTechnologies and as such can be considered eMedia or new media, there is much discussion and variety regarding the definition around what exactly new media is and whether indeed it is even new anymore. Despite the variety of discussions, there is one common property or characteristic that arises throughout. That common element, as Lister et al. (2003), Manovich (2001), Miller (2004), and Chun (2006) all acknowledge, is that new media use, or are created by, digital technology. Digital technology is in essence the computer whose digital nature provides us with interactivity. Jensen (2005: 184) describes how interactivity is seen as "*the* defining characteristic of computer media".

This is reflected in Miller's (2004: xii) belief that digital story-telling is narrative entertainment that reaches its audience via digital technology and media – microprocessors, wireless signals, the Web, DVDs and so on. Older media, Miller explains, is supported by analogue technology (film, video, LPs, audiotape) and cannot support back and forth two-way communications between the audience and the material. It is this back-and-forth that differentiates the new media from the old and is what is referred to as interactivity (Miller, 2004: xii). This is similar to what Aarseth (1997: 22) outlines as the shifting of the traditional author as sender, text as message, and reader as receiver relationship. What instead results is cybernetic intercourse between those involved in the process, a cybernetic feedback loop from machine to human.

Jensen (2005: 1) however warns that interactivity “remains a central yet notoriously difficult notion in studies of computer mediated communication”. For example Manovich (2001: 55) advises that the term interactivity is a tautology when used in relation to computer-based media. He argues that all classical and modern art is interactive in a number of ways and that once an object is represented in a computer it automatically becomes interactive. Therefore to call computer media interactive is pointless as it is simply restating the most basic fact about computers. What however does differentiate eMedia from traditional analogue Media, is that the media here are coded (“numeric data”) and by programming can be manipulated, that is such manipulations being activated by user activity.⁸ Manovich (2001: 20) sees eMedia as the result of the translation of all existing media into numerical data accessible through computers. “Graphics, moving images, sounds, shapes, spaces and texts that have become computable; that is, they comprise simply another set of computer data” (Manovich, 2001: 20). In digital processes input data is converted to numbers as opposed to analogue processes which take physical form, so all online sources would qualify as digital, including all versions of ePoetry to which I refer to in this research. By its very replicable and mutable nature digital media are less fixed than analogue media, “digital merely signifies the assignment of numerical values to phenomena” (Bush in Lister et al., 2003: 15), this corresponds to Manovich's first principle of new media, that is, numerical representation. In other words, though the ePoems may look like colourful visuals to the reader, in fact those colours are programmed

representations by the computer of the numerical information (binary code) it is processing.

Despite the difficulty in pinning down a specific and consistent definition of interactivity due to the existence of a variety of detailed studies and theories (see for example Deen [2011], Kennedy [2011], Lévy [2011], Lombard & Ditton [2007], and Murray [2012]) analysing the use of interactivity in ePoetry is somewhat easier to identify. When pushed to its full potential interactivity can create powerful ePoetic experiences, however this is not how it is typically implemented. Instead it is quite often used as as a way of regulating the flow of narrative; or even to create some potential for the reordering or sequencing of words or phrases and perhaps images by means of, for instance, a simple drag and drop scripting in Flash. As in for example the ePoem *I didn't know infants in arms until* (Petrosino & Weychert: Online).

D. The Apparatus

What is most often criticized in new media or digital theory is the fact that the relationship of reader and text is studied and discussed but the role of the machine is ignored (Lister et al., 2003: 28-29). Sarah Sloane (2000: 21) defines digital fictions as “a term that encompasses stories that are written on or by computers, read via a computer interface, and that are one genre of what Espen Aarseth (1997) calls more generally *cybertext*”. As the computer is clearly such a defining feature of these digital fictions it is imperative that it too is considered. Jenny Weight’s article *I, Apparatus, You: A Technosocial Introduction to Creative Practice* (2006: 413-446) is particularly relevant here. In developing her own argument she integrates the thinking of many prominent new media theorists including for example Ball, Cayley, Flusser, Glazier, Hayles, Manovich, Rosenberg, Seaman, Wardrip-Fruin and more generally the competing arguments of the ludologists and the narratologists. As both a theorist and an active practitioner in the creation of ePoetry (in her case generative poetry), Weight addresses the question of the ‘technical and social’ restructuring that has taken place in the eMedia, and the implications of this for poetic practice, such as both the creation and the consumption of ePoetry.⁹ In this section I will elaborate on these points from Weight’s (2006) theory with reference to the ePoetry examples discussed in this research.

What is important to note about Jenny Weight's argument is that she believes that the texts in question "cannot be understood separately from the apparatus that displays and performs them" (Weight 2006: 413). This is similar to Manovich's opinion that in "cultural communication, a code is rarely simply a neutral transport mechanism; usually it affects the messages transmitted with its help" (Manovich, 2001: 64). This is also similar to the ideas put forward by Marshall McLuhan in his 1962 book *The Medium is the Message*, where he describes how "the electric light escapes attention as a communication medium just because it has 'no content'" (McLuhan, 2003: 203). Weight (2006) outlines a technosocial argument that a trilogical relationship is formed when an apparatus mediates creative communication (Weight, 2006: 413 – 446).

Similarly Kerr et al. (2006: 68) reference Bootz's (1997) suggestion that while traditional texts have a two level structure, that is encoding and decoding. ETexts however exhibit a three-level structure in that there exists the encoding and decoding as in traditional two-level structure texts but in between there also exists the physical manifestation of the reader's individual choices. This echoes Jenny Weight's (2006: 413) proposal for a trilogical technosocial relationship in ePoetry and confirms the importance of considering all three partners in the communication process, the human, the machine and the software.

Weight uses Flusser's (2000) term, apparatus, to mean any programmed or programmable machine. The apparatus is "a plaything or game that simulates thought [*trans.* An overarching term for a non-human agency, such as the camera, the computer and the 'apparatus' of the State or of the market] organization or system that enables something to function" (Flusser, 2000: 83). In his book *Towards a Philosophy of Photography* Flusser (2000: 21) uses the term with reference to photography in that photographic apparatuses "are black boxes that simulate thinking in the sense of a combinatory games using number-like symbols".¹⁰ He views the activity of taking photographs as a game in which the photographer is a player (Flusser, 2000: 27). In this sense it is clear how this applies to computers, as many people interact with the computer as a plaything rather than simply a tool. The digital apparatus is now used as an instrument of leisure not only of work. The core of Weight's technosocial argument is a trilogical relationship that consists of three partners, the human

programmer or artist, the executing apparatus and the human interpreter (Weight, 2006: 414). A technosocial undertaking of this kind is formed with similar partners with reference to the cases of ePoetry that I refer to in this research, the poet or eMedia technologist (this could be one or two people), the apparatus, and the creader. Weight describes the trilogical relationship as meaningful and rewarding for its human interpreters. “The creating technosocial subject collaborates with the apparatus to create new media or communication. The interpreting technosocial subject interprets media or communication performed and disseminated via (but not initiated by) the apparatus” (Weight, 2006: 415). “The apparatus performs at the behest of one or other human party, but not necessarily in ways that the humans can predict” (Weight, 2006: 415). Though the apparatus is being directed by the human there is the possibility of the apparatus itself contributing unanticipated elements to the process this is why it is important to view it as much as a partner in the undertaking as the other partners. She explains that “networked apparatuses command access to a near infinite database of information and media objects, and programs can be written to manipulate that information in nontrivial ways...it is a performative device of unique capacity, sensitivity and complexity, which encourages a wide range of human creativity, interpretation and, indeed, collaboration” (Weight, 2006: 415-416). In this regard Jenny Weight (2006: 431) outlines three commonly identified features of the text-as-apparatus which I will now discuss.

i. The Interface

The first of these is the interface; this is the apparatus screen or computer monitor, which creates a visual environment. Odin (2007: Online) explains how in the print medium content is the same as the interface, however the writer for the digital medium needs an interface to make the content accessible to the user. The interface in a web browser allows us to access a web page without which the majority of users would not be able to understand the content as otherwise they would be presented with a page of HTML code which to most people would be unintelligible.¹¹ “The interface shapes how the computer user conceives of the computer itself” (Manovich, 2001: 65-66). Morris explains that unless you click ‘view source’ in your browser window the operations of code remain hidden to the average web user. However she also reminds us that in some examples of ePoetry from practitioners and theorists,

such as John Cayley, Brian Lennon, Talan Memmott, Alan Sondheim, Ted Warnell and Jessica Loseby, code or code elements seep onto a screen to be read not by the apparatus but by the human audience and the result is a digital composition which Alan Sondheim calls *codework* (Morris, 2006: 29). I will refer to *codework* in greater detail presently when I discuss the algorithm, also known as code.

ii. The Database

The second common feature of the text-as-apparatus that Weight (2006: 431) outlines is the database. Traditionally narrative is associated with books and films, however now with the eMedia a new category of narrative has come about, that is the database; “a collection of items that constitutes the content of the work and exists in binary code on the computer” (Odin, 2007: Online). This brings to mind the work of media theorist Kittler in whose theories there has been a resurgence of interest of late. As a consequence there is a move within the eLiterature field towards a remix theory that is clearly grounded (albeit often unknowingly) on Kittler’s (1986) media theories. Marc Amerika’s (2011) recent publication *Remix the Book* is an example of this. Kittler purports that the technologies of the early twentieth century separated the media and the digital is now reuniting them (Kittler & Johnston, 1997: 32). Although Kittler’s position builds on McLuhan’s (1964) view of medium as the message, it is also in a sense in opposition to it. McLuhan’s standpoint is reflected in Weight’s (2006) technosocial theory that lies at the very core of this investigation. Both McLuhan (1964) and Weight (2006) emphasise the importance of a consideration of the machine however in more of a symbiotic sense than that put forward by Kittler (2010). “McLuhan, who was originally a literary critic, understood more about perception than electronics, and therefore he attempted to think about technology in terms of bodies instead of the other way around” (Kittler, 2010: 29). This quote reinforces that, according to Kittler, “machines are our fate, and to say so is not to witness to an awful downfall of the human condition; it is to properly grasp our situation” (Peters, 2010: 2).

To return however to Weight’s (2006) second feature of the text-as-apparatus, that is the database, it is important to mention Murray’s (2012) standpoint. She purports that “all things made with electronic bits and computer code belong to a single new

medium, the digital medium, with its own unique affordances” (Murray, 2012: 2). This concurs with Lev Manovich’s assertion that “numerical representation turns media into computer data, thus making it programmable. And this indeed radically changes the nature of media” (2001: 52). However most pertinently for this research Morris (2006: 8) believes that this is a feature not only common to ePoetry but also of traditional print poetry, as she believes that all poems be they oral, written or digital draw on the databanks of a culture such as its language, its knowledge archives, its symbol sets, its emotional networks. What does however differentiate the the analogue from the digital is the coding that is used by the ePoet to prepare information for display on the apparatus, as previously cited the code is the link between the *wetware* (humans) and the *hardware* (computers) (Morris, 2006: 8).

The contemporary computing environment is considerably more user friendly than in previous decades. Previously computer users would have had to write code directly into the apparatus in order for it to follow instructions. Now however that is no longer necessary, computer software now can be accessed and used in a more visual and less technical manner than before. This means that it is not necessary to be able to program to create documents, draw pictures, and send messages. The more complex the piece the user wishes to create the greater the technical and coding requirements become, nonetheless there exist a wide array of choices of software for the ePoet to use. So for example *Hunger* (Collins & SamuelChristopher: Online) is a video piece and as such the ePoets would have used video editing software such as Final Cut Pro or Avid. *I didn't know infants in arms until* (Petrosino & Weychert: Online) is an interactive animated piece so the ePoet used Adobe Flash software and *Concatenation* (geniwaite: 2006) a generative poetry piece was created using Director software. In each of these cases the code used by the ePoet to communicate with the apparatus differs due to different software being used. The code as I have previously stated is the link between human and machine, it is the set of instructions that the human wants the apparatus to enact for the creader. For example when the creader clicks this image play this song, when they click this button show this animation and so on and so forth. This brings us to Jenny Weight’s (2006) third feature.

iii. The Algorithm

The third feature is the algorithm, an algorithm is a series of instructions, in this case Weight describes algorithms as interactivity, in other words the algorithm dictates the extent to which the reader is given freedom within the environment. Algorithms link the user to the database allowing them to form new relationships (Weight, 2006: 431-432). In much ePoetry the scripting language of Adobe Flash, ActionScript, defines the extent of the interactivity, or relationships to the content. Correspondingly Strehovec (2010: 64) contends that digital poetry is enabled by software as a cultural tool.

Software code is a rich and burgeoning topic as evidenced by Manovich's (2008: Online) book *Software Takes Command* available as a constantly updated and drafted document under creative commons licensing online. Manovich (2008: 3) refers to "cultural software...cultural in the sense that it is directly used by hundreds and millions of people and that it carries 'atoms' of culture (media and information, as well as human interactions around these media and information)" (Manovich, 2008: 3). However the code or algorithm that interests this research is that written by the ePoet to program interactivity rather than the code of the software, which while powerful, is generic in terms of its functionality specific to that application. All code written to create the software that is Adobe Flash is the same for that version of software. However the code that the ePoet includes in their ePoem to enable specific poetic interactions is unique. Alternatively Simanowski (2011: vii) suggests that, "a preoccupation with code threatens to divert our attention from the actual meaning of an artifact. It encourages claims such as the notion that everything in digital media is actually literature because everything is represented as alphanumeric code".

Nonetheless Watten (2006: 365) suggests that in eMedia art the methods of communication are the communication and eMedia art is both visual display and textual coding. We can see this also reflects McLuhan's (1962) theory, regarding the medium as the message, in that the communication takes place through both the visuals that the computer creates by processing the code, and also through the code itself. So for the purposes of this research we can see that ePoetry not only communicates through visual and textual language on screen but also through the

programming language of ActionScript. This is despite the fact that the reader will not have to process ActionScript (unless there is an error). However the apparatus and the ePoet do have to either write or process ActionScript if an ePoem is to be created and be executed (in the manner that a computer executes a program).

Any trilogical relationship such as that between the apparatus, the programmer and the interpreter has an inherent conflict between two models of language, the programming language and natural language. Ong (2002: 7) believes that while computer languages seem to resemble human languages in certain manners (in that they have rules, such as grammar) they are in fact completely different. This according to Ong (2002: 7) is due to their noetic nature, in that they come straight from human consciousness whereas human language comes straight from the unconscious.

Weight (2006: 419) in fact defines programming as “a species of logical writing whose operational efficacy derives from the correspondence of surface display...with coded instruction, where correspondence is not equivalent to representation.” What is significant for any apparatus or executing code is that it can be executed without error. Code can only ever ‘signify’ one thing. It is not open to interpretation. The apparatus has no concept of multiplicity; there is no ‘beyond’ the data, when a computer encounters a ‘bug’ in the code, no dialogic negotiation takes place. The program – the performance– stops (Weight 2006: 420). With reference to this John Cayley in his paper *The Code is not the Text (unless it is the Text)* (2005: Online) also uses the term *codework*. He describes this term as it applies to literature which “uses, addresses, and incorporates code as an underlying language-animating or language-generating programming”. Cayley (2005: Online) views this as a special type of language in itself, or as an intrinsic part of the new surface language or ‘interface text’ of writing in networked and programmable media. Manovich states that the “act of writing code itself is very important, regardless of what this code actually does at the end” (2006: 216).

Though the apparatus is considered a partner in this undertaking and the texts cannot be understood separately from this apparatus, the interpretation only takes part on the

side of the human user. In short computers cannot read poetry only humans can. “The apparatus does not care that representations of linear connection are somewhat emblematic of the human condition, that meaning or significance is ever framed by a need to make narrative connections they simply determine what narrative connections will be possible (Weight, 2006: 433). It is only the human element in this relationship that has a need to construct meaning, a need for meaning which remains at the heart of ePoetry, just as it has forever been with traditional poetry.

It is not surprising that meaning is central to the creation of both poetry and ePoetry. However natural language is not a transparent bearer of meaning in the way that programming code absolutely must be. “Natural language works on principles of coherence, empathy and a level of syntactical forgiveness” (Weight, 2006: 419). Natural language is always concerned with meaning, which is contextualized and nuanced. It emerges from the way specific individuals interpret the unity of the text into a multiplicity of elements, and then unify it again. When humans encounter an apparently nonsensical piece of text (such as a ‘bug’ to a programmed apparatus) they usually attempt to extrapolate some meaning through clues and cues (Weight, 2006: 420). Unlike the apparatus, the human interpreter engages in a ‘back and forth’ between the unity of text and multiple factors in the world that might be brought to bear on interpretation, the interpreter cannot help reaching beyond the text, the apparatus has no capacity to do so.¹²

Morris (2006: 9) also lists three components of a digital poem, these are: the data fields (similar to Weight’s database), the code (similar to Weight’s algorithm) and the display (similar to Weight’s interface). Stephanie Strickland (2006: Online) a theorist and ePoet also proposes that there exist three agents: writer-coder, machine processor-network, player-reader. She believes that unless all three of these peers are communicating and engaged then nothing is happening. This mirrors Weight’s (2006) technosocial trilogical relationship of the machine, the algorithm and the apparatus which itself builds on Manovich’s (2001) database and Flusser’s (2000) apparatus. This trilogical technosocial relationship is clearly integral to understanding meaning making in ePoetry as it is essential that all contributors to the communicative process are considered.

To summarise, this chapter began by identifying the broad characteristics of digital media and therefore ePoetry. The goal of this chapter was to define the ePoem as an object and locate it within a field of research before considering how it can be taxonomised and explored. As previously cited, Strehovec (2010: 67) purports “digital poetry...is characterized by new media features”, therefore a contextualisation of new media theory was essential before moving to the specifics of ePoetry translation and meaning making.

Specifically this chapter also concluded that Bolter and Grusin’s (2000) remediation theory though useful is not adequate for ePoetry, as while it is seductive to think of text on the screen as similar to text on the page, it clearly is not. Instead Hayles (2004: 67-90) suggestion of media specific analysis is more appropriate, as despite the effectiveness of the computer as a simulation machine there exists evidence of something entirely new at play. It is imperative to recognize the differences inherent in this new medium and that these very differences are the reasons that the computer is such a good simulation machine, in particular differences such as the dynamic processes at play in the machine (Hayles, 2004: 71).

Furthermore this chapter discovered that it is necessary to view communication within ePoetry as a trilogical relationship, whereby the apparatus is considered as much a part of the undertaking as the creader and the ePoet as per Weight’s (2006) technosocial theory. Weight (2006: 433) suggests that ePoems offer trilogical ‘narratives’ that represent possibility rather than closure and the privileging of contingency over fate. These discussions took place in order to situate the digital poem as an object within a broader theoretical field.

The following chapter provides an overview of the field of ePoetry past and present in order to identify where within this extremely broad and ever changing field the specific examples of ePoetry, which I have examined in this study, are situated.

Chapter 3. ePoetry Past and Present

- A. ePoetry Timeline**
- B. A History of ePoetry**
- C. What is ePoetry?**
- D. ePoet Interviews Methods & Rationale**

This chapter provides an overview of the field of ePoetry past and present. It begins with a timeline and a brief account of the history of ePoetry. Then an explanation follows of what exactly ePoetry is and how it is defined and categorised.

Subsequently the methods and rationale for the ePoet interviews are laid out. This chapter is essential as an introduction and explanation of ePoetry within the emerging field of electronic literature as well as providing an understanding and rationale of where within this field this thesis is placed.

The timeline that follows in this section is drawn mainly from Bootz (Online), Funkhouser (2007), Glazier (2002), and Kac (2007), as well as other relevant sources. Funkhouser (2007) most notably provided a detailed chronology of digital poetry in his book *Prehistoric Digital Poetry: An Archaeology of Forms, 1959-1995*. Whilst I would have liked to continue where his chronology ended in 1995 the vast quantities and varieties of online content currently produced on a daily basis makes it an impossible task. As digital technology and tools were less prevalent from 1959 to the launch of for example Apple's Apple II (Linzmayr, 2006: Online) and Commodore's PET (Barton & Loguidice, 2007: Online) in 1977, it was possible for Funkhouser to begin to list digital poetry works produced. However, as even Funkhouser himself states with reference to his chronology, as "a record of advancements that occurred within the genre, this document aims to be encompassing and inclusive though not complete" (2007: xix).

To attempt the equivalent for current times is an almost impossible task. Nonetheless we must start somewhere, so I have collated the information uncovered during the course of my six years of research and the intention is that this timeline can be added to as time progresses. I included on the timeline the ePoems on which I specifically focus in this thesis but clearly there are many more examples which could have been drawn on. I have also included on the timeline the launch dates of technologies that are used in the making of ePoetry, allowing the reader to see that an increase in tools

(such as the Apple Macintosh computer or Adobe Flash software) in turn incurs an increase in content creation using those tools. The apparatus as you will see throughout the discussions and analysis of my thesis is an essential component in the creation and consumption of ePoetry.

Often as a technology is introduced it is initially launched with a specific function in mind, but as it permeates through common usage the affordances of the technology come to the fore and human use of it adapts and changes. Correspondingly the technology itself adapts and changes to our needs. As with animals for example, though chimpanzees found trees useful for climbing and living in they also eventually discovered that if you broke twigs off them you could insert them into ant nests and thereby remove ants to eat (Shumaker et al., 2011: 161). Likewise when the Minitel in France was launched in 1982 (Michalet, 2011: Online) it was mainly envisaged as a video-text system using telephone line networks to book tickets, make reservations or look up phone numbers. However as I outline in the history of ePoetry later in this section, *Art Access* an art review, began to offer writers the possibility to write works specially adapted to the Minitel accompanied by critics' text (Bootz, 2007: 214). Similarly in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, Pirsig (1974: 169) in relation to technology observes:

If you have to choose among an infinite number of ways to put it together then the relation of the machine to you, and the relation of the machine and you to the rest of the world has to be considered, because the selection from among many choices, the *art* of the work is just as dependent upon your own mind and spirit as it is upon the material of the machine (Pirsig, 1974: 169).

The *art* of the work, created through use of the machine, is just as dependent on the machine as it is on the human as well as *how we choose to use the machine*.

Correspondingly as previously mentioned in the introduction, McLuhan, (1964: 7) purports that it “was not the machine, but what one did with the machine, that was its meaning or message”. McLuhan's (1964: 193) contention is that media is an

extension of man and “once a new technology comes into a social milieu it cannot cease to permeate that milieu until every institution is saturated”. However so too must we consider how we humans have permeated the technology. It “is the poets and the painters who react instantly to a new medium like radio or TV. Radio and gramophone and tape recorder gave us back the poet’s voice as an important dimension of the poetic experience” (McLuhan, 1964: 58). Yet it is not only the poets who react, but the technology itself that also reacts until the two are entwined in “feedback”. Feedback is what McLuhan states is involved in “perfecting the individual machine” (1964: 387), or as we might refer to it, the computer. What we have then is a cybernetic feedback loop between machine and human (Aarseth, 1997: 22).

A. ePoetry Timeline

Select parts of the timeline that follows below are expanded on in the succeeding section of this chapter, *A History of ePoetry*. It must be noted that large chunks of it are direct quotes from Funkhouser (2007), however their reproduction here are necessary in order to provide historical context for the field of ePoetry. I have added some recent examples of ePoetry as well as dates for the launch and emergence of relevant digital technologies. It is interesting to note that the terminology used to describe and categorise ePoetry can be seen to change as the timeline progresses. This is a logical consequence of changing technologies and forms. An in depth discussion regarding ePoetry terminology takes place further on this chapter in section C. *What is ePoetry*.

1959

Theo Lutz & Brion Gysin create text generators (Bootz, 2007: 213)

“1960

Oulipo founded

Brion Gysin’s permutation poem *I am that I am* programmed by Ian Somerville

1961

Nanni Balestrini’s *Tape Mark I* created with code and punched cards on an IBM 7070

Rul Gunzenhäuser, *Weinachtgedicht* (automatic poems)

1962

Auto-Beatnik (Time, May 25)

1963

Balestrini, *Tape Mark II*

Clair Philippy, five poems published in *Electronic Age* (blank verse at the rate of 150 words a minute)

1964

Jean Baudot, *La machine à écrire* (text generator)

Phillippy creates strophes using a vocabulary with one hundred words with the assistance of computer

L. Couffignal and A. Ducrocq create *Un doute agréable couleur de lotus endormi...*, an imitation surrealist poem created on Calliope hardware system

1965

Emmett Williams uses 101 most used words from Dante's Divine Comedy to create *Music*, a computer poem

Lionel Kearns, *Birth of God/uniVerse* (visual poem)

1966

Williams, *The IBM Poem*

Gerhard Stickel, *Autopoeme, Monte-Carlo-Texte*

1967

Baudot, *Rephrase*

1968

The Computer and the Arts exhibition, Institute of Contemporary Art, London

E. M. de Melo e Castro, *Roda Lume* (videopoem)

Alison Knowles and James Tenney, *A House of Dust*

Tenney, *Hank and Mary, a love story, a chorale*

Douglas Englebart, *Augment*

1969

Jackson Mac Low, *PFR-3 Poems*

Svante Bodin, *Transition to Majorana Space*

1970

Alan Sondheim, *4320*

Carl Fernbach-Flarsheim, *The Boolean Image/Conceptual Typewriter*

Dick Higgins, *Computers for the Arts*

1971

Louis Milic, *Returner*

Gerrit Krol: *APPI: Automatic Poetry by Pointed Information*

Waldemar Cordeiro, *Arteônica* (exhibit of computer art)

1972

Aaron Marcus, *The City Sleeps but Someone Is Watching*

Erthos Albino de Souza, *Le tombeau de Mallarmé*

1973

Richard W. Bailey edits *Computer Poems* anthology

1974

rjs, Energy Crisis Poems

1975

Richard Kostelanetz, *3 Prose Pieces* (video)

Europalia event in Brussels

Albino de Souza, *Ninho de Metralhadoras*

Cordeiro, *Gente*

1976

Angel Carmona, *Poemas V2: Poesía compuesta por una computadora* (Funkhouser, 2007: xix-xxi)

1977

Macintosh Apple II launched (Linzmayr, 2006: Online)
Commodore PET launched (Barton & Loguidice, 2007: Online)

“1979

Philippe Bootz, combinatory poems on minicomputer
Sondheim, *TI59 Poems, Iceland* (generators)
Csaba Tubak, *Electronic Game and Tool for Writers*

1980

Jean-Pierre Balpe, *Poèmes d’amour*
Robert Adrian founds ARTEX
Enzo Minarelli, *Volto Pagina* (video)
Kac, *Tesão* (videotext)

1981

Silvestre Pestana, *Povo-Ovo*
Charles O. Hartman, poetry composer (the Scansion Machine)” (Funkhouser, 2007: xxi-xxii)
IBM launch the personal computer (Eliot, 2011: Online)

1982

“Eduardo Kac, *Não* (animated poem)
Roger Laufer and Michel Bret, *Deux mots*
Julio Plaza, *luzazul*
Augusto de Campos, *pluvial . . . fluvial*
Alice Ruiz, *acende apaga . . . apaga acende . . . vagalume*” (Funkhouser, 2007: xxi-xxii)
Minitel launched (Michalet, 2011: Online)
A group called the A.L.A.M.O. formed made up of computer scientists and writers (Bootz, 2007: 213)

“1983

Kac, *Holopoems*
John Cayley, *wine flying*

1984

Hugh Kenner and Joseph O’Rourke, TRAVESTY software
Swift Current (online magazine)
bpNichol, First Screening (animated poems in Apple BASIC)
THE ALCHEMIST (diskette magazine)

1985

Les Immatériaux (A.L.A.M.O.) exhibit at Pompidou Centre, Paris
John Cage, *Mesostics* (published on the WELL)
Fred Truck, Art Com Electronic Network on the WELL
Lenora de Barros, *Entes . . . Entes . . .*
Kostelanetz, *Antitheses*
Joao Coehlo, *Universo*” (Funkhouser, 2007: xxi-xxiii)
Art Access – the first telematic art review adapted to the Minitel (Bootz, 2007: 214)

1986

“Bootz, telematic poems, *Metamorphose*
Michael Newman, *The Poetry Processor*
Geof Huth, *Inchworms* (Apple BASIC)
Harry Polkinhorn, *Bridges of Skin Money* (visual poems)
Robert Pinsky, *Mindwheel*

1987

mIEKAL aND, *Zaum Gadget*, PataLiterator
Xexoxial Endarchy, International Dictionary of Neologisms (HyperCard version)
Huth founds dbqp press
Judith Kerman, Interactive Poem Demo *Animated Picture Poems*

Albertus Marques, *Chuva*” (Funkhouser, 2007: xxiii)
Macintosh’s HyperCard software released (Linzmayr, 2006: Online)

1994

“Jim Rosenberg, *Intergrams*
Cayley, *wine flying* converted to diskette
Your Personal Poet, Computer Poet Corporation (generator)
Andrew Stone, *Haiku Master*
William Dickey, HyperCard poems
Louis Crew, Poetease (program)” (Funkhouser, 2007: xxiii)

1994

L.A.I.R.E. (Lecture, Art, Innovation, Recherche, Écriture) team is formed with Bootz, Papp, Maillard, Develay, Dutey (Bootz, 2007: 214)

1989

“Melo e Castro, *Signagens* (digital videopoems)
Hartman, DIASTEXT
Rod Willmot, *Everglade* (hypertext poem published by *Hyperion SoftWord*)
Clemente Padín, AIRE (video)“(Funkhouser, 2007: xxiii)
L.A.I.R.E. produce *Alire* a web-based literary journal (Bootz: 2002)
C.E.R.N. propose new protocol for information distribution (Howe: Online)

1980s late – 1990s early - Voyager and Eastgate systems publish electronic literature using Storyspace (a hypertext authoring software) and Macintosh’s HyperCard, these works were published as CD-ROMS and hypertext fictions (Hayles, 2008: 6)

1900s early – in the U.S.A. Gopher was in use, this was a precursor to the Internet and consisted of a text only interface (Glazier, 2002: 16)

1990

“André Vallias, *Nous n’avons pas compris Descartes*
Robert Kendall, kinetic poems created for DOS (Disk Operating System)
Jim Andrews, *And Yet* magazine
Minarelli, *Polypoesia*

1991

Cayley’s *Indra’s Net* - HyperCard
AWOPBOP founded - University at Albany
PoetryStar - instructional program, Chatfield Software
Dickey, *Heresy*” (Funkhouser, 2007: xxiii)
The World Wide Web, a hypertext system is launched (Howe: Online)

1992

“*poésie-digitale dichtungskunst* exhibition curated by Vallias, with Friedrich Block
Action Poétique published with disk
A. de Campos, *Poema-Bomba* – computerized
Pestana, *Ego II*
Fritz Lichtenauer, *Computertextgrafik*

1993

Eastgate Quarterly Review of Hypertext 1.1, Rosenberg’s *Intergrams*
Patrick-Henri Burgaud (with Jean-Marie Dutey), *La mer*
Online publications: *GRIST*, *RIF/T*, *We Magazine Issue 17*
POETICS listserv, SUNY-Buffalo
Judith Malloy, *Its Name Was Penelope* - Eastgate, HyperCard
Deena Larsen, *Marble Springs*
Arnaldo Antunes, NOME, Cultura – video
Chris Funkhouser, MOO poems
(*Pré*)*texte à voir* poetry-video exhibition Art 3000 - Paris

1994

A:*LITTÉRATURE* interactive publication

Balpe, *Génération*

Kathryn Cramer, *In Small & Large Pieces*

HiPitched Voices – MOO

Barros, *A cidade e seus fluxos* - CD-ROM

GRIST Online

Fabio Doctorovich, *Bribage cartooniano*” (Funkhouser, 2007: xxiii-xxiv)

Macromedia Director 4.0 launched (Lingo Workshop: Online)

1995

“The Little Magazine, vol. 21 (CD-ROM)

Kenner and Hartman, *Sentences*

Andrews, *Vispo and Webartery* (WWW discussion group)

Laurie Anderson, *Puppet Motel* (CD-ROM)

Truck, *Bottega* (CD-ROM)

Doctorovich, *Chatgattcat (o rotaciones)*

Ladislao Pablo Györi, *Virtual Poetry*” (Funkhouser, 2007: xxiv)

The Electronic Poetry Center (E.P.C.) at the University at Buffalo founded (E.P.C.: Online)

1996

Macromedia releases Flash software (Gay: Online)

1997

Born Magazine launched online, with a focus on collaboration and digital poetry (Born Magazine: Online)

1999

Electronic Literature Organisation (E.L.O.) is formed (E.L.O.: Online)

Ambient Fish (Bergvall: Online) interactive ePoem – Flash

2000

Poems That Go an online ePoetry journal is formed (Poems That Go: Online)

2003

Arteroids – Poems That Go (Andrews: 2003) (Morris, 2006: 22) generative ePoetry – Director

V: Vniverse (Strickland & Lawson: 2004) (Hayles, 2006: 181) interactive ePoem – Director

2004

The Last day of Betty Nkomo – Poems That Go (Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries: Online)

video/animation linear ePoetry - Flash

2006

Concatenation – The Electronic Literature Collection Volume 1 published online by the E.L.O.

(geniwaite: 2006) – Director

I didn't know infants in arms until – Born Magazine (Petrosino & Weychert: Online)

The Dead – (Collins & Delcan: Online) - Flash

Hunger – (Collins & SamuelChristopher: Online) - Video

Luz – The Electronic Poetry Center (E.P.C.) the University at Buffalo (Glazier: Online) – HTML and JavaScript

Ten Doors Closing – (Sheehan: Online) – video

When you reach Kyoto – The Electronic Literature Collection Volume 1 published online by the E.L.O.

(geniwaite & Stefans: Online) - Director

2007

Fallow – Born Magazine (Givens & Ong: Online) - Flash

2008

A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House. – *Born Magazine* (Anderton & Robinson: Online – Flash)

The Burning (Dorris & Kuypers: Online) – Flash
In praise of an elevator. – *Born Magazine* (Schroeder & Handplant Studio: Online) – Flash
Backbeat (ARCantú: Online) 2008 is the date of first access online, date of creation is uncertain

B. A History of ePoetry

Digital poetry, or as this research refers to it ePoetry, makes up a sizeable chunk of the contemporary development of electronic literature (eLiterature or eLit).

eLiterature was first recognisable as a genre with the emergence of hypertext fictions, these were texts that used the emerging hypertext technology of the Internet to create non-linear blocks of text or *lexia* that linked to either each other or to external sites.

As the technologies evolved, the pieces began to include graphics, colours and sound (Hayles, 2008: 6). Bootz (2007: 213) contends that the first programs of computer texts were developed in 1959 by Theo Lutz and Brion Gysin. These programs were random text generators that is computer programs that when executed automatically generated text (Funkhouser, 2007: xvii). Later in 1982 in France a group called the A.L.A.M.O. formed which was made up of computer scientists and writers. This group moved towards a computerized automatic generation of texts into different forms some of which were poetic (Bootz, 1996: 120). As previously mentioned in the introduction, in France at the time there was a digital network of information accessed through phonedlines which was known as Minitel. This was widely used in France long before Internet usage became widespread, and its existence provided a medium for poetic electronic experimentation. *Art Access*, an art review, offered writers the possibility to write works specially adapted to the Minitel and accompanied by critics' text (Bootz, 2007: 214).

In terms of the development and experimentation in eTechnologies, the late 1980s and early 1990s were when the most activity took place. The web-based literary journal *Alire* was created in January 1989 by the Parisian group *L.A.I.R.E.* (Lecture, Art, Innovation, Recherche, Écriture), which included Philippe Bootz, Frédéric Develay, Jean-Marie Dutey, Claude Maillard, and Tibor Papp; Bootz (Online) states that it is the oldest multimedia journal in Europe. *Alire* was “the first periodical on disk dedicated to the publication of digital poetry” (Bootz, 2007: 216). Before the arrival of CD-ROMs and the Internet explosion, the journal was already publishing poetry written for and intended to be read through computers. Bootz believes (Online) that historically, “the journal corresponds to the establishment of a ‘third stream’ in

computerized literature, if one acknowledges that hypertext and earlier software texts (générateurs automatiques) made up the first two. This third stream being that of animated literature, to which the five authors from L.A.I.R.E. came from backgrounds in aural and visual poetry”.

While France was experimenting with the Minitel, in America Gopher was in use in the early 1990s. This was a predecessor of the World Wide Web and was a text-only interface. Its major drawback was that, unlike the World Wide Web, it did not display images. “Gopher and the system of text-based hypertext it employed, may have marked a kind of age of innocence for digital poetry, a last great days of print” (Glazier, 2002: 16). The World Wide Web of today has developed to the point of allowing for text, visuals, graphics, animations, video, audio, and extensive interaction. Although Tim Berners-Lee and others at the European Laboratory for Particle Physics (C.E.R.N. - Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire) had proposed a new protocol for information distribution though its development had begun before Gopher, it was slower to develop. Nonetheless it was this protocol, which became the World Wide Web in 1991, and was based on hypertext (Howe: Online).

Voyager and Eastgate Systems were publishers of electronic literature during mainly the late 1980s and early 1990s. Storyspace, a hypertext authoring software, and Macintosh’s HyperCard software were the main tools used during this period (Hayles, 2008: 6). Published works were primarily interactive CD-ROMS and hypertext fictions, but in the poetry category, “Eastgate lists Robert Kendall’s *A Life Set For Two*, Judith Kerman’s *Mothering*, Deena Larsen’s *Marble Springs*, and Rob Swigart’s *Directions*. Of special note are the important works by Jim Rosenberg, *Intergrams* and *The Barrier Frames Diffractions Through*” (Glazier, 2002: 136-137). Sloane (2000: 22) describes hypertext fictions as digital texts that use digital note cards with embedded buttons that allow readers to make choices between alternative plot branches and to write in their own words into the evolving story. Sloane posits that M.U.D.s, M.O.O.s and M.U.S.H.es are “a third type of digital fiction, one that relies on the Internet to connect readers and writers in collaborative stories distinguished by otherworldly settings and levels” (Sloane 2000: 22).

In fact Bootz (Online) believes that the three developments in computerised literature were in fact close contemporaries, the first works in these genres having been written between 1978 and 1985. At the same time as computer poetry was forming in the 1980s so too were others experimenting in video and visual poetry. It was the proliferation of the computer and the Internet that made these experimental pieces accessible to a viewing audience and also the ease of access for artists to a new medium in which to experiment. Bootz (Online) suggests that “computerization not only encouraged the creation and wide publication of these works, it profoundly modified its own capacity to perform...digitality encroached upon literature, not in order to kill it, but to transform it”. It is this transformation that this body of work seeks to investigate.

Others have also begun investigations in this field, currently the Electronic Literature Organisation (E.L.O.) is the most active and widely known group that facilitates the “writing, publishing, and reading of literature in electronic media” (E.L.O.: Online).¹³ To date the E.L.O. has published online two collections of electronic literature, and since September 2011 these are housed at M.I.T.’s Media Lab (E.L.O.: Online). The E.L.O. was formed in 1999 and according to its web site one of its goals is to draw attention to “born-digital literature” (E.L.O.: Online).

The Electronic Poetry Center (E.P.C.) at the University of Buffalo, U.S.A. was founded in 1995. The E.P.C. also provides access to ePoetry works and resources. Their aim is “to make available a wide range of resources centred on digital and contemporary formally innovative poetics, new media writing, and literary programming” (E.L.O.: Online). Loss Pequeño Glazier is the director and founder of the E.P.C. and is himself an ePoet and academic. His book *Digital Poetics: The Making of E-Poetics* (Glazier, 2002) is considered a landmark publication in the field of ePoetry (Bootz & Baldwin, 2010: xiv). Baldwin (Bootz & Baldwin, 2010: xiv) also suggests Bolter’s (2001) *Writing Space* and Hayles’ (2008) *Electronic Literature* as other landmark texts that have emerged from predominantly American academia. In an effort to counteract the American-centric focus of the published academic work in the field of ePoetry, Baldwin and Bootz edited *Regards Croisés* (2010) a collection of

essays on digital literature written by academics from around the globe. However Eduardo Kac had previously attempted a similar venture in 2007 when he edited *Media Poetry, An International Anthology*.

A notable early academic publication exists however in the form of *New Media Poetry: Poetic Innovation and New Technologies* (1996) an edition of the journal of *Visible Language*. While it is indeed published in the U.S.A. nonetheless it does contain articles from international ePoets and academics such as: Bootz, Cayley, Melo e Castro, Györi, Kac, Rosenberg, Vallias, and Vos.

Additionally other noteworthy publications in the field of electronic literature are as previously mentioned, Hayles (2008) *Electronic Literature: new horizons for the literary*, Amerika's (2007) *Meta/Data: A Digital Poetics*, and Simanowski's (2011) *Digital Art and Meaning: Reading Kinetic Poetry, Text Machines, Mapping Art, and Interactive Installations*. However out of all the book publications mentioned so far the only ones to focus specifically on ePoetry are Glazier (2002), Kac (2007) and Funkhouser (2007).

C. What is ePoetry?

To understand what ePoetry is, it is first necessary to look at and define *electronic literature* as this is the broad field into which ePoetry falls. With reference to digital or electronic literature Sandy Baldwin lets us off the hook by concluding, “No agreed-upon terminology exists for this emergent field” (Bootz & Baldwin, 2010: ix). Hayles (2008: 3) however posits that electronic literature was generally considered to exclude print literature that has been digitised, that is, it was required to be “born digital”. This concept has now proved dated, as it does not account for works that began their life in print only to move to the digital realm, for example the ePoetry on which I focus in this research. The E.L.O. convened a committee of creators and critics of electronic literature in order to arrive at a suitable definition for the field (Hayles, 2008: 3). As part of this definition the E.L.O. states that the “field of electronic literature is an evolving one. Literature today not only migrates from print to electronic media; increasingly, ‘born digital’ works are created explicitly for the networked computer”. Therefore the term not only refers to pieces of literature created solely in and

experienced through the computer but also those works that began in print before moving to the digital. The E.L.O. (Online) defines eLiterature as:

works with important literary aspects that take advantage of the capabilities and contexts provided by the stand-alone or networked computer. Within the broad category of electronic literature are several forms and threads of practice, some of which are:

- Hypertext fiction and poetry, on and off the Web
 - Kinetic poetry presented in Flash and using other platforms
 - Computer art installations which ask viewers to read them or otherwise have literary aspects
 - Conversational characters, also known as chatterbots
 - Interactive fiction
 - Novels that take the form of emails, SMS messages, or blogs
 - Poems and stories that are generated by computers, either interactively or based on parameters given at the beginning
 - Collaborative writing projects that allow readers to contribute to the text of a work
 - Literary performances online that develop new ways of writing
- (E.L.O.: Online)

While each of the bullet points above warrants its own detailed explanation and corresponding research this would be beyond the scope of this work so in order to maintain focus and structure I will focus on the second element: “Kinetic poetry presented in Flash and using other platforms” (E.L.O.: Online). This is the particular type of electronic literature with which this research is concerned. By using the term kinetic the E.L.O. are referring to kinetic energy, such as movement and so we are dealing with poetry in motion created in Flash and other digital technologies.

N. Katherine Hayles in her paper *Electronic Literature: what is it?* (Online) observes that electronic literature, while created and performed in the context of networked programmable media, is also informed by the powerhouses of contemporary culture namely games, films, animations, digital arts, graphic design, and electronic visual

culture. As such Hayles (Online) refers to it as an adaptive mutant but, what is distinct about electronic literature as opposed to print literature is that, it cannot be accessed until it is performed by properly executed code. Due to the fundamental immediacy of the code to the text's performance, some genres of eLiterature have come to be known by the software used to create and perform them such as Flash poetry. Hayles lists hypertext fiction, network fiction, interactive fiction, locative narratives, installation pieces, codework, generative art, and the Flash poem as the components that make up eLiterature.¹⁴ I will not delve into an explanation of each of these components as the focus of this research is specifically on ePoetry which encompasses what Hayles refers to as the Flash poem. Flash is an interactive authoring software which is quite often the professional application of choice for those wishing to produce online interactive animated content.

The terms used with reference to digital or ePoetry are vast and varied, for example some of the terms I have come across in the course of my research (most notably in Funkhouser [2007] and Simanowski [2011]) in relation to ePoetry are:

Text generators

Generators

Video text

Kinetic concrete poetry

Video

Auto

Digital videopoems

Animated poems

Generative

Computer poems

Digital Poems

Digital Videopoems

Hypertext poetry

Automatic poems

Visual poems

Simanowski (2011: 58) uses the term kinetic concrete poetry, kinetic as I have already stated alludes to movement. Concrete poetry however is poetry whose visual form mirrors the theme of the poem itself. Such as for example *The Mouse's Tale* (Carroll, 1993: 56), which appears in Lewis Carroll's (1865) *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. This is a poem that tells the story of a mouse through a poem that is visually presented in print in the form of a mouse's tail. Simanowski (2011: 58) contends, "kinetic concrete poetry remediates the poem in a manner more in line with the mainstream aesthetics of film and club culture". Correspondingly in certain examples of ePoetry we see movement providing a communicative value in much the same way as text and visuals. However Simanowski's book *Digital Art and Meaning* approaches ePoetry from the art world and encompasses digital literature, kinetic concrete poetry, text machines, interactive installations, mapping art and real time web sculpture. Simanowski (2011: x) contextualises his analysis by observing that it is driven by "the belief that the first purpose that a digital work serves is to produce an act of creative expression". He invokes Sontag's (1964) essay *Against Interpretation* and Gumbrecht's (1994) essay *A Farewell to Interpretation* towards the task of developing an erotic hermeneutics of art (2011: 208-209).

Conversely this research approaches ePoetry from the side of creation not interpretation, hence the interviews with ePoets. Simanowski (2011) offers close readings of works of digital art in terms of an art audience's evaluation and interpretation whereas this work looks at the creation of specific forms of ePoetry and the translation of the poetic experience from print to digital.

Now that the when and where of ePoetry has been established, the next logical question to ask is who is making it and how?

D. ePoet Interviews - Methods & Rationale

The ePoets whose responses are quoted in this thesis:

1. Nick Robinson translated Lucy Anderton's poem *A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House*. (Anderton & Robinson, 2008) into a Flash piece.

2. Monica Ong translated Rebecca Givens' poem *Fallow* into a interactive Flash piece (Givens & Ong, 2007).
3. Sam Tootal along with Chris Turner make up the eMedia duo who call themselves SamuelChristopher, Sam Tootal gave responses on the video and audio based eMedia translation of Billy Collins poem *Hunger* (Collins & SamuelChristopher, 2006).
4. Dylan Sheehan made a video and audio based eMedia translation of his own poem *Ten Doors Closing* (Sheehan, 2006).
5. Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries is an eMedia duo made up of Marc Voge and Young-Hae Chang, they responded to questions regarding *The Last Day of Betty Nkomo* (Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries: 2004) a Flash piece they created for International AIDS day.
6. Mateo Parilla translated Heather Lee Schroeder's poem *In Praise of an Elevator* into a Flash piece (Schroeder & Handplant Studio, 2008).
7. The Claire Allan Dinsmore interview was conducted by Megan Sapnar in July 2004 for the website *Poems That Go* (Online) and it discusses her piece *The Dazzle as Question* (n.d.), a Flash ePoem she created herself.
8. Bill Dorris was a digital media lecturer in the Department of Communications in Dublin City University, he is a poet and ePoet and created *The Burning* (Dorris & Kuypers, 2004) in Adobe Flash with the poet Janet Kuypers who wrote the poem and also provided some imagery and audio for the ePoem.

Regarding the collaboration between the original analogue poet and the eMedia producer such as in *Born Magazine* (Online) productions, there is virtually no information available regarding the type and amount of contribution each provided in relation to the creation of the ePoem. Many possibilities exist. For example, the original analogue poet might simply 'give the poem over' to the eMedia professional

to create an eMedia version of it. Alternatively the original analogue poet may provide for example a reading of the poem. Or as in the case of *The Burning* (Dorris & Kuypers: Online) the poet might provide not only a reading, but also an additional audio track featuring a repeating line with a particular cadence and re-emphasis of both meaning and sound throughout the entire poem (Dorris, 2011: q2). This is a production decision that inherently frames the potential range of further developments within the eMedia translation of the poem. Alternatively another possibility is that the original analogue poet and the eMedia professional spend a good deal of time both discussing potential ‘translations’, and also revisions in concept, as they go along. In any case, it would be well to consider such collaboration (or lack thereof) when considering what differentiates for example, the most effective from the least effective eMedia translations.

The question of collaboration and/or degree of such, leads to a final issue which is of central importance to the question of translating analogue poetry to ePoetry: What is the pedagogy of translation, or more likely, what pedagogies of translation are being employed in creating the eMedia version of any given poem? In the introduction to this body of work the parallels between the advent of the printing press and that of the eMedia are referenced. We are clearly now in the initial stages of the development of ePoetry as evidenced for example by the contrasting emphasis on visual narrative in Flash translations, and repetitions building momentum and rhythm in generative poetry. We are also inevitably in the midst of transition in the pedagogy of poetic translation. The analogue poet with perhaps a PhD in English literature or a Master of Fine Arts in creative writing is not bringing the same poetic frameworks to the table as the eMedia professional with for example a Master of Science in eMedia production. Between them, in varying amounts of collaboration the eMedia translations emerge. If we compare the contributions of both the original analogue poet and the eMedia practitioner to each of the ePoetry translations, we may begin to get a clear view of the characteristics of the developing consensus – or perhaps lack thereof – regarding what constitutes ePoetry, and ePoetry translation. With those concerns in mind, it was important to conduct and analyse interviews with the eMedia creators themselves. Interviews therefore were conducted with the eMedia professionals involved in the creation of a range of ePoems.

In selecting ePoems to examine I attempted to provide a representative sample of the range of ePoetry currently available online. My selection was based on the types of ePoems accessible online rather than for example the geographic location of the ePoets. It is important to note however that it was only those ePoets who had translated a poem from text to digital who were interviewed. Nonetheless throughout this body of work I reference other examples of ePoetry as appropriate to critical analysis.

In this thesis I cover and propose a range of different theories in relation to ePoetry. I examine the characteristics of the Poetic Machine and its societal implications and considerations, I also consider traditional poetry, its origins and forms, as well as traditional poetry translation theories. However it is necessary to ask do these theories really ring true in practice when considering the creation of ePoetry? To truly see the relevance of these theories we must look for evidence of them at work in the creation of ePoetry and the best way to do this was to conduct interviews with the creators of some of these ePoems, the ePoets themselves.

Initially I selected ten potential interview candidates, these were selected based on the ePoems they created that I had come across online throughout the course of my research. The aim of my choice was to select ePoems that were indicative of a broad range of the kinds of ePoems available online and to be able to contact their corresponding ePoets. This would enable me to get a representative sample of ePoems from the categories outlined earlier in this chapter in the taxonomy of ePoetry, for example pieces made in Adobe Flash that were more of an animation style, those made with video, those with much interactivity and those with none. It is important to note however that I did not interview any *Generative ePoetry* ePoets because, as I previously explained, in these cases the poem is generated whereas in *Interactive ePoetry* or *Video/Animation Linear ePoetry* a definite written poem first exists. This is because this research's focus lies in examining the process of creation of ePoems and what specifically changes or doesn't change when a print poem moves to the digital realm.

The contact details for these ePoets were found online and I then e-mailed them asking if they would participate in an interview.¹⁵ In fact in the very early stages of this process when I e-mailed my first candidate Nick Robinson I suggested that we conduct the interview through a phone call, Skype, or e-mail, whichever suited him best. Unfortunately Nick was uncomfortable with the idea of a phone or Skype call and preferred to conduct the interview through e-mail. I therefore pursued this same method for all candidates. None of the candidates responded favourably to the suggestion of a phone interview but they did respond favourably to the idea of an e-mail questionnaire. This is most likely due I believe to convenience, as they can respond to the questions at a time of their own choosing rather than committing to a phone call at a specific time with a stranger.

Out of the ten requests to participate, I received seven positive responses. These consenting candidates were sent the interview questions as a word document which they then filled in and sent back. The questions were mostly the same for most candidates but I did have to modify them slightly depending on the ePoetry piece the candidate had created. For example if there was no interactivity in the piece it was pointless to include a question asking about interactivity. Not only would it be pointless but it would also lead to the candidates feeling like they had been bulk e-mailed, something I wanted to avoid. So I always included a question specifically mentioning a detail in their poem which demonstrated to the ePoet that I had studied it in detail. I received six responses to the interview questions in total.¹⁶ Out of the seven interviews I include in the appendices there are two that were not conducted through e-mail. The interview with Dylan Sheehan was conducted through youtube messaging not e-mail but otherwise it was exactly like the others. Also the interview with Claire Allan Dinsmore (Sapnar: 2004) was not conducted by me it was conducted by Megan Sapnar in July 2002 for the website *Poems That Go (Online)*, I included it as it is relevant to my research. In the interest of accuracy I have not corrected any typos or grammatical errors in the responses and when quoting them in this section and in the appendices I have reproduced them exactly as I received them with the annotation [*sic*] after any errors. When quoting from the interviews I have listed the candidates name, the year of the interview and the number relating to the question asked. All questions and responses are available in the appendices. So for

example when I reference (Ong, 2009: q1) this is from Monica Ong's response to question 1 of her interview which was conducted in 2009.

The ePoets whose responses are discussed in this research:

9. Nick Robinson was my first respondent and my test subject so to speak. Unlike the others I had the opportunity to send him a follow up e-mail as my questioning was less targeted due to the fact that Robinson was the first candidate to be interviewed.¹⁷ Following this I had a clearer idea of what information was required for my research so one communication exchange was sufficient with all the succeeding candidates. Nick Robinson translated Lucy Anderton's poem *A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House*. (Anderton & Robinson: Online) into a Flash piece.
10. Monica Ong translated Rebecca Givens' poem *Fallow* into a highly interactive Flash piece (Givens & Ong: Online).
11. Sam Tootal along with Chris Turner make up the eMedia duo who call themselves SamuelChristopher, Sam Tootal gave responses on the video and audio based eMedia translation of Billy Collins poem *Hunger* (Collins & SamuelChristopher: Online).
12. Dylan Sheehan made a video and audio based eMedia translation of his own poem *Ten Doors Closing* (Sheehan: Online).
13. Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries is an eMedia duo made up of Marc Voge and Young-Hae Chang, they responded to questions regarding *The Last Day of Betty Nkomo* (Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries: Online) a Flash piece they created for International AIDS day.
14. Mateo Parilla translated Heather Lee Schroeder's poem *In Praise of an Elevator* into a Flash piece (Schroeder & Handplant Studio: Online).
15. The Claire Allan Dinsmore interview was conducted by Megan Sapnar in July 2002 for the website *Poems That Go* (Online) and it discusses her piece *The Dazzle as Question*, a Flash ePoem she created herself (Sapnar: 2004).
16. Bill Dorris was a digital media lecturer in the Department of Communications in Dublin City University, he is a poet and ePoet and created *The Burning* in Adobe Flash with the poet Janet Kuypers who wrote the poem and also provided some imagery and audio for the ePoem.

The focus of these interviews was on ascertaining to what extent the various theoretical models regarding ePoetry and translation are relevant to the process of ePoetry creation. Specifically the interview questions attempted to deal with eMedia potentials – the problems of narrative affordance, visual expression of language and interactivity. The interviews also bore in mind Hayles’ (2006: 181) suggestion that a digital poem is in fact a process and Watten’s (2006: 335-370) view of poetics as a “a self-reflexive mode of the ‘making’ of the work of art or cultural product”. The questions also attempted to deal with experiencing the ‘expanded field’ (Krauss, 1998) of our new mediated world, that is in Watten’s terms (2006: 365) – “foregrounding the mechanisms of communication in our mediated world”. And in the process of doing so “defining the genre as expanding rather than pregiven”.

As well as the above a discussion of Orr (1996) and others (for example Aristotle, Boland, Pound) with reference to the characteristics of traditional poetry was considered in the interview questions. Namely Orr’s (1996) temperaments of poetry were focused on - Story, Structure, Music, Imagination. It was also important that the interview questions focused on Holmes’ (1994) theories regarding the translation of traditional poetry such as: metapoem forms (mimetic, analogical, organic, deviant), contextual levels (linguistic, literary, socio-cultural) and planes (serial, structural).

I will discuss each of these theoretical models, with reference to ePoetry examples and interview responses in the succeeding chapters of this corpus as part of my theoretical discussions relating to the elements at play when poetry translates to the digital.

Chapter 4. Poetry Transformations

A. Poetry & Societal Transformations

B. Art Worlds

C. Poetry Criticism Revisited

i. Simulations of Representations

ii. Poetry & Emotions

iii. Poetry Structure - Orr's (1996) Temperaments

a. Story

b. Structure

c. Music

d. Imagination

e. A Marriage of Contraries – Rationale for using Orr

iv. eTemperaments – Orr's theory revised

This chapter seeks to understand digital poetic expression by conducting a comparative study of digital and analogue poetry. This is done through the application of traditional analogue poetry theory, namely Orr's (1996) temperaments of poetry, to the specific digital examples of ePoetry selected for this research.

A. Poetry & Societal Transformations

Firstly however it is helpful to begin this chapter with the big picture so that we then may comprehend where ePoetry is in relation to existing variations within poetic expressions. At some points these are so obvious as to constitute evidence of sizable cultural (such as modernism and postmodernism), societal (such as World Wars I and II), and/or technological (such as massive industrialization) change affecting poetic (and other artistic) genres.

With regards the advent of modernism, Harvey (1990) argues that it is compellingly the case that, "the whole world of representation and of knowledge underwent a fundamental transformation during (a) short space of time... somewhere between 1910 and 1915" (Harvey, 1990: 28-9). He cites Bradbury and McFarlane's work (1976) documenting the "radical transformation(s)" occurring through the arts and science of the capitalist world, including works of Proust, Joyce, Lawrence, and Mann in literature; Matisse, Picasso, Duchamp, Braque, Klee, and Kandinsky in art; Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and Bartok in classical music, Einstein's "generalization of the theory of relativity", and "Saussure's structuralist theory of language, in which the

meaning of words is given by their relation to other words rather than by their reference to objects” (Harvey, 1990: 28-9).

As for the underlying trigger of the “furore of experimentation” which resulted in these “fundamental transformations” in the “whole world of representation”? Again in Harvey’s terms: “It is important to keep in mind... that the modernism that emerged before the First World War was more of a reaction to the new conditions of production (the machine, the factory, urbanization), circulation (the new systems of transport and communication), and consumption (the rise of mass markets, advertising, mass fashion) than it was a pioneer in the production of such changes” (Harvey, 1990: 23) - changes in capital formation that caused “a radical change in the experience of space and time in Western capitalism” (Harvey, 1990: 29). Is it any surprise then that, “Gertrude Stein... interpreted cultural events, such as the advent of cubism, as a response to the time-space compression to which everyone was exposed and sensitized” (Harvey, 1990: 271). In Chapter 6 *Meaning Making in ePoetry I* compare this quote regarding Stein to the ePoet Stephanie Strickland’s contention that *Recursion and Looping* is a key characteristic in ePoetry (Strickland, 2006: Online), and that navigation within in ePoetry consists of travelling in a loop, it is the illusion of travel.

Equally it can be no surprise that -- as a “great promoter of Modernist experimentalism” whose Paris apartment became a salon for “a circle of fine artists and writers” including among many others, Picasso, Matisse and Hemingway – Stein’s own poetry (“world of representation”) reflected exactly the same response to “this time-space compression” (Paschen & Mosby, 2001: 38). In Morris’ terms (2006: 2) “her writing (was) a continuous present as additive as a drive in the country, as iterative as the frames in a filmstrip, as collaged as the views from a plane”.

Similar arguments can equally be made regarding the effects of massive societal changes on the development and expression of Walt Whitman’s poetry in the mid-nineteenth century. By the end of the 1860s when the construction of the “The Great Bridge” was starting from Brooklyn across the East River to New York, Brooklyn had been transformed in less than a generation from a “backwater... hinderland” to the

third largest and fastest growing city in America (McCullough, 1972: 103-04). This transformation was reflected in the poetry of Whitman who had grown up near and spent most of his adult life in the very same city between his birth in 1819 and the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* in 1855 (Paschen & Mosby, 2001: 16).

B. Art Worlds

Clearly massive societal transformations, what Harvey refers to as “new conditions of production... transportation... and consumption”, impact massively on our “worlds of representation” (1990: 28-29). But even societal transformations on the scale of European modernity or the take off of industrialization along the east coast of America in Whitman’s time rarely, in Howard Becker’s words, “produce new art worlds” (1982: 310). “Artistic revolutions (such as modernism) make major changes in the character of the works produced and in the conventions used to produce them” (Becker, 1982: 305). However most of the personnel – creative, production, distribution, etc. – remain intact, albeit perhaps extending, modifying their existing practices. In Becker’s terms, “the innovation is usually added to what competent participants need to know and do” (1982: 308).

The reasons for this are simple. An *art world*, in Becker’s terms, “denote(s) the network of people whose cooperative activity, organized via their joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things, produces the kind of art works that the art world is noted for” (1982: x). Over time every art world develops its own “artistic tradition(s), such as a connected series of solutions to commonly defined problem(s)” (Kubler, 1962 in Becker, 1982: 301). Thus “revolutionary changes (within an art world) occur when their originators mobilize some or all of the members of the relevant art world to cooperate in the new activities their vision of the medium requires” to address the still “commonly defined problems” (Becker, 1982: 308).

In contrast, a new “art world is born when it brings together people who never cooperated before to produce art based on and using conventions previously unknown or not exploited in that way” (Becker, 1982: 310). Becker argues that new art worlds typically begin with either the “invention and diffusion of a technology” (such as, “photography and motion pictures”), the “development of a new concept” (such as

“the novel”), or “a new audience” (such as, “the outdoor rock concert” of the ‘60s) (Becker 1982: 310-314). In all of these cases, and hence most consequentially in our thinking regarding translation of analogue poetry to ePoetry, as Becker notes, “the people who develop new art worlds participate in the broad currents of intellectual and expressive interest growing out of extant tradition and practice” (1982: 314). As a result, “a new technique, conception, or audience suggests new possibilities but does not define them fully. So the first people involved experiment with it, seeing what it can do and what they might want to do with it. What people actually do with the innovation depends on what it makes possible, on what version they have of contemporary traditions and interests, and on the people and resources they can attract” (1982: 314).

Seamus Heaney in his poem *Seeing Things* writes:

Whatever is given
Can always be reimagined, however four-square,
Plank-thick, hull-stupid and out of its time
It happens to be
(Healy in Tillinghast, 2004: v).

Clearly in relation to the “commonly defined problems” of poetic expression, the impact of the worldwide advent of eMedia will be of much further reaching consequence than was either the modernity of Stein’s era or the industrialization of America in Whitman’s. To what extent it will trigger the emergence of a new *art world* as per Becker (1982) or sizably revolutionise poetic expression within the existing one remains to be seen. Constantine (2004: 41) tells us that poetry must be agile, continually it must devise new ways to answer the changing circumstances and shapes of human life. Human life has changed and this will be reflected in our poetry.

Whatever the consequences of the impact of eMedia within both the culture and the poetic genre - what Krauss (1998) has termed, the “expanded field” - poetic expression will continue to query the meaning of human existence, both perceptually and intellectually, and hence emotionally by “foregrounding” the changing nature of the human condition and “situating its means of doing so within the structures of

technology and art that define the genre as expanding rather than pre-given” (Watten, 2006: 365). The continuity, amplification or abandonment of pre-existing aspects of poetic expression will continue to reflect such changes in the human condition and the expanding genre. The logical next step of this discourse therefore is to revisit traditional poetry criticism towards analysing its application to ePoetry. After all as we are considering the translation of analogue poetry into eMedia, the concerns of traditional poetry may be expected to carry over in some form into ePoetry. In this context and in light of the ePoet interview responses I will look at both poetry and ePoetry examples in order to begin to grasp how much indeed has changed.

C. Poetry Criticism Revisited

Brower (1970: viii) suggests that the changing forms of lyric demand changing models of criticism of lyric, and this is what this section sets out to achieve. Poetry (or ‘lyric’ as Brower refers to it) is continuously changing and so too must our criticism. Therefore traditional poetry criticism needs to be discussed in order to identify the changing form of poetry as it moves from print to pixel. Critical poetry theory that is attentive to the medium specificity of ePoetry needs to be developed towards the goal of seeing how, what, and why things have changed.

Aristotle’s *Poetics* provides us with the most commonly known first systematic attempt at analysing art. “The production of good poems is an activity that can be understood, and the *Poetics* is an attempt to lay that intelligibility open to inspection” (Heath in Aristotle, 1996: x). In fact much of modern theories of film or literature can be seen to stem from Aristotle’s theory of tragedy. However what is most notable for the purposes of this study is that Aristotle defines both painting and poetry to be *mimesis* that is ‘imitation’ (Heath in Aristotle 1996: xiii).

In his introduction to Aristotle’s *Poetics* (1996: xii) Malcolm Heath explains that by Aristotle’s contention, human beings are by nature prone to engage in the creation of likenesses. In fact the word *poet* comes from the Norman French (and before that, Latin and Greek) meaning *the maker* (Gill, 2009: 30-31). The likeness that is made is a likeness or imitation of something, and when responding to likenesses we must recognise the relationship between the likeness and the object. This then according to

Aristotle engages and satisfies our human power of understanding and so gives us pleasure.

Plato's *The Republic* however condemns *imitative* poetry and charges it with crippling our thoughts and corrupting our souls (Moss, 2007: 415). As imitations they are removed from the truth, yet will be regarded as such by many who know no better. Due to this, Plato fears imitation will then be regarded as truth (Moss, 2007: 415).

Philip Sidney built on these theories when he wrote *Apologie for Poetrie* or *An Apology for Poetry* in which he accepts Aristotle's definition of poetry as *mimesis*. However he varies it slightly in that he believes that the poet's world is a better world than that of 'reality' (Chatterjee in Sidney, 1975: xvi) and as such is more than or better than imitation.

Poetry therefore is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word *Mimesis*, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth: to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture: with this end to teach and delight (Sidney, 1975: 7).

Interestingly this notion of a speaking picture as purported by Sidney (Sidney in Chatterjee, 1975: 7) is a metaphor that fits quite perfectly with ePoetry in the sense of the visual and aural dimensions of a poem. Though Sidney uses the metaphor to reference the visual and aural aspect of analogue poetry, the increased capacity for visual movement and sound effects in ePoetry exaggerates the aptness of the metaphor.

The notion of poetry as *mimesis* or likenesses is applicable to both analogue and ePoetry. In fact many of the ePoems are likenesses of print poems, which are likenesses of the poet's experience, so then we are dealing with imitations of imitations. However it is not as simple as that, the translation of a poem cannot always be compared to the original poem, as we may not have access to it. By this logic experiencing an ePoem is different to reading an analogue poem in the sense that when reading/listening to a poem that speaks of a sunny day the reader/listener

can compare this to her own experience of a sunny day. However if an ePoem is a likeness of a poem, the creader may not be able to compare her/his experience of the original poem as she/he may not have read it. Nonetheless if the ePoem also speaks of sunny days the creader can compare this likeness with her/his experience of a sunny day. It is interesting to note however that each ePoem that appears in *Born Magazine* (Online) also provides access to the poem in static text form, which is still only viewable through the computer. So in this case the creader can compare the likeness of the ePoem both to her/his direct experiences and to a simulation of the original poem. Other ePoems however do not provide access to the original poem in static text form. It is also important to note that the static print version that is provided is still digital and generally also includes some graphic design, so the creader is being referred to a digital imitation of the original.

This leads us to concerns regarding the putative authority of the original print poem. This is an area much debated by English literature academics in the field of digital humanities, in particular their concerns stem from the move to digitise English literature documents. Buzetti and McGann (Online) for example speak of a classical model of critical editing that:

involved the effort to distinguish the corruptions that have entered the body of the work as a result of its transmission history. That model often postulates a single authoritative ‘original’ state of the work. The scholar’s analytic procedures are bent upon an effort to recover the text of that presumably pristine original (Buzetti & McGann: Online).

Scholars of nineteenth and twentieth century texts such as Jerome McGann make clear how concerns such as this regarding the putative authority of the original print text matters. In the field of English literature digital versions are often viewed simply as advanced tools with which to study the original historical text. Even the vocabulary used such as the word “corruption” in the quote above implies that the original is pure and good and the copy corrupt and bad. Buzetti and McGann suggest however that the “pursuit of a ‘correct’ or an ‘authorative’ text is what the poet called ‘a hopeless flight’” (Buzetti & McGann: Online).

The putative authority of the original print over the digital is false bravado and the pursuit of such an unattainable quest. How this relates to the ePoetry that this research is concerned with is that though the ePoem's relationship to the original poem is of note in terms of intertextuality, it is of no real concern to the reader. Nor is it of any concern how far removed the ePoem is from the original poem or whether the reader has ever even encountered the original or not. The ePoem, like the poem, stands alone (albeit intertextually connected) with its own individual authority.

i. Simulations of Representations

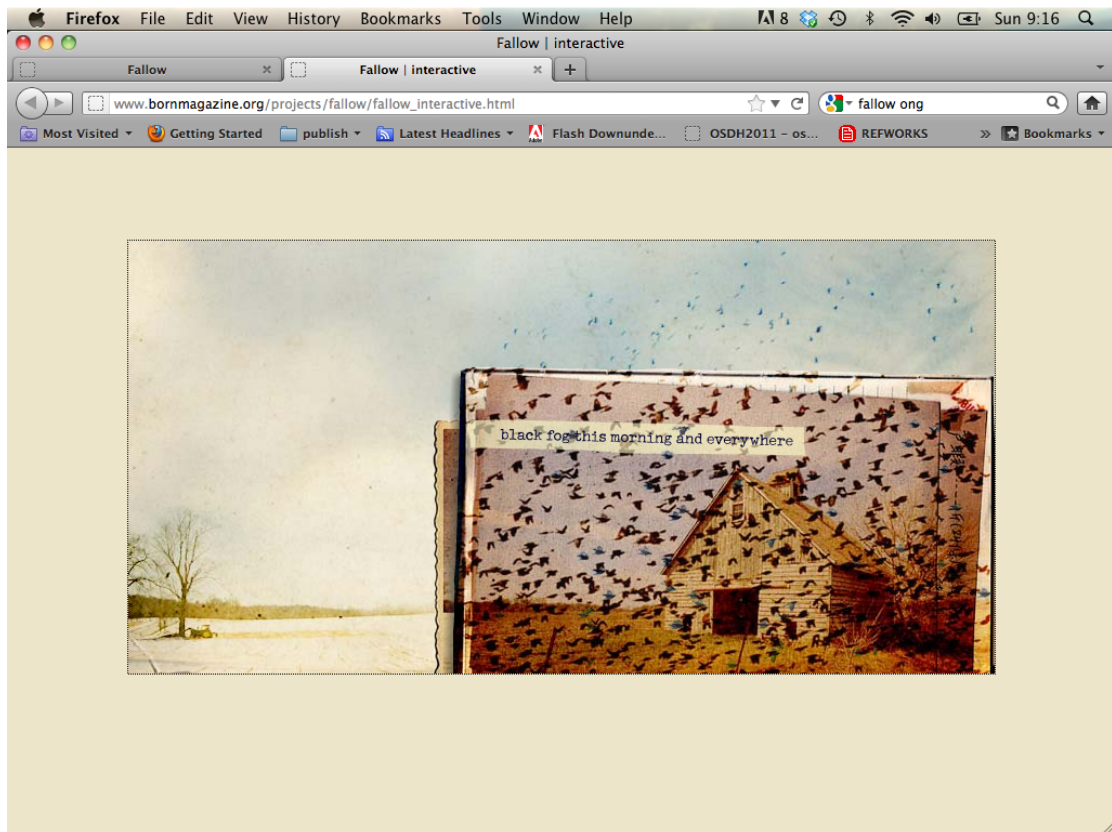
To return however to the notion of poetry as *mimesis*, though poems can be seen to be likenesses and imitations of life, Paul de Man (1970: 156-159) suggests that this is not always the case. He analyses the idea of modern poetry being rooted inwardly in the self, in thoughts and knowledge rather than outwards, in imitation of the world around us. It was in fact Yeats (1936) who first put forward this idea when he purported that modern poetry (contemporary poetry of his era) is no longer mimetic (built on likenesses). Instead it is based more on the conflict of representation and the self, in that it is representing the world outside of the self but it is also inside the self, private, and inwards. It is here then in this space that we can situate ePoetry.

Yeats (1936) believed, modern poetry represents the soul and the soul "does not dwell in real or copied nature, but rather in the kind of wisdom that lies hidden away in books" (cited in de Man, 1970: 157). Thus Yeats believed "that truly modern poetry is a poetry that has become aware of the incessant conflict that opposes a self, still engaged in the daylight world of reality, of representation, and of life" (de Man, 1970: 157). De Man (1970: 157) observes that this "implies that modern poetry uses an imagery that is both symbol and allegory, that represents objects in nature but is actually taken from purely literary sources". It is the tension between these two types of language that calls into question the self. We can see therefore that ePoetry is noetic as it relies on the type of knowledge that Yeats refers to. To be able to create an ePoem the ePoet must have an understanding of digital technology or code, knowledge that can only be learnt through information rather than based on everyday experience. As evidenced from interview responses it was clear that ePoet was in fact

the eMedia technologist, the original analogue poet offered little to the process apart from the source text. Therefore the ePoet always had a learnt knowledge of digital authoring techniques, technology, and tools.

Furthermore Abrams (1953) builds on this view with the metaphor of the ‘lamp and the mirror’, yet he believed poetry to come from the self and not the soul as Yeats (1936) stated. The mirror symbolises mimetic poetry, poetry of imitation, reflecting the world around in a similar fashion to that described by Aristotle. Modern poetry, de Man, Yeats, and Abrams all similarly believe is not mimetic but is instead symbolised by the lamp. The lamp is a symbol, which Abrams believes to represent self-knowledge and consciousness. What Abrams calls self-knowledge and consciousness Yeats refers to as the soul. Likewise Mary Midgley in *Science and Poetry* (2001: 51) describes poetry as playing a central role in our intellectual life because it supplies the language in which our imaginative visions are most immediately articulated.

Notably this is similar to what Giddings (2007: 423) proposes regarding video games in that we view “simulations as being generative of a range of possible phenomena, events or trajectories: as tools for the imagination – a prosthetic imagination – producing speculative, not definitive, knowledge” (Giddings, 2007: 423). He argues that in fact the ‘realism’ of computer simulations is skin deep and that to view computer simulations as such “is a mistake rooted in the persistent tendency to view artefacts as representational or mimetic”. For example the ePoem *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online) opens to the audio of a dog barking and bird song combined with the imagery of a barn and birds flying (as in the screen shot below).



Fallow (Givens & Ong: Online)

The faded auburn colours of the piece imply the countryside at twilight and the sepia tones evoke a time past. On the surface this does seem in fact to be mimetic, and yet the ePoet is not seeking to imitate exactly such a scene only to recreate a sense of it in the mind of the creader and as such evoke the corresponding atmosphere through the creaders' internal imagination. The illusion of mimesis is shattered as soon as the creader clicks on the flying bird to begin the transition to a subsequent piece of poetic content (never mind the fact that the creader is accessing all this through the computer screen). The creader knows they are not really sitting in a field in a countryside evening, the mimesis is as Giddings (2007: 423) states, only skin deep and what in fact we are faced with is a simulation of a countryside evening anchored within a particular era.

Paul de Man lists as an example a line from a poem by Mallarmé, “‘Le noir roc courroucé que la bise le roule’ [The black rock angered at being rolled about by the north wind]” (Riffaterre in de Man, 1970: 157).

From a representational point of view de Man (1970: 164) posits, the idea that a rock could move about in such a way because of wind is absurd and it is really the emotion involved that we are meant to connect with in this case. We must also take into account that “the rock...of course is Verlaine’s tombstone” (Riffaterre, 1985: 114). Verlaine was a French poet so here we can also see the link to a literary source or “the kind of wisdom that lies hidden away in books” (de Man, 1970: 157) and thus de Man’s explanations of Yeats’ and Abrams’ metaphor of the lamp and the mirror in relation to poetry do indeed ring true. So it is possible to confidently affirm that as poetry evolves so too does its literary criticism.

Notably the ePoet and theorist Melo e Castro (1996: 140) also refers to Mallarmé by suggesting that “the idea of the poem as a verbal galaxy of signs” was “first proposed by the French symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé”. This is particularly interesting as it allows us to conclude that both analogue and digital poetry can operate as Melo e Castro terms it, ‘galaxies of signs’, even though the elements that act as signs differ, yet their communicative function remains the same.

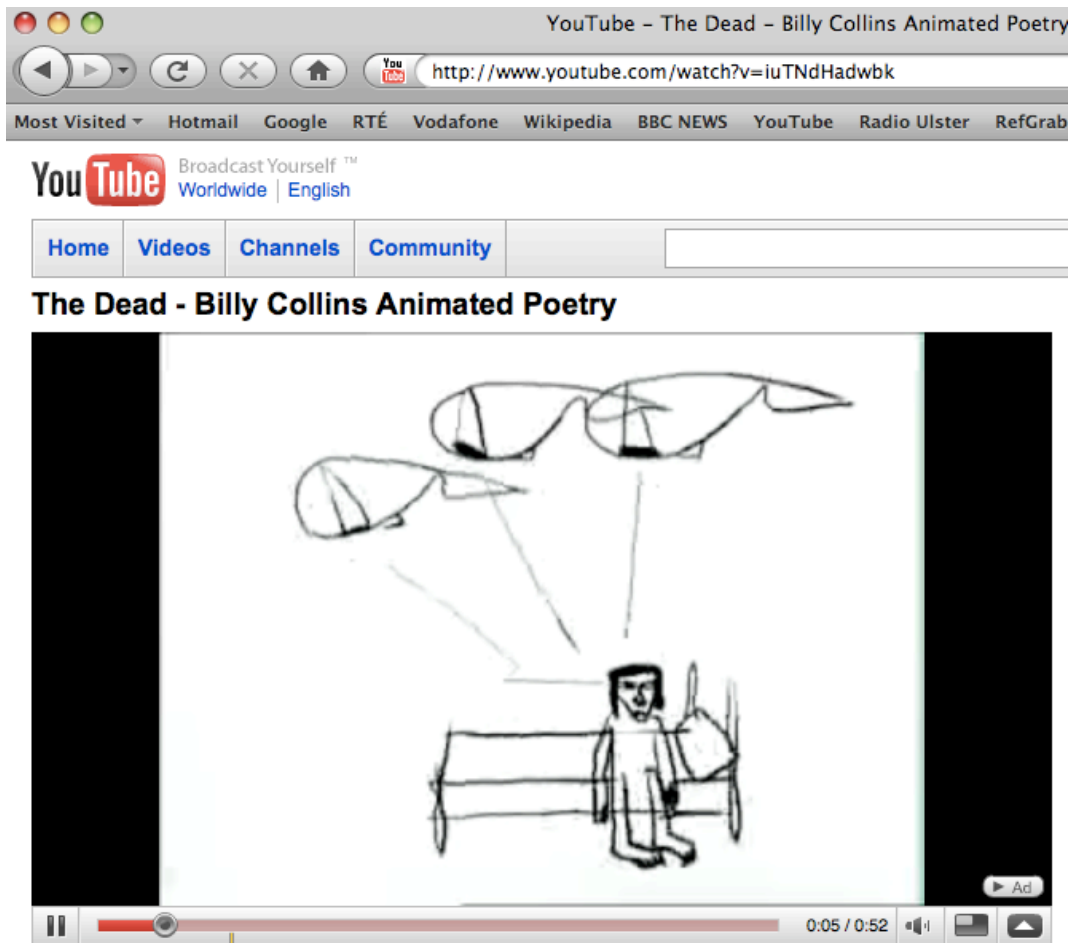
Espen Aarseth in his book *Cybertexts – Perspectives on Ergodic Literature* (1997: v) discusses this reading process and quotes Italo Calvino who tells us that:

literature is a combinatorial game that pursues the possibilities implicit in its own material independent of the personality of the poet, but it is a game that at a certain point is invested with an unexpected meaning that is not patent on the linguistic plane on which we were working but has shipped in from another level, activating something that on that second level is of great concern to the author or his society. The literature machine can perform all the permutations possible on a given material, but the poetic result will be the particular effect of one of these permutations on a man endowed with a consciousness and an unconsciousness, that is an empirical and historical man. It will be the shock that occurs only if the writing machine is surrounded by the hidden ghosts of the individual and his society (Aarseth, 1997: v).

By this we can see Calvino to mean that in each poem there is another level of meaning beyond the linguistic level that operates on the reader from that age/time/society in a specific manner beyond what the poet may have intended, and as a result there exist many possibilities and permutations for each individual. This is because as Morris (2006: 8) notes, all poems be they oral, written or digital, draw on the databanks of a culture such as its language, its knowledge archives, its symbol sets and its emotional networks. So not only can each ePoetic experience vary depending on the computer, platform and browser but also depending on the creader's situation and life experiences.

Calvino's reference to a writing machine and literature as a combinatorial game is particularly relevant to this research in terms of its application to ePoetry. This is because increased interactivity in an ePoem can increase the scope for individual permutations. As a result of this increased scope there is the potential for a more personalised experience and therefore correspondingly a stronger emotional connection with the creader. The extent of this connection, or as Calvino suggests *shock* (Calvino in Aarseth, 1997: v), can be used to measure the effectiveness of the poetic experience on the creader. A strong emotional reaction to a work of art or a poem is evidence of a connection even if the emotions evoked differ to those intended by the poet or artist.

For example in the ePoem *The Dead* (Collins & Delcan: Online) we see an animation displaying visuals concurrently to the audio voice over of the poet Billy Collins (as in the screen shot below). The poem and visuals describe the dead watching over us as we sleep. It is in fact the corresponding comforting feeling of being watched over that both the poet and ePoet wish in fact to evoke here, rather than the quite frightening prospect of the undead walking the earth. Yet despite this neither the ePoet or the poet can know for certain how the creader will interpret the imagery. This uncertainty however does not take away from the potential *shock* of the piece.



The Dead (Collins & Delcan: Online)

It is clear therefore that we can apply the ideas of de Man (1970), Yeats (1936), and Abrams (1953) to ePoetry in the sense that it draws on self-knowledge and consciousness. For what else is cyberspace but a space that is given wholly to the intellect that exists in a completely separate space to that of the ‘real’ world? A space where people can shed their human bodies and appearances and operate in terms of the individual self removed from its physical trappings. As Dinsmore, for example, refers to her poetry work in cyberspace as “more cerebrally centered, with a little less gut involved” (Sapnar: 2004). Dinsmore here is referring to the intellectual rather than emotional aspect of online content creation which due to digital tools and interfaces requires a taught knowledge of technical interactions.

However we have not completely relinquished the ‘real world’ as it is often imitated in cyberspace in order to allow us a framework in which to interact. This is because we have not yet reached a point where we can operate without symbols from our

everyday life. So we see avatars in Second Life (Online) who reflect the appearances that often their human selves desire. In other words it is surprising how few avatars in Second Life (Online) are overweight.

Hence according to Aristotle (Heath in Aristotle, 1996: xiii) and de Man (1970: 164) a poem is an imitation or representation of something from the 'real' world. However if we factor in game studies' approach regarding ePoetry, an ePoem functions as a simulation. As previously mentioned Giddings (2007) in his paper *Dionysiac Machines: Videogames and the Triumph of the Simulacra* discusses this debate regarding representation versus simulation with reference to games studies theory. This logic can equally be applied to discussions regarding poetry and ePoetry. A poem is a representation of an object or emotion or even experience. However an ePoem is an event, it is an experience, not just a representation of it. Digital poetry, Strehovec (2010: 73) contends, is about the event. Strehovec (2010: 64) quotes Heidegger's 1936 paper, *The Origin of the Work*: "In the tragedy [as an example of linguistic work] nothing is tagged or displayed theatrically, but the battle of the new gods against the old is being fought" (Young & Haynes, 2002: 43). Strehovec (2010: 64) suggests that the phrase "is being fought" emphasises that it is poiesis (making) not mimesis (imitation) which is taking place for the work of art. Similarly Glazier (2002: 113) suggests that the code used in the creation of ePoetry "is a scene of poeisis", as real as the ink used to print poetry (Glazier, 2002: 113). However this can apply not only to ePoetry but also to analogue poetry, such as for example Adrienne Rich (2000: 142) who contends that her earlier poems were *about* experiences but that her later poems *were* experiences. Therefore both ePoetry and poetry can be both about experiences and yet can also be experiences themselves, and so here we can see the lines blur between the specificities of the different forms of print and pixel.

Funkhouser (2007: 3) asks the question, "Could it be true that digital poetry is, in fact, a simulation of poetry"? Here then we might have the answer; ePoems are similar to games in that they are simulations in the sense that they are created by the computer – a simulating machine (Hayles, 2004: 71). This view is further confirmed by Murray (2012: 53) who states that by "harnessing the procedural power of the computer to represent objects and processes we can create simulations, working models of

complex systems that can be run with controlled variations and that aspire to reproduce the complexity we recognize in natural and social systems”. So therefore an ePoem can be seen as a simulation *of* a representation. We can see traces here of the postmodernist simulacra of Deleuze (1983) and Baudrillard (1983), a copy of a copy. This does not mean however that the copy (in this case the ePoem) has less substance than the original, as through their creation they themselves are also ‘real’. The dissembling of the simulacrum is so effective here that it goes beyond presenting itself as a good copy – it claims the ontological possibility of being the original (Giddings, 2007: 422). However as previously mentioned, Giddings (2007: 423) purports that “defining computer simulations ... as modeling the essence of actual world phenomena, processes and systems is a mistake rooted in the persistent tendency to view artefacts as representational or mimetic”. So in this sense it is clear that while a poem is a representation, an ePoem is not, in the sense that it is gamelike (by being made by the computer a simulating machine). However an ePoem is still a poem if it continues to maintain poetic characteristics, hence an ePoem is a simulation *and* a representation. Therefore the computer simulated static print version of the interactive visual ePoem provided by *Born Magazine* (Online) for each production is still an ePoem, despite the lack of movement or interactivity. EPoems therefore are not merely electronic versions of print poems, they are more than that, they are both something new and yet still resemble the old, they are representations (Aristotle, 1996) and simulations (Giddings, 2007), they are both poems (Orr, 1996) and games, and they are both translations (Holmes, 1994) and originals (Baudrillard & Deleuze, 1983).

What we find are the essential characteristics of what might be termed the postmodern, to borrow from David Harvey (1990), condition referring to the pervasive sense of fragmentation, loss of individuality, roots, connection and depth which is characteristic of the postmodern world. Add to this the equally pervasive awareness that one’s own self-identity, intellectual, emotional, biological, and of course interpersonal functioning is now ever bound up in the ePoetic experience. Interestingly this can be linked to what Paul de Man (1970: 157) tells us of Yeats’ belief regarding modern poetry “as the conscious expression of a conflict within the function of language as representation and within the conception of language as the

act of an autonomous self". This, de Man (1970: 158) continues, is similar to Hugo Friedrich's ideas in his book *The Structure of the Modern Lyric* (1967) in which he states that a loss of representational reality (*Entrealisierung*) and a loss of self (*Entpersönlichung*) go hand in hand. Here then we can clearly see where the theories of poetry and technology link as both Hayles (1999) and de Man (1970: 157) refer to a loss of self and a resulting conflict of representation.

So to recapitulate, poetry and indeed ePoetry are not only imitations of what has gone before, they are also new objects themselves. They are representations of the world around us, however unlike a poem, an ePoem is accessed and created through the computer, therefore it is also a simulation. The application of this logic to ePoetry leads us to conclude that an ePoem is a simulation of a representation. Thus to repeat de Man's (1970: 157) assertion, "truly modern poetry is a poetry that has become aware of the incessant conflict that opposes a self, still engaged in the daylight world of reality, of representation, and of life". We can easily see how this can similarly apply to ePoetry.

However the most notable specific differences between poetry and ePoetry are brought about as a result of the simulation machine, the computer. In terms of the difference between digital fictions and new digital texts (as previously quoted) Sloane (2000: 109) reveals that perhaps a new reading process is required, and as a result this in turn "requires an entirely new way of understanding the self and the world". Such a realisation consequentially brings us to a discussion regarding the impact of poetry on its reader or more appropriately to this research, creader.

ii. Poetry & Emotions

Paul Muldoon in *The End of the Poem* (2006: 115-116) discusses Emily Dickinson's poetry and states that though she seemed resigned to the idea of her poems not being read, she did have a very powerful sense of the effect a poem might have once it has been read. Muldoon quotes Dickinson from Martha Gilbert Dickinson Bianchi's *The Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson*: "If I read a book [and] it makes my body so cold no fire ever can warm me I know *that* is poetry" (Gilbert Dickinson Bianchi, 1972: 276). As previously mentioned Adrienne Rich (2000: 142) reflects this opinion on when she purports that her earlier poems were *about* experiences but now her later

poems *were* experiences that contributed to her knowledge and emotional life, even while at the same time they reflected and assimilated her life. The deep emotion evoked by a poem or work of art seems key to its effectiveness.

Consequently any discussion regarding poetry needs also to refer to the effect or impact a poem might have on its reader. Regarding poets' views on the emotional impact of poetry much can be found, for example, Plath's striking insistence that a poem, "excludes and stuns" (Boruch, 1996: 52). While Eliot states (in Herbert and Hollis, 2000: 37) that the "business of the poet is not to find new emotions but to use the ordinary ones and, in working them up into poetry, to express feelings which are not in actual emotions at all". Throughout the variety of different views regarding the impact of poetry, one remains constant and relevant to this research, and that is that in order to be effective ePoetry should evoke a *shock* as affirmed by Calvino (in Aarseth, 1997: v).

For example Susanne Langer (1957) suggests, "A work of art presents feeling (in the broad sense I mentioned before, as everything that can be felt) for our contemplation, making it visible or audible or in some way perceivable through a symbol, not inferable from a symptom. Artistic form is congruent with the dynamic forms of our direct sensuous, mental, and emotional life; works of art . . . are images of feeling, that formulate it for our cognition. What is artistically good is whatever articulates and presents feeling for our understanding" (Langer, 1957: 661-662). A work of art for Langer is a snapshot of emotions or feelings so to speak, and it is these feelings and emotions that are being communicated to the audience, which in the case of ePoetry is the reader. Interestingly this quest for an emotional connection and the belief that the emotional impact of a piece is the key to its effectiveness is not specific only to the analogue. It can also be found in discussions regarding the creation of digital fictions.

Sarah Sloane (2000: 95) tells us of the OCC model which was published in 1998 by Ortony, Clore and Collins in the book *The Cognitive Structure of Emotions*. This model Sloane observes is a model of how emotions work and is popular with artificial intelligence enthusiasts as it offers a framework for emotions that can easily be

implemented in programming. However, systems such as these show in fact a failure to “grasp the complexity and context-dependence of human qualities, language, and feelings” (Sloane, 2000: 95). Sloane also critiques Picard’s *Affective Computing* (1998) in which researchers are described as searching for a set of human physiological signals, such as for example heart rate and mannerisms, that best intimate human emotional reaction. Sloane warns us that what Picard here is doing is confusing “the sign for the thing, not realizing that the thing itself does not exist outside of language” (2000: 94). Sloane critiques these attempts at creating models for emotions with a view to critiquing the effectiveness of digital fictions and optimising narrative enjoyment. This too can be applied to ePoetry as the effectiveness of a poem whether in printed or electronic form, whether linear or non-linear, lies in its ability to form an emotional connection with the creader. Sloane believes that more focus needs to be placed on how the reader or creader will interpret or code the digital fiction and that the weak emotional connection apparent in early digital fictions is due to a focus on modelling, recreating, and imitating the world instead of considering the creader and how they will receive the fiction.

Furthermore Carolyn Handler Miller (2004: 114) tells us that most people do not associate strong emotions with interactive projects, and that perhaps this is due to the fact that their genesis lies in computer games which were traditionally focused on getting the player to achieve specific goal(s) rather than experience a world or story. She argues that emotions can and do play a role in digital storytelling, in fact, the contribution of emotions can be extremely significant and can make the work seem less computerised and more real to the creader. Emotions, Miller explains, make the interactive experience more immersive and compelling and intensifies the connection between creader and content, in our case the poem. Emotionally barren work fails to leave an impression on the creader, this is also true of both analogue and ePoetry (Miller, 2004: 114).

Interestingly Miller (2004: 64) also reveals that stories are artefacts that we consume and that games are processes that we experience, alluding to the algorithmical process of computer programs as one that is appropriate for computer based media such as ePoems. However Strickland (2006: Online) refers to John Cayley’s theory (2003:

Online) of ePoems as instruments, in that you *play* an ePoem more like an instrument than a game in order for the instantaneous composition of the music to be played and heard only once. I find the allegory of an instrument a suitable one for ePoetry as the poetic experience created in that instance for the reader can be seen to be a unique song that will never again be replayed. Therefore an ePoem can be seen to lie somewhere between a process and an instrument, the reader uses the ePoem to create the poetic experience like a musical instrument but the process of creation is also the poem itself. An interesting potential here could be to save your ePoetic experience to be played over and over again as you would a favorite song.

To summarise, so far we have looked at ePoetry in terms of societal changes in order to place ePoetry within a historical and cultural context. Consequently a broad overview of the implications of the changing form of poetry was given. As a result of this we have concluded that an ePoem is a simulation of a representation (in that it is based on a poem which is a representation but it is also like a game made on a computer, a simulation machine). An ePoem is also like a game in that it is an event. However an analogue poem can also be considered an event, so in this sense they are similar. Emotion clearly is also essential to the effectiveness of both analogue and digital poetry and correspondingly both poems and ePoems operate as galaxies of signs. However unlike poetry, ePoetry can be seen to lie somewhere between a process and an instrument.

It is next necessary to approach a comparison of the specificities of forms of poetry and ePoetry in a more detailed manner. A structured look at the internal components of poetry such as story, structure, music, and imagination as proposed by poet and poetry criticism theorist Gregory Orr (1996) now follows. The purpose of this is to (using Orr's [1996] poetry theory, ePoet interview responses, and ePoetry examples) identify those areas that correspond to traditional analogue poetry and those areas where ePoetry deviates from the traditional. A rationale for the selection of Orr as an appropriate critical framework to use for the analysis of ePoetry is then provided as well as suggested revisions to Orr's theory for the digital realm.

iii. Poetry Structure - Orr's (1996) Temperaments

As previously mentioned Aristotle suggests a structure for the breakdown of poetry to enable analysis. He believed tragedy, like poetry to be imitation.¹⁸ With reference to this research it is interesting to note that the elements which Aristotle lists as comprising a tragedy, are echoed in many theories on what constitutes poetry and as such I believe are relevant to this body of work. In fact Miller (2004) notes, "Aristotle's remarks on dialogue have stood the test of time, and are as applicable to interactive media as they were to Greek drama" (Miller, 2004: 110). As well as this the "principles discussed in *The Poetics* have been applied not only to stage plays, but also to movies, TV shows, and, most recently, are finding their way into interactive narratives" (Miller, 2004: 75).

It is clear then that despite the aura of smoke and mirrors that lies about any attempt to understand poetry there exist many theories that offer quite a systematic and formal approach to breaking down the elements of poetry and thus contribute to an understanding of a poem. Rueben A. Brower (1970: vii) for example informs us, "we can hardly talk for long about a poem and not use the first or one of its current equivalents – structure, pattern, design, order". While some of these more "fashionable terms" have the advantage of not being associated with content they are nonetheless subject to the same abuses as other critical terms. So, Brower warns, we must be careful not to "freeze the life of the poem into lifeless formula" and recommends "flexibility in approach" and an "immediacy of response to the poems under consideration" (Brower, 1970: vii). Nonetheless we will attempt a structural examination of poetry such as this towards the goal of identifying the specific affordances of ePoetry.

The new poetic experiences of the ePoems - while not derived from text, but rather from eMedia enhancements of text, such as via motion graphics or video – nonetheless conform to the characteristics common to analogue poetry, as discussed, for example, by Gregory Orr (1996). Orr (1996: 270) in his paper *Four Temperaments and the Forms of Poetry* proposes four categories or as he calls them *temperaments* to poetry and these are not dissimilar to Aristotle's analysis. These are: Story, Structure, Music and Imagination. Orr also suggests that the dynamic tension of a poem is

brought about through a marriage of contraries that occurs through the contrast of each of these temperaments and it is this aspect of Orr's theory in particular that lead me select them as the most appropriate for this research.¹⁹ There are many prominent arguments about what constitutes poetry and most suggest similar analyses as those proposed by Orr and Aristotle. Eavan Boland, for example, echoes Orr's temperaments of music and structure in poetry when she thinks "of a poem as moving through cadences, as being disrupted by rhyme at the end of a line, as being reconnected by music to the next line even while the connection has been broken by sense" (Strand & Boland, 2000: xxvii). Eliot believes that poetry "begins with a savage beating a drum in the jungle and it retains that essential of percussion and rhythm" (1933: 155). Ezra Pound (Herbert & Hollis, 2000: 22) suggests rhythm, symbols, technique and form as categories for the analysis of poetry. Form and technique can be seen as being similar to Orr's Structure, rhythm to Music and symbols to Story and Imagination. Similarly Richard Tillinghast (2004: 112) argues that revisions in poetry, that is the systematic attempt of poets to rework and revise their poems, show "how related the formal and spiritual sides of poetry can be". His 'Formal' can be seen in Orr's 'Structure', and his 'Spiritual' in Orr's 'Imagination'.

Muhamad Tawfiq Ali (in Simawe & Weissbort, 2003: 9) also suggests similar categories and tells us that the Arabic definition of poetry is "meaningful speech which has rhyme and rhythm" and that the absence of any of these three elements renders the speech as prose and not poetry. He goes on to explain that Rhyme is a key attribute of poetry whereas Rhythm and Meaning are attributes that are also common with prose.

Nonetheless to return to Orr, it is clear by evidence of ePoet responses that Orr's (1996) poetry criticism theory can, not only be applied to traditional analogue poetry, but also to ePoetry. However the question remains to what extent? This section tackles this issue by outlining each of the temperaments and then, using ePoet interview responses and ePoetry examples, illustrating their application to ePoetry. This then allows for a problematising of Orr's theory in relation to ePoetry and concurrently, a rationale towards a revision of poetry criticism for the digital realm.

a. Story

According to Orr, Story (1996: 271-277) is the beginning, middle, and end. It is an element which is essential for a human connection, though less imperative for a poem than for a film or novel (Orr, 1996: 271-277). Nonetheless it is still important for a story to be told, conflict must seek a resolution. If not immediately apparent we will always seek the story in a work of art such as a painting or poem. In some of the ePoems considered in this research, story does not exist in the traditional sense, such as a clear beginning, middle and end. In these cases the authors have made an effort either graphically or otherwise to situate their piece in a recognizable location or space. In Arnall's (Online) sense an ePoem is "an open, explorable environment" rather than a narrative. The reader's response can then be to create their own narratives by associating their own personal experiences of such an environment to the ePoem and so too will they begin to associate emotions leading to an evocative piece.²⁰

A number of the interviewees commented on just such a process in relation to their own ePoems. Monica Ong in discussing her ePoem *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online) mentions that she "brought a visual space to the words, a sort of setting in terms of landscape – not a literal one but perhaps one that taps into the reader's landscape of memory" (Ong, 2009: q3). She also speaks of the "emotional space" (Ong, 2009: q11) of her ePoem and states that she likes "creating a poetic space that is just as engaging or transformative as a book" (Ong, 2009: q1). This is similar to Langer's (1957: 661-662) view that a work of art is snapshot of emotions or feelings and Eliot's (in Herbert and Hollis, 2000: 37) belief that the "business of the poet is not to find new emotions but to use the ordinary ones and, in working them up into poetry, to express feelings which are not in actual emotions at all". This corresponds to our previous discussions in this chapter regarding poetry and emotions.

Ong (2009: q8) also mentions that in *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online) she wanted to "help reinforce the space by implying the natural landscape, the sense of distance (such as the dogs barking), and the open space". Sam Tootal talks of "communal" spaces (Tootal, 2009: q9) where they have set the poem and states, "Audio is the character of the environment you're seeing in *Hunger* (Collins & SamuelChristopher:

Online) it brings the scenes and environments to life, albeit in a dark, brooding way” (Tootal, 2009: q8). Here we can see that SamuelChristopher use audio as a character in their story and the manner in which Ong and SamuelChristopher use audio in their ePoems is quite similar. What is interesting is that in *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online) and *Hunger* (Collins & SamuelChristopher: Online) they used media elements to suggest spaces that people would recognise and therefore relate to in a subtle way. The “stills we used are urban compositions we’re interested in in general, the kind of thing you glance at whilst travelling around a town or city” (Tootal, 2009: q9). This is the equivalent of setting it within a story or context that people can connect and identify with. Similarly Dylan Sheehan (2009: q5) talks of using the London Underground as a setting that is an “instantly recognisable and everyday place to most Londoners I wanted to inject an element of ‘myth’ to something so taken for granted”. This recognisable place allows the reader to become a character in the story of the poem and so allows for a greater emotional connection, personal interpretation, identification and emotional evocation.

b. Structure

Orr’s (1996: 271-277) temperament of Structure is the pattern of the poem, the element most often (but not always) recognisable in poetry. In fact sometimes it is even the lack of a structure compared to prose that makes poetry recognisable as what it is. “Poetry of course takes advantage of this by breaking lines, lending credence to the eloquence of silence via stanza, spacing, etc.” (Sapnar: 2004). Orr (1996: 271-277) purports Structure to be pattern making, the element often the most easily recognisable in poetry as the structure of a poem most usually adheres to a specific pattern. For example traditionally (but not always) sonnets must follow a specific pattern that of fourteen lines with a specific rhyming or meter and in more modern poetry sometimes even a complete lack of structure can be a pattern in itself. Interestingly Murray also describes the digital medium “as much a pattern of thinking and perceiving as it is a pattern of making things” (Murray, 2003: 11).

Correspondingly in relation to “textual and written language”, Seaman in his paper *Pattern Flows: Hybrid Accretive Processes Informing Identity Construction* (2005)

discusses how meaning arises from the experience of patterns. He notes that the “variety of language use enables and is enabled through hybrid constructions.

In terms of outlining a new approach to linguistics, the computer functions as a pattern-producing semiotic machine...I call this more expansive take on linguistics *Pattern Flows*. This understanding of linguistics enfolds computer-based perturbations as well as other forms of environmental perturbations into an accretive participation in meaning production” (Seaman, 2005: 15).

In this regard Seaman (2005: 16) proposes that “computer-based environments can function as consensual domains, extending human agency through this potentially quixotic technological means”. It is not hard to imagine where this may take us in relation to new poetic experiences.²¹

This mirrors previously quoted Espen Aarseth’s definition of a cybertext as “a machine for the production of variety of expression” (1997: 3) and Italo Calvino’s belief that “literature is a combinatorial game” (in Aarseth, 1997: v). In short, pattern making, or structure (as Orr refers to it) is essential to the human search for meaning whatever the domain, be it analogical, textual, or digital.

Interestingly, structure seems to be an area left most often unchanged in the ePoetry pieces by the translators. With reference to *Hunger* (SamuelChristopher: Online) Sam Tootal (2009: q11) states that the “words and structure are unaltered from the reading that we received by Billy Collins”. From this we can see Tootal to mean that they did not alter or change the words or structure of the original poem written by Billy Collins that they translated into eMedia. Also Mateo Parilla (2009: q10) reports, “I respect the original groups [*sic*] of lines” and “aspects that must be respect [*sic*] are the reading, order, the rhythm” (Parilla, 2009: q16). This is echoed by Monica Ong’s (2009: q16) opinion that “the media art needs [*sic*] come from the poetic content and be carefully considered. Artist Ben Shahn always emphasized that ‘form is the shape of content’”. Similarly Dinsmore (Sapnar: 2004) tells us that “form is an extension of content”. Nick Robinson (2009, E-mail) explains that when he was communicating with the poet Lucy Anderton she told him “the ‘meaning’ of the poem is reflected in the shape

of the poem” and as a result Robinson tried to maintain as much as possible the original structure of the poem by working line by line, “I treated each line as a ‘frame’ that I wanted to stand on its own as an appealing visual” (Robinson, 2009: q7).

c. Music

The next temperament, Music, is the interaction of syllables, syntax and sounds inherent in reading or reciting which create the poem’s aural and rhythmical structure (Orr, 1996: 271-277). This is the sound of the words that contribute to a rhythm in the poem. To return to Aristotle, Heath believes that he understood poetry to be imitation in rhythmical language (Heath in Aristotle, 1996: xvii).

Orr’s (1996: 271-277) temperament of music does not refer to music as in songs or soundtracks when applied to traditional analogue poetry, but in eMedia translations the concept can expand to include not only this, but anything (such as motion graphics) which contributed to the rhythm of a piece, including of course the original interaction of syllables, syntax, intonation, etc. from the original poem. The music of a piece seems in the ePoetry examples I have so far looked at to be essential, the omission of such leads to a dull, flat and unengaging piece. To support this view there is much to be found in the interviews.

Samuel Tootal (2009: q8) for example states that he and his partner (Chris Turner) are “very interested in creating depth and texture to our work and when it is moving image you suddenly have the world of audio to delve into. Sound is so important to us, to any moving image creators and filmmakers. Work can live or die on the audio content and for us with *Hunger* it needed that added depth, a sense of mystery. Audio is the character of the environment”. Tootal in this in this instance is describing how audio or sound afforded as much weight as an actor in a play. Dylan Sheehan (2009: q6) also uses audio in his piece, “many of the sounds are the normal workings of the Underground, we block them out in day-to-day travels. The screeching of metal wheels on metal tracks and the mechanical rhythm of the escalators and the announcements over the public address system”. These comments from ePoets outline the extensive expressive and communicative potential of audio in ePoetry.

With regards to the audio in his piece *A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House*. Nick Robinson (2009: q8) states “After completing all of the art and animations I still felt like the piece needed something else to fill it out and I leaned immediately towards sound since Flash supports it so well. I embarked for a search for the ‘perfect’ piece to accompany the poem ... I feel like it fits perfectly with the poem.. I also compressed and lowered he[sic] sound quality considerably ... reaching that ‘gritty’ or ‘scratchy’ sound” (Robinson, 2009: q8). The “something else” that Robinson felt was needed to complete the piece was an element that eMedia could provide, audio or music.

Though I have been applying Orr’s (1996: 271-277) temperament of music to audio in ePoetry in its original interpretation it relates to the rhythm of a poem. Claire Allan Dinsmore stresses the importance of rhythm in poetry both traditional and eMedia and the changing of such can impact the meaning of the piece. When discussing her piece *The Dazzle as Question* (Sapnar: 2004) observes, “setting up a rhythm was one of the most important things for me. The meaning inferred by that rhythm, placing emphasis in time. When reading a poem for instance, the meaning can be construed very differently depending upon how the work is read – where the emphasis is placed, lull – each nuance of elocution lending meaning to the distinct content of each particular word, and thus to the work as a whole. I wanted to further the levels upon which this piece functioned by lending the ‘reading’ a voice beyond how the words would tell if the piece were, say, straight prose” (Sapnar: 2004). Sheehan (2009: q10) tells us that “I go on rhythm and feeling” when he was asked about the strengths of his ePoem. Parilla (2009: q16) states that “aspects that must be respect [sic] are the reading, order the rhythm”.

d. Imagination

Orr’s (1996: 271-277) final temperament, that of Imagination, deals with the themes or metaphors of a piece, the ideas, and thoughts. Much from the respondents’ answers on this topic can be extracted. The temperament of Imagination is the ideas and thought process of the poet, the metaphors and imagery at use, the flow of image-to-image or thought-to-thought (Orr, 1996: 271-277). Sam Tootal (2009: q12) believes his piece *Hunger* (Collins & SamuelChristopher: Online) to contain “themes of immortality, death, fragility and impermanence of physical human existance [sic].”

Also “we’ve obviously given it other levels of subjective meaning by virtue of the fact we set it to sound design and images” (Total, 2009: q11) and he states that the strength of the piece lies in “that it communicates the themes...in a subtle way that doesn’t overpower or deminish [*sic*] from the poetry of the words themselves” (Tootal, 2009: q13).

Nick Robinson (2009: q12) reveals that he was being careful not to pigeonhole reader’s interpretation but believed the poem to be about languish (Robinson, 2009: q13). This mirrors the original poet’s intentions as Robinson cites communication with her in which she (the poet) states, “the images, hopefully, enfold the reader in a world of feeling and atmosphere that is not literal. This is not a ‘literal’ poem, it is a poem that opens doors within, and I cannot control what doors it opens for each reader (I am a big believer in not trying to write for other peoples [*sic*] interpretations” (Robinson, 2009: E-mail). Ong (2009: q8) also mentions leaving space for the reader’s internal voice. From these comments we can see that while the eMedia translator is aware of the themes of a piece they also are anxious to be careful to allow space for the readers to form their own interpretations of the themes of the piece.

Monica Ong (2009: q13) believed the themes of her piece to be, “longing, memory, seeding”. Sam Tootal (2009: q12) when asked explained “there are themes of immortality, death, fragility and impermanence of human existance [*sic*]. We’ve added a slightly melancholy maybe even apocalyptic interpretation to our film”, from this we can see that the translators were careful to include what they believed to be the main themes of the original poem but as well as this the translation by its very changing nature has added either more depth to the existing themes or even whole new themes compared to the original poem. Sheehan reveals that for him the use of the London underground in his ePoem symbolised an alternative reality and the last train symbolised hopes and dreams (Sheehan, 2009: q5). The themes of the piece he continues to tell us are “Essentially, Death and Love. The parting = death seperation, [*sic*] entering the underworld that could be [*sic*] death of a relationship or whatever. And Love, the power of love to stay with someone no matter what/ where they go. Even in to the arms of Death it’s self.. [*sic*] Essentially the poem is saying I will be

here for you, always, come what may” (Sheehan, 2009: q9). It is clear from the respondents answers that while they want to leave space for a creader’s interpretation they all have very clear ideas on what they believe to be the themes that they wish to convey in the ePoem.

Therefore it is clear that if we look at some examples of ePoetry and responses from ePoet interviews we can see how they fulfil Orr’s ‘four temperaments’. For example *The Burning* (Dorris & Kuypers: Online), an interactive Flash ePoem, tells the story of an abusive relationship, the poet’s voice narrates as now she is engaged in another abusive relationship, this time with alcohol. The word rape is repeated more than once throughout the poem drawing comparisons between the rape of the silhouetted figure we see in the piece and now the rape by alcohol. This piece has a very strong rhythm to it supported by the background audio using the repetition of a key line in the poem. The visuals of the piece support the imagery of the poem but do not distract. To listen to just the audio of the poet’s voice reading aloud the creader does not come away with the same poetic experience as when experiencing the ePoetry piece. The scripting of continuously changing gradients of colours in the alpha channel the colours reflect and accentuate the emotions of the poem, red, yellow, purple – hate, nausea, jealousy, shame. The photography in the piece informs us about the main protagonist in the poem. So it is clear how the piece fulfils the first criteria that of a story as it clearly tells of a conflict, “a two-person conflict, as in Plath’s ‘Daddy’ or Adrienne Rich’s ‘Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law’” (Orr, 1996: 272).

The second and third criteria, structure, and music are apparent not just in the language of the piece read aloud by a woman’s voice but also in the clear rhythm in the background music and the pace and timings of the colour gradients in the alpha channel as well as the rhythmical fading in and out of the images. The use of the colour gradients along with a minimum use of imagery allows space for the creader’s imagination to form their own visualisation, suggesting but not insisting, so we can see how *The Burning* (Dorris & Kuypers: Online) meets Orr’s fourth criteria, imagination. The display of the marriage of contraries is fulfilled in part through the flow of images from the vodka bottle to the fresh faced girl in a debutante’s dress to the silhouette of a couple fighting. Contrasts of the bright colours of the gradients to

the washed out paleness of the photographs. The recurring mantra in the poem, a repetition of a line in the poem that communicates the regret and shame felt by the protagonist in the story “*How these were the hands that should have pushed you away from me*” encompasses the complexities involved in a traumatic and damaging experience. The repetition of this in conjunction with the colour gradients and images all combine to engage the reader and so create a very powerful poetic experience. All elements in this piece of ePoetry fulfill Orr’s (1996: 271-277) formulae for poetry.

Another example is the ePoem *Ten Doors Closing* (Sheehan: Online) which is based on Orphic poetry (Sheehan: Online). Orphic poetry has hexameter, a rhythm of six. This fulfills Orr’s temperament of structure. Some Greek religious poetry in hexameter (a meter of six) was attributed to Orpheus a Greek poet and musician, who to save his wife, Eurydice, from death entered the underworld and sang so mournfully and beautifully that he softened the hearts of Hades and Persephone so that they allowed her to return to earth with him (Miles, 2009: 54). In this ePoem the references to the underworld are visually translated into the London underground, which echoes Orpheus’ adventure in the underworld. This also fulfills Orr’s temperament of story. With regards Orr’s third temperament, music, the sound effects match the visuals with digital noises, screeching harsh in synchronisation with industrial train noises in contrast to the soft female voice slowly speaking the words of the poem, the contrasts play on our emotions and set the mood for the piece. “Music in poetry is irrational; it works directly on the emotions, regardless of the purported content of the language” (Orr, 1996: 274). The imagery of the poem spoken aloud, images of the ancient Greek underworld, juxtaposed with a modern city at night allows the audience’s imagination to run riot and so fulfills Orr’s fourth criteria, imagination. The contrast of the modern imagery along with the historical form of the poem, allow for greater poetic effect, displaying that which Orr (1996: 270) describes as essential to poetry, “the marriage of contraries”.

What is different about Orr’s (1996) poetry framework compared to others I have mentioned is his suggestion of dynamic tension which is brought about through the interplay of the different *temperaments*. It is most especially this element of Orr’s

(1996) theory that is particularly appropriate for this research as I we shall see it is applicable to the generation of meaning in both analogue and ePoetry.

e. A Marriage of Contraries – Rationale for using Orr

These four temperaments Orr suggests together form a marriage of contraries and that while each of these temperaments are capable of creating the unity we call a poem, he believes that “for a poem to have the stability and dynamic tension that comes of a marriage of contraries it must fuse a limiting impulse with an impulse that resists limitation” (Orr, 1996: 270). Interestingly this reflects Baudrillard’s analysis of culture and his concept of *trope*, by referring to literary texts using this concept he emphasized the importance of difference in the creation of meanings.²² Gottdiener in (Kellner, 1995: 27) posits that according to Barthes both metaphorical²³ and metonymical²⁴ tropes rely on contrasts or difference and that this is how meaning arises. Similarly Orr’s dynamic tension, which is brought about through the contrasts or difference of conflicting temperaments allows the true emotional meaning of poem to be evoked.

For example Orr (1996: 270) suggests Dylan Thomas’ famous villanelle, *Do not go gentle into that good night* (Thomas, 1952: 159) as an example of how the poet’s musical temperament is constrained by that of structure. The result is a poem that has a defined structure but music still runs through it, in other words we find regular irregularity. The musical cadence is contained by the pattern of the poem, and the resulting poetic effect is a unique communicative rhythm that expresses the themes of the piece as clearly as the imagery of the language does. We follow the story while our minds leap from image to image in the temperament of imagination. So here we see the four temperaments at play.

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they

Do not go gentle into that good night.

(Thomas, 1952: 159)

Another well-known example is Yeats' poem *The Isle of Inisfree*

I will arise and go now, for always night and day

I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;

While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,

I hear it in the deep heart's core

(Yeats in Tillinghast, 2004: p151-152)

The rhythm of this verse is quite structured, the stanza is made up of three six-beat or hexameter lines and this metre combined with the story being told and the scene being described lulls us into a watery feel as that of water lapping against the shore

(Tillinghast 2004: p151-152). Here also we can see all of Orr's temperaments at play, Story, Structure, Music, and Imagination, with all elements combining to form the whole pattern of poem that captures us, and creates an emotional response.

Notably it is not only in ePoetry where we can see this marriage of contraries taking place. Music videos also rely on the dynamic tension of their components or elements to create emotional impact. Vernallis (2004: x) suggests imagining the various elements of music videos mise-en-scène as separate tracks on a sound engineer's mixing board, each of these elements become submerged in the mix and together they form a dynamic system.²⁵

Orr's (1996: 270) marriage of contraries however can refer to not only the conflict of temperaments but it can also refer to what I feel is most apparent in the ePoems and that is the emotional impact or dynamic tension that comes from a marriage of contraries of the visuals and the audio. Often we might have jarring audio combined with beautiful graphics (or vice versa) it accentuates the impact of the piece. For example in *The Last Day of Betty Nkomo* (Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries: Online) the audio of the piece is quite intricate music and yet the visuals are simple

only black and white Monaco font. The opposition of these two elements gives a unique style and emotional impact to the ePoem.

Ten Doors Closing (Sheehan, Online) and *Hunger* (Collins & SamuelChristopher: Online) situate their pieces in mundane every day places and yet the content of the poems are far from mundane and everyday. It is this marriage of contraries that provides dynamic tension for the creader and so enhances the poetic experience and emotional impact.

iv. eTemperaments – Orr’s theory revised

While it is clear that Orr’s (1996) temperaments still come into play much as they did in analogue poetry, nonetheless it is also clear that there is considerably more potential for variation within these when dealing with ePoems. This is due to the fact that in the electronic medium the ePoet is afforded a greater range of tools to use than in print. To adequately communicate the varying nuances and the potential for expanded possibilities of temperaments in the electronic realm as opposed to print, I will refer to them as *eTemperaments*, that is, Orr’s temperaments expanded in electronic form.

For example, story or narrative in the digital medium has changed in that it now has multiple levels and sequencing possibilities, especially with relation to implicit narratives, driven by the contents and sequencing of visual displays with or without reference to text.²⁶ Rhyme is now demoted, as visual and repetition and tensions among such becomes dominant, and the focus is no longer on the read text as a linear narrative. Intonation is broadly expanded in potential as multiple readings or voices are possible simultaneously or sequentially, and other audio aural effects can be incorporated. All these factors when brought into play in a studied, practised and balanced manner can contribute to a far more immediate and richer semiotically and experientially poetic experience for the creader than would have originally been possible in print form. However as there is potential for an enhanced experience so too is there the risk of a greatly inferior poetic experience if the ePoem is translated without consideration of the overall experience.

Orr argues that for the expression of his four temperaments (story, structure, music, and imagination) to combine successfully in a poem there must be a “marriage of contraries”, such as both “stability” and a “dynamic tension” that comes from the “fus(ing) of a limiting impulse with an impulse that resists limitation” (Orr, 1996: 270). In analogue poems this tension is inevitably created among the four temperaments as they are played out in the text itself. However in ePoetry, the possibilities for the creation of such tension are vastly expanded. Not only is there the sizeably increased number of contributors to such a tension in ePoetry but there is also the potential for these same combinations to serve the function of amplifying a particular temperament in the process of contributing to an amplified dynamic tension, as it were, and beyond this there is the potential for the expression of these same temperaments to undermine each other and thus undercut the potential for an overall dynamic tension in the ePoem.

For example, in *The Burning* (Dorris & Kuypers: Online), it can be argued that the music in the traditional text, is amplified by both the addition of the repetitive line underneath it such as the double audio track and the interwoven rhythm of the transitions in the colour gradients. While a dynamic tension is created by the fragility of the visuality of the speaker who at times fades from view while her voice continues, or is replaced by memories and imaginings presented in other visuals.

Similarly in *In Praise of an Elevator* (Schroder & Handplant Studio: Online) the addition of black and white harsh imagery in a looping background video and the smoothness of the animation sliding down the screen creates a dynamic tension. This all contributes to placing the reader in conflicting places and contexts, while reading the words, the video and audio jar from the smoothness of the text and the marriage of these contraries again enhance the ePoetic experience.

By way of contrast, in *The Dead* (Collins & Delcan: Online) there is no marriage of contraries only a reflection of what already exists. The animation exactly mirrors the voiceover of the poet Billy Collins and the result is an ePoem that has no dramatic tension and as a result minimal poetic impact. The fact that both the poem and the animation which is used in the ePoem are both on their own extremely engaging (see

below) and yet fail poetically in combination further emphasizes the need for Orr's marriage of contraries in ePoetry, however it is achieved.

The important point here to note is that in the original analogue poems the dynamic tension in the text could not be undermined by any eTemperaments but in the ePoem this is imminently possible. For example in the ePoem *I didn't know infants in arms until* (Petrosino & Weychert: Online) the dynamic tension of the piece is undermined by the use of interactivity which requires the creader to click after every line and so jars the rhythm of the ePoetic experience.

To return to the ePoem *The Dead* (Collins & Delcan: Online) this undermining of the dynamic tension in my opinion occurs because despite all of the wonderful development of Orr's four temperaments in the original analogue version and the dynamic tension created (such as between the mundane and the fantastical in the telling of the poem) all of this is undercut in the ePoem. This is mainly because the original poem is layered over with an equally amazing animation which unfortunately gives the creader a prescribed visual interpretation of the text and in the process puts the creader into a conflicting perceptual experience throughout the poem. This is a conflict that has nothing to do with tension between the four temperaments, amplified or otherwise. Rather it is due to the constant need for the creader to make some decision regarding how to imagine the words being heard within the narrow visual constraints prescribed by the animation or in some wider imaginings, which the words of the poem inevitably trigger.

In general the point to be made here is that the movement from analogue into ePoetry in relation to Orr's temperaments has expanded the possibility for expression of the temperaments. However, the move has also expanded the scope for undermining such expression and hence the same for the resulting dynamic tension (or lack of such).

To conclude it can be argued that the role of eTemperaments has become much more complex with the additional individual possibilities for enhancing or diminishing any particular element which contributes to even one of these temperaments. For example in relation to music, Orr's traditional contributing elements (such as the interaction of

syllables, syntax, and sounds inherent in the reading or reciting of the poem which create its aural and rhythmical structure) now have been greatly augmented by the addition of eMedia elements such as sound effects and audio as well as the rhythm contributions created by the use of video, motion graphics and interactivity.²⁷ The ways in which these individual elements may interact with each other to enhance or diminish the poetic experience are obviously immense and will no doubt provide the basis for years of further ePoetic evolution to come.

In summary, this chapter began by looking at a broad overview of poetry and societal changes towards placing the development of ePoetry within a broader social and historical context. Following on from this poetry criticism was outlined and reviewed in light of the specific affordances of ePoetry.

Through the application of theory from Aristotle (1996), Giddings (2007), de Man (1970), Yeats (1936), and Abrams (1953) to ePoetry, it was concluded that an ePoem is a simulation of a representation. Discussions then followed that referenced Calvino (in Aarseth, 1997: v) and Miller (2004) towards proving that emotional impact is an essential attribute of poetry, whether analogue or digital.

An analysis and application of Orr's (1996) poetry criticism brought about the conclusion that the emotional impact of poetry can be brought about through, a dynamic tension within the temperaments of story, structure, music and imagination. This can be seen to be at play in both poetry and ePoetry however the content and emphasis of the temperaments has changed sizeably. This leads us to revise Orr's (1996) temperaments into eTemperaments in order to encompass the extended possibilities of all communicative elements in the digital realm. For example, rhythm particularly is now forefronted both in relation to sequences of text and visuals (patterning) but also in relation to the use of text as visual rather than a meaningful syntactic element in story (such as in generative poetry).

It was also concluded that, for ePoetry a new temperament needs to be brought into play, one that can encompass audio. While currently we use the temperament of music to incorporate audio, in Orr's (1996) original meaning for this temperament it

was to encompass the rhythm of a piece. Therefore expecting this to include all ePoetry audio elements as well as the rhythm of text, motion graphics, and interactivity, is attributing too much to one temperament. With all the additional possibilities for elements in the ePoem to affect the musical temperament, it would instead make sense to consider Music in terms of sub categories, such as, Tonal contributions (from voice or other audio), Rhythmic contributions (from Tonal factors, plus for example, motion graphics and interactivity). Overall it can be argued that Orr's temperaments might now best be considered in terms of how they are expressed not only in relation to both the analogue dimensions of expression (as in traditional poetry), and the eMedia dimensions (eTemperaments); but also in terms of how these two dimensions relate to each other in a given ePoem.

To conclude, the overall point to be made here is that within the context of poetry theory, the movement from analogue into digital poetry has expanded the possibility for poetic expression. As the potential channels or temperaments have expanded so too has the scope for potential poetic expression, however the basic mechanisms have not changed, merely broadened. The elusive balance between all poetic elements that contribute to form an effective poetic experience is the same in analogue poetry as it is in digital. However the balance becomes potentially even more intricate as the digital apparatus affords us more complex poetic expression techniques and there is a greater amount of variables due to the mutability of the digital medium. Nonetheless the apparatus remains a tool of that which we wish to express, and as in analogue poetry there is still the potential for an effective or even ineffective poetic experience.

Chapter 5. ePoems as Translations

- A. Translation as Communication**
- B. The ePoet as Translator**
- C. Holmes' Forms of Translation**
- D. Translation and Adaptation**
- E. The Specificity of Poetry Translation**
- F. Nida's Functional Equivalency**
- G. Reiss & Vermeer's Skopos Rule**
- H. Holmes' Levels of Translation**
- I. Holmes' Serial & Structural Planes**

This chapter specifically deals with Holmes (1994) translation theory in relation to ePoetry. The goals of this chapter are two-fold, firstly to understand that all ePoetry can itself be viewed as translation, and secondly that translation theory is a useful prism with which to examine and unlock the creation of specific ePoetry examples.

A. Translation as Communication

McLuhan (1962) purports that the modern reader is involved in total translation of sight into sounds as they look at the page; in this case McLuhan is referring to a reader translating from print into oral words in the mind. So therefore for the purposes of this research this too can be equally applied to the translation of poems from print into online visuals in the eMedia. This then is translation as communication and it is in this manner that I refer to translation, in a similar sense to Hatim and Mason (1997). They look upon translation “as an act of communication which attempts to relay, across cultural and linguistic boundaries, another act of communication (which may have been intended for different purposes and different readers/hearers)” (Hatim & Mason, 1997: 1). The ePoet through the ePoem is communicating to the reader, perhaps the intended communication differs from that actually received but that point is outside my research question. A study into the reception of these ePoems and whether the actual message received corresponds to that intended by the ePoet is a worthy topic and one that merits further research but currently far exceeds the scope of this thesis as it would require delving into the areas of media consumption and audience theories.

This research instead focuses on the process of creation of the ePoem, the translation of the poem from paper to pixel. So to begin, an overview of traditional translation theories as they relate to poetry translation will be looked at. It is important to note that this research is interdisciplinary in nature and as such a blend of theories from the areas of digital media, literature, and translation is used. As such it is not my intention to give an account of the entire history and development of the field of translation studies however I will present an overview of the field as it relates to the overriding topic of this research, namely ePoetry translation. The logical starting point of this engagement is to start with traditional poetry translation and then move to its application to ePoetry.

Stephanie Strickland (2006: Online) a theorist and ePoet lists translation as one of the eleven characteristics of ePoetry, or as she refers to it, networked digital poetry. According to Strickland (2006), ePoems engage translation in many ways if we view eMedia as “a language without any native speakers, an all border crossing language” into which ePoems have been translated. This is a characteristic that is of particular interest to this research and one that is strongly evident in the ePoems. In the sense that they are indeed translations but that rather than poetry being translated from one spoken language to another we can see them being translated from print into the eMedia which behaves as a language.

It is important to note that the ePoetry with which this research is concerned starts out as written or print poetry; the poem’s initial form has been analogue on printed-paper. To look at what happens next, the process of translation of the printed text into visual motion graphics with audio and interactivity, is essential to understanding what ePoetry is. As previously mentioned in the introduction to this work it is comparable to the creation of music videos in that in music videos, music comes first, so too in ePoetry does the poem come first (Vernallis, 2004: x). There is however one exception and that is generative ePoems, in these instances the computer code generates the poem, each experience is unique based on a series of variables at each instance of play. This corresponds to Manovich’s first principle of new media, that is, numerical representation whereby the ePoem is the result of the translation of all existing media into numerical data accessible through computers. “Graphics, moving

images, sounds, shapes, spaces and texts that have become computable; that is, they comprise simply another set of computer data” (Manovich, 2001: 20). The code will however use variables such as words to generate a poem so in a sense a generative ePoem still exists in print first but not to the same extent as in *Interactive ePoetry* or *Video/Animation Linear ePoetry* where a definite written poem first exists and which is then translated into ePoetry.²⁸

When discussing her translation of Sabine Lange’s poetry Williams (2005: 10) states, “my principal aim as a translator was to convey as much of the essence of Lange’s poetry as possible in English. It was therefore important for me to retain as much of the rhythm, rhyme and linguistic sophistication as I could – even if that meant straining English syntax to its limits” (Williams, 2005: 10). This view is similar to the opinion that Eshleman (2007: 50) eventually arrived at during his translations. He writes that when he began to translate poetry he believed that the goal was to take a literal draft and interpret everything that was not acceptable in English. He changed words, phrases, punctuation, line breaks, and even stanza breaks. What he felt he was then left with was something that was not an original poem in English nor was it accurate to the original work, as it had been tampered with to such an extent. Eshleman (2007: 50) cites Ben Belitt’s translation of Neruda and Robert Lowell’s *Imitations* as examples of such translations. Then, however, he felt it more appropriate for his translations of César Vallejo’s poetry to “respect the original at every point, to check everything (including words that I thought I knew), to research arcane and archaic words, and to invent English words for coined words – in other words, to aim for a translation that was absolutely accurate *and* up to the performance level of the original” (Eshleman, 2007: 50). It should be noted however that when Eshleman began his work his translations were indirect translations, as he did not speak the source language. Through repeated study of the source language this inevitably changed as his literacy in the source language improved, granted not to fluent level but still to a coherent level and perhaps this fact most of all contributed to his change of attitude to translation.

In a similar vein Buesco and Duarte (2007: 177) remind us of George Steiner’s belief that “[s]ome of the most persuasive translations in the history of the *métier* have been

made by writers ignorant of the language from which they were translating”. This particularly has relevance to ePoetry translations such as those from *Born Magazine*, in which an online translation of a poem has been made through the collaboration of a poet and an ePoet, as the poet does not speak the ‘language’ of eMedia. Though it is clear from the interviews the input of the poet into the translation process was minimal, perhaps through continued work in this realm the poet would gradually learn enough to become the ePoet. Similarly in the future as digital technology becomes more accessible, fluency in the creation (and not just fluency in the reception as it exists now) of eMedia will become more widespread.

Similarities can be found in the process of translating a poem from one language to another and the process of translating a poem from print to digital. In order to identify these similarities and/or differences, I will apply poetry translation theory to the process of ePoetry creation using ePoet interview responses as evidence. I will explicate Holmes’s (1994) theory with reference to other models and examples from both traditional print poetry translation and ePoetry translation to further elucidate the appropriateness of Holmes as a model with which to analyse the process of translation of a print poem to an ePoem. This allows this work to continue an examination of the specificities of the digital medium and their impact on the form of the poem.

James S. Holmes (1994), a poet and a translator of poetry provided what is widely considered the most systematically theoretical map of processes involved in poetic translation.²⁹ I will use Holmes’ map with reference to other relevant translators and theorists as a conceptual core for attempting to extend the understanding of such translation into the realms of ePoetry.

We can apply Holmes’ (1994) model of translation to ePoetry translation if we interpret language A, the source text, to be a piece in standard textual language and language B, the target text, to be the piece translated into digital multimedia form. The transfer mechanism is then both the ePoet and the software applications of choice (such as Adobe Flash) with or without the collaboration of the poet. In this case the translator first decodes the piece to allow for assimilation and interpretation and then recodes the piece into a new mode. Whether this new mode is from one language to

another such as for example French to Spanish or analogue to digital it does not affect the model.

B. The ePoet as Translator

Now that I have clarified the sense in which I refer to translation in this research, it is next necessary to ask who is steering the process of translation? What is immediately clear from the results of the interviews overall is that in each case the eMedia technologist was the primary, often sole, translator, despite, in most cases, there being in existence a separate person (the poet) who was the original author of the poem in its written form. Initially I had anticipated a more traditional and less complex relationship such as that outlined by O'Hagan and Ashworth (2002) who state, "even if the whole communications environment is transformed, the basic and unchanging role of the Translator will be to facilitate communication between the Sender and the Receiver of the message" (O'Hagan & Ashworth, 2002: 150). Through this before I conducted interviews I had understood that the original poet was the Sender, the creator the Receiver, and the eMedia technologist or the ePoet the translator.

However while it is clear that the ePoet is the translator, they are also the Sender, as the involvement of the original poet in the creation of the ePoem was minimal. They tended to defer to the greater eTechnology skills of the ePoet and therefore a great amount of the ePoet's interpretation of the poem was transmitted and so the ePoet is also the Sender. Evidence of this is apparent in answers such as that from Robinson (2009: q4) who, when asked about the working arrangements with the original poet, states, she "didn't actually add much to the development of the final piece aside from very limited periodic feedback. At the time I was panicked about our lack of communication and close collaboration". Also Ong (2009: q4) tells us "we kept the process simple. The poet sent me the poem...Then I sent her a mock-up, kind of a sketch...After receiving positive feedback, I proceeded in completing the building and programming".

Others such as SamuelChristopher when making their ePoem *Hunger* (Collins & SamuelChristopher: Online) did not consult the poet Billy Collins as is evidenced by Sam Tootal's answer, "It is entirely our interpretation of the poem" (Tootal, 2009:

q10). This lack of communication between the traditional poet and ePoet undermines virtually all ‘co-piloting’ regarding intertextuality and lead me to focus on the decisions the ePoets made. O’Hagan and Ashworth (2002: 58) suggest the term *transterpreting* as a new mode of translation, though they use it to refer to multi-lingual languages in a text-based chat environment. It is however relevant to this research in the sense that it affords the translator the ability to interpret themselves, in ePoetry this is particularly apparent because of the extended potential mutability of meaning in poetry. Due to this the scope for the ePoet’s interpretation of a poem differing from that of the original poet remains vast.

While collaboration does exist in the creation of ePoetry it seems to be mostly between members of the translator or ePoetry team and not between the poet and translator. Sam Tootal (Tootal, 2009: q4) describes, “We [Sam Tootal & Christopher Turner] work very closely on all projects – whether it be in the same room or on opposite sides of London. Firstly we bounce ideas back and forth, so we usually spend at least half a day discussing the creative/narrative approach to a project and then begin to create elements that inform the next stage of the process and that might change the outcome of the final piece as we discover [*sic*] things along the way.”

Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries is another creative eTechnology partnership that I interviewed regarding their ePoem *The Last Day of Betty Nkomo* (Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries: Online). It is made up of Marc Voge and Young-Hae Chang and when asked about their working arrangements tell us “We’d like to say a mutual respect for one another’s input, but that would be a lie” (Young-Hae Chang, 2009: q4). Young-Hae Chang both wrote the text, “we wrote it for International AIDS day some years back” (2009: q2) and made the ePoem however the audio they used was not their own, “if we had to do it over, we’d make the music ourselves” (2009: q13). In the case of Dylan Sheehan he also wrote the poem and made the ePoem, “I wrote the poem, it was one I had written already but I added some lines to make it fit with the journey a bit better” (Sheehan, 2009: q2).

Mateo Parilla is slightly different in that he does seem to have kept up a strong contact with the poet. “During the process we keep [*sic*] in touch via e-mail” (Parilla, 2009:

q7) and “We connected very quickly” (2009: q6). However for Parilla it does seem to be the case that although he maintained closer contact with the original poet despite this the input still seems to have been minimal. “Heather Lee Shroeder [*sic*] brought her poem. My work was to give it a visual content” and Heather Lee (the poet) “was in love with my ideas. She gave me total creative freedom. There were a couple of text corrections, that was all” (Parilla, 2009: q5).

This is similar to Robinson’s working relationship with the author of his poem however he does seem to have received more input on the meaning and interpretation of the poem than the other ePoets. “Well she wrote the poem and provided some insight into what was behind her words personally” (Robinson, 2009: q3). Also “Lucy was the dream “client” in this regard – not only was she interested in letting me take the reins but once presented with my chosen artistic direction she was in total agreement. The only thing that she asked me to do was the [*sic*] emphasize her favourite line in the poem from the rest. I still think it is likely more subtle than she would have liked but there was very little time for back-and-forth” (Robinson, 2009: q6). Though it is clear here that some collaboration took place, nonetheless the level of collaboration between ePoet and poet is still far less than that between members of an ePoetry team. Therefore the conclusion arrived at is that it is the ePoet who is steering the process of translation.

C. Holmes’ Forms of Translation

James Holmes (1994: 29-30) argues that the relationship between the translator’s (in the case the ePoet) chosen form of metapoem and the total effect that it produces is extremely close. The translator has chosen a different form for the metapoem whose original basis is the same work, and these differences in forms all evoke very different tones. Each of these translators at the start of the translation process made very specific choices, which affected the outcome of the final piece (Holmes, 1994: 29-30).

Holmes’ (1994: 26-27) outlines the following four approaches that translators have traditionally come upon as solutions to the problem of form of the metapoem. Firstly there is a *mimetic* form where the original form is kept (most similar to original). This approach tends to have the effect of re-emphasising, “by its strangeness, the

strangeness which for the target-language reader is inherent in the semantic message of the original poem” (Holmes, 1994: 27). Then there is the *analogical* form; here the translation seeks functionally to parallel the form in the original’s poetic tradition. Both of these are “form derivative...determined as they are by the principle of seeking some kind of equivalence in the target language for the outward form of the original poem” (Holmes, 1994: 26). There is also the *organic* form or “content derivative”, this form starts with the same semantic content but allows it to form its own unique shape rather than the form of the original. And finally there is the *deviant* or *extraneous* form where the metapoem is cast into a form that is in no way implicit in either the form or the content of the original (most dissimilar to original) (France, 2000: 31).³⁰

Some extracts from the interviews can point us in which section we should categorise the electronic metapoems. “The words and structure are unaltered from the reading that we received by Billy Collins. We’ve obviously given it other levels of subjective meaning by virtue of the fact we set it to sound design and images” (Tootal, 2009: q11). This comment regarding *Hunger* (Collins & SamuelChristopher Online) leads us to set it in the category of an organic translation according to Holmes’ theory. That is the content is similar to the original poem but the form is different. In this case the content of the poem is the same but the form has changed from print text to digital video and audio.

Similarly Sheehan (2009: q8) when asked about his piece *Ten Doors Closing* (Sheehan: Online) answers, “I think the finished product fairly represents the original idea. The poem its self [*sic*] is essentially unchanged”, this would also lead us to categorise the piece according to Holmes’ theories as an organic translation. Parilla (2009: q12) comments that, “the essence of the poem is the same. Of course, there are new nuances and [*sic*] others have been diluted”, this also points us to categorising his ePoem *In praise of an elevator* (Schroeder & Handplant Studio: Online) as organic. In fact most of the examples of ePoetry that have been looked at in this research fall into this category except for *The Last Day of Betty Nkomo* (Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries, 2009: Online). In this piece although the words were indeed written first, they were in fact written specifically for this piece and still appear as written words

although they are now digital written words and the rhythm and audio is new. There is however no added imagery unlike the other pieces therefore it could be categorised as *analogical* whereby the translation seeks to functionally parallel the form in the original's poetic tradition.

In Holmes' (1994: 26-27) forms of translation we can see similarities with Baudrillard's (1983) postmodernist discourse regarding the simulacra and simulation. He suggests similar categories as the phase of the image: first when it is "the reflection of a profound reality" (similar to a mimetic translation), second when "it masks and denatures a profound reality" (similar to an analogical translation), third when "it masks the absence of a profound reality" (similar to an organic translation) and finally when "it has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum" (similar to a extraneous translation) (Baudrillard, 1983: 6). So here building on my dialectic in Section C.i *Simulations of Representations* in Chapter 4 *Poetry Transformations*, we can see that an ePoem is a simulation not only through the logic of game studies as previously discussed but also through translation theory which stems from postmodern theory.

Holmes (1994: 50) defines the verse translator's goal as a dual one, that of "producing a text which is a translation of the original poem and is at the same time a poem in its own right within the target language". He then extends this definition of translation further within the context of a game metaphor. Holmes compares the process of translation to a game, the goal of which is to produce an acceptable translation. The rules of the game are that the final piece must match the original enough to be considered a translation and the form is reformulated in such a way that it will be considered a poem. The same way a player in a computer game makes choices on what levels or game paths to pursue so too does a translator make choices appertaining to what form the translation shall take.

According to Holmes a poem can be defined as a "coherent textual whole" however translation itself is a dichotomy between languages, literatures and cultures (Holmes, 1994: 50). Therefore translators must accept these dichotomies and do their best to create the illusion of wholeness and each translator's path through the game of

translation is different and produces different results. Each translator will choose his or her own type of game play to negotiate through the different levels whether translating from one spoken language to another such as for example German to English or text to interactive animation.

Here again we can find echoes of postmodern theories regarding the simulacra (Baudrillard: 1983). Giddings (2007: 427) offers the following quote from Asplund (2003: 39–40), a “simulacrum is good enough if an evaluator experiences a striking similarity but also at the same time a discrepancy between illusion and reality”. However the difference here is that to deem a simulacrum as “good enough” you need to be able to compare it to the original. Yet when we apply this to Holmes’ poetry translation it does not fit, as when experiencing the translation of a poem you will not necessarily be aware of the original poem. Therefore you are unable to make that judgment of comparison, you will however be able to judge whether it works on its own terms as a poem either analogue or digital.

D. Translation and Adaptation

Another important question to consider when studying ePoetry translations is what makes these ePoems translations and not adaptations? Bastin (2001: 8) tells us, “some scholars prefer not to use the term ‘adaptation’ at all believing that the concept of translation can be stretched to cover all types of transformation as long as the main function of the activity is preserved”. In fact when adaptation and translation theories are studied in detail the line blurs between the two.

Bastin (2001: 8) for instance states, “adaptation may be understood as a set of translative operations which result in a text that is not accepted as a translation but is nevertheless recognised as representing a source text of about the same length”. In this sense Bastin (2001: 8) defines adaptation as being made up of translation activities. Translation, in fact, is the result of a complex interplay between human activity and interlingual textual production (Diaz-Diocartez, 1985: 8). If we look at translation as part of a greater process, we can see it is more than simply a textual link between two languages and cultures. With more at stake than vocabulary and tenses, and the nit-picking detail of appropriate and inappropriate word choices and lexical

accuracy. Translation begins with (as all literary interpretation does) reading. The initial reading results in a specific interpretation and reception of a text by the potential translator. The interpretation created is dependent on variable individual cultural signs and meanings of the translator, his or her experiences and signifiers (Diaz-Diocaretz, 1985: 20). Then and only then does the translator begin to write in the new language.

Seleskovich (1977) likewise suggests a theory of sense developed in the context of interpretation, specifically she refers to multi-lingual interpretation, non-literary translation. She suggests that there is a distinction between linguistic meaning and non-verbal sense whereby “non-verbal sense is defined in relation to a translating process which consists of three stages: interpretation or exegesis of discourse, deverbalization, and reformulation” (Salama-Carr in Baker, 2001: 112).

In short, the initial reading by the would-be translator is an interpretation. We read, then interpret, then reproduce in another language, then read and then interpret. Reading itself is always an interpretive process. We are dealing with the translator as reader and then as writer. The translator first of all encounters the ST (Source Text) and then after processing produces a RT (Receptor Text). Translation can be seen to be “the final result of problem solving and sign production of a RT functionally equivalent to a ST, performed by a human being in a given language for a given group of text-receivers” (Diaz-Diocaretz, 1985: 20). We read, then interpret, then reproduce in another language, then read and then interpret, so therefore we can see that interpretation is always involved in both adaptation and translation.

Another similarity is that translations like adaptations can take different forms. As previously stated Holmes (1994: 26-27), outlines different forms of translations: mimetic, analogical, organic and deviant. For example *Jabba Wookie* (Atom Films: Online), a Flash interpretation of Lewis Carroll’s *The Jabberwocky*, is an example of an organic translation. The content is derivative, the words of the poem are the same but it has been transposed with Flash visuals with different characters creating its own unique shape.

Interestingly, Holmes' (1994: 26-27) approaches to form in translation are similar to Geoffrey Wagner's (1975) categories of adaptations. Wagner (1975: 222) outlines three categories of adaptations. *Transposition* – “in which a novel is given directly on the screen with a minimum of apparent interference”. This is similar to Holmes' mimetic or analogical translations. *Commentary* – “where an original is taken and either purposely or inadvertently altered in some respect...when there has been a different intention on the part of the film-maker, rather than infidelity or outright violation” (Wagner, 1975: 224). This is similar to Holmes' organic translation. *Analogy* – “which must represent a fairly considerable departure for the sake of making another work of art” (Wagner, 1975: 226). This is similar to Holmes' deviant translation.

Other writers have suggested comparable categories for adaptation but all echo a similarity to Holmes' translational forms. Michael Klein and Gillian Parker (1981: 9-10) outline firstly “fidelity to the main thrust of the narrative”, secondly retaining “the core of the structure of the narrative while significantly reinterpreting or, in some cases, deconstructing the source text”, and thirdly viewing “the source merely as raw material, as simply the occasion for an original work”. Dudley Andrew (1980: 10) also suggests three categories for adaptations “Borrowing, intersection, and fidelity of transformation”. We can see here a pattern of similarity between the forms of translation and adaptation emerging. This further blurs the lines between the two.

E. The Specificity of Poetry Translation

As the Bible has been translated in many different versions and forms so too can we see in contemporary society games being translated into movies, movies to games, books to films and so on and so forth. The transferring of a piece from one medium to another is not particularly new but with the advent of new technologies and interactivity the rules have changed. Interactivity can prove particularly problematic for adaptations as it can impact elements of traditional storytelling such as character and plot. In most films for example the character has a ‘character arc’ whereby we see the development of the character as a personality or entity through their dealing with specific plot points (Miller, 2004: 47). For example as Bordwell (1986: 18) suggests, the “classical Hollywood film presents psychologically defined individuals who

struggle to solve a clear-cut problem or to attain specific goals. In the course of this struggle, the characters enter into conflict with others or with external circumstances. The story ends with a decisive victory or defeat, a resolution of the problem and a clear achievement or nonachievement of the goals. The principal causal agency is thus the character, a distinctive individual endowed with an evident, consistent batch of traits, qualities, and behaviors”. This focus on character can often be lacking in most games and so when adapting games to films sometimes the result can be films that audiences find hard to connect with as there is less of a connection with character as on a sequence of events (Miller, 2004: 47).

Using character as the main vehicle for adaptations from book to game or movie to game however is less problematic. As Miller outlines when discussing the adaptation of the *Nancy Drew* mystery novels to a contemporary interactive game “Anne Collins-Ludwick, the writer producer of the Nancy Drew games, told me that the move from a linear medium to an interactive one hasn’t impacted the character at all” (2004: 106). What the team at *Her Interactive*, the company that adapts the *Nancy Drew* novels, look for when selecting a book that will lend itself to an interactive approach is “a story that has strong characters, interesting locations, and opportunities for puzzles” (Miller, 2004: 171).

Nonetheless it is also important to consider elements other than character and how these are impacted by a change of media. According to Miller (2004: 48) when moving to or from an interactive medium usually one of the elements most effected can be that of Plot. When turning a movie into a game you must deal with how to convert a single linear story line into a multidimensional interactive experience. When turning a game into a movie you must convey a sense of interactivity and choice that was part of the game without making it seem repetitious. The film *Lola rennt* (1998) is an example of a film that mirrors the game medium while still following a linear path (Miller, 2004: 49). The movie is structured into levels and each time Lola, the main protagonist, tries to overcome obstacles to save her boyfriend. In the first two levels Lola does not succeed but the audience get to know the characters more each time and this strengthens the audience connection. Finally in level three, Lola succeeds and saves her boyfriend then, game over, the end.

However aspects such as plot and characterisation while relevant to games and books are not characteristically elements essential to poetic expression. The theory and work relevant to traditional poetry translation is by definition focused on the questions which have always been central to poetic expression, such as previously discussed Orr's (1996: 270) *temperaments of poetry: Story, Structure, Music and Imagination*.³¹

This research chooses to focus on the creation of ePoetry and as such it is clear from discussions so far that Holmes' theories of poetry translation can provide an appropriate framework in which to analyse the process of creation of ePoems, or as I see it, the translation of analogue poems. Holmes (1994: 9) emphasises the innate difference between translation of prose and poetry due to the ambiguity inherent in poetry as opposed to the more single-minded nature of prose. And it is this chameleon like quality of poetry that makes its translation such a complex task.

The use of language in poetry is very different to the use of it in prose and so when faced with the task of translating poetry as opposed to prose, the translator is left with an infinitely more complicated process. The language in poetry is often denser and more compact than in other literary forms and an inner rhythm or musical mode is an essential characteristic. Poetry relies more specifically on the intricacies of connotation rather than denotation. An often quoted adage is Robert Frost's definition of poetry as "that which is lost in translation" (Connolly, 2001: 170) and that in the translation of poetry it is precisely the poetry that gets left out (France, 2000: 89). However this view equates writing and translating poetry to be mysterious and unexplainable and yet application of Holmes (1994) theory of translation allows to us to move towards a more thorough understanding of this process.

F. Nida's Functional Equivalency

In order to contextualise Holmes' (1994) theories it is necessary to mention Dr. Eugene Nida (1964) who formulated the translation theory of *functional equivalency* translation, also called *dynamic equivalency* which essentially means a translation of meaning for meaning rather than word for word.³² It seeks to express the thought

conveyed in a source text, as opposed to *formal equivalence* which deals with word for word at the expense of natural expression in the target language. Both approaches to translation rely on literal fidelity to the source text. Nida dealt with each sentence as a whole rather than break it down into its separate elements of words (Nida, 1964: 120). The idea of even trying to translate poetry using formal equivalence is unbelievable as, if you were to break a poem down into separate words, it would be all but meaningless, since in poetry true meaning comes from the whole combination and order of structure and content.

Take for instance the phrase ‘a pregnant pause’, to break it up into separate words and translate the word ‘pregnant’ and then the word ‘pause’ it would not adequately encompass the meaning that the phrase viewed as a whole evokes, that of a moment filled with unsaid meanings. We can see the application of this in terms of ePoetry if for example you were to have a line of a poem that is describing a pillow filled with feathers. However the poetic meaning perhaps might be alluding to lightness and freedom, therefore an ePoet may choose to show an image of a bird flying. This would result in a far more effective poetic experience than literally showing an image of a pillow while we hear the line of the poem in a voiceover.

The ePoem *The Dead* (Collins & Delcan: Online) can help illustrate this point. As I discuss in greater detail in Chapter 6 *Meaning Making in ePoetry*, the visuals of this piece are in fact so literal that they take over the creader’s mental visualisation. In this case the animation reflects exactly through visuals the poetic imagery and as a result we are faced with an example of over literal diegesis. The poem speaks of the dead looking down on us and the animation literally shows this, which is too literal for such a strong poetic image, and so reduces the efficacy of the ePoetry piece. A less literal digetic with a greater focus on freedom of interpretation would allow for a greater poetic impact and connection with the creader. This corresponds to a moving away from literal equivalence as a working concept in translation studies. Here again we can see postmodernism at work as Baudrillard’s (1983) theory regarding the simulacra and simulation proposes that simulation “stems from the utopia of the principle of equivalence, from the radical negation of the sign as value” (Baudrillard,

1983: 6). So to Baudrillard and translation, equivalence is a utopian axiom, to truly achieve equivalence is an impossible task.

G. Reiss & Vermeer's Skopos Rule

It is also important to mention Reiss and Vermeer (1984) who further developed translation theory by developing the *skopos* rule. This theory emphasises the purpose of the end result of the translation and as such is relevant to the decision making process of the ePoet. Vermeer (1996: 13) postulates that it is the intended purpose of the target text that determines the translation methodologies and strategies. By this he means that the translator can determine how best to go about their translation by first determining the *skopos* or purpose of the target text. The translator, in this case the ePoet, or “the expert of transcultural communication decides whether a commission can and should be carried out in a specific way (form) and for a specific purpose under the given circumstances or not” (Vermeer, 1996: 31).

Nord (1993: 9) adds to this by purporting that it is the situation in which the target text is received that gives it its function. This gives a greater importance to the target text than Nida's theories, which favour the source text. Snell-Hornby (2006: 20) tells us that this approach “relativizes both text and translation”; there is no one perfect translation as any translation depends on its *skopos* and situation. Interestingly however Reiss and Vermeer's (1984) *skopos* theory is, according to Snell-Hornby (1990: 84), somewhat lacking regarding literary translation due to the special status of text and style in a literary work of art. In fact she recently stated in *Turns of Translation Studies: New Paradigms or Shifting Viewpoints?* (Snell-Hornby, 2006: 54) that Vermeer's theory blends well with James Holmes' theories in respect of intertextual coherence, which replaces Nida's equivalence.³³ I will elaborate further regarding Holmes' (1994: 47) literary intertext (whereby the linkages of a translation to different texts or bodies are charted) later on this chapter.

Despite an adherence to equivalence Nida nonetheless understood how language changes from culture to culture as symbols and meanings are culture specific, for example the use of body parts to express emotion in language changes from culture to culture.³⁴ Nida's translation work was mainly religious and as such he does not

privilege the sign as Chomsky and structural linguists do. Rather he privileges the reaction or response to the sign, in that if his translation elicits the response that God intended then the translation is successful (Gentzler, 2001: 52). This is similar to the translation of poems in that if the ePoem elicits the response in the reader that the translator (in this case the ePoet) intended then the translation is successful.

Dass (1993: 2) gives as an example the common object of a table, an object we would believe to be common worldwide in its roots and connotations. Suddenly the meaning of a common object such as a table is not as straightforward as you might imagine. Because of this, Dass posits that it is impossible to have equivalence in translation because “each word trails various (and perhaps countless) systems of contextual associations and significations. There is an endless play of signifiers” (Dass, 1993: 3).

In Hindi and Panjabi, the word for “table” is *mez*, derived from Portuguese *meza*. The root goes back to the Latin *mensa*, which is etymologically related to the Sanskrit *ma* (“measure”) and to the Greek *métron* (“measure”, “rule”, from which we get out “metre”). Also *mensa* is closely related to *manus* (“hand”) which in turn is associated, by way of the Indo-European root *man-*, *ma*, to German *Mond* (“moon”), Old High German *mund* (“hand”), Old English *mund* (“hand”), and again to the Sanskrit *ma* (“measure”, “moon”). Further there is the American term “mesa” (from the Spanish *mesa*, “table”) which describes a geographical feature common in the South-Western United States, and the Turkish *meze* (probably adopted from the Latin, since Turkish is a non-Indo-European language) which means both “table” and “hors d’oeuvres” the once so transparent table has disappeared in a web of meanings. And of course, “table” itself derives from the Latin *tabula* (“a flat board”, “a plank”, “a board to play on”, “a list”, “an account”) (Dass, 1993: 2).

This too comes into play in ePoetry, for example the use of the image of a table may connote domesticity, work, stability, the mundane or perhaps luxury and modernism depending on the reader. However one advantage of ePoetry is that as all ePoetry is situated online the majority of readers therefore must be coming from a

technologically developed socio-cultural situation. A situation that has access to Internet, cinema and T.V. and therefore due to the effects of convergence (Jenkins, 2006) in contemporary society a teenager in Japan can be watching the same content as one in Ireland. Therefore the space between their cultural understandings, coding and differences decreases. For example if an Irish teenager were presented with the *Facebook* (Online) profile page of a Japanese student they would recognise elements on the page and be able to navigate through general areas such as profile page, photographs and videos for example. While granted they would not be able to understand the detail of the written posts and the words in a foreign language on the buttons, nonetheless a common language of symbols and icons of *Facebook* (Online) will exist.

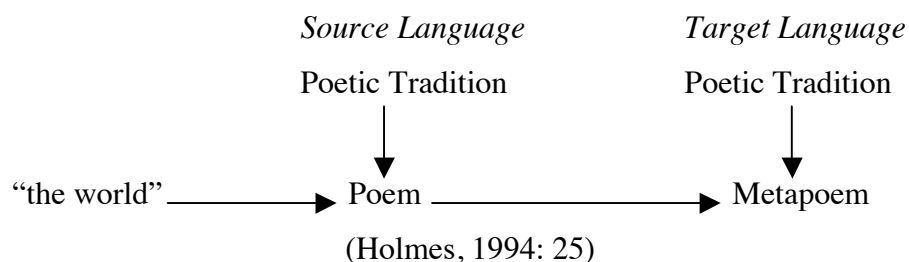
Culturally specific meanings are inherent in virtually all poetic translation and often of course have multiple ramifications for the overall translation.³⁵ We might equally apply these discussions to print and online culture. There are certain shared understandings for example in the online realm that allow all readers no matter where they are situated in the world to understand certain functions. For example, the icon of a house on a web page usually indicates that clicking on it will bring them back to the home page of the web site.

The formal model of translation as a communication process is this: The source (S) encodes a message (M) in a specific language (A) and transmits it to a receiver (R_A). The receiver then acts as a translator and transfers (_{TR}) the message and encodes it into a new language (B) into a new message (M_B) that should be 'equivalent to' the original message (Holmes, 1994: 35).

However the process of transfer, the (_{TR}) has a lot more to it than simply switching from one language to another, and the concept of the final message being 'equivalent to' the source message itself is loaded. "While general theorists of translation have tended to define the central problems of translating in terms of arriving at 'equivalence' those concerned with verse translation are inclined to despair of any such thing" (Holmes, 1994: 10).

Holmes argues where literary translation (such as verse) is concerned Barthes' 'classification' of literature, into those uses of language which speak about objects and phenomenon which are external and speak about language (Holmes, 1994: 23), and the 'secondary language or meta-language' - which makes use of language to communicate something about literature itself - applies (Holmes, 1994: 10). What is interesting here is that this reflects Paul de Man's (1970: 156-159) explanation of Yeats and Abrams metaphors of traditional and modern poetry, the mirror and the lamp, the mimetic and the intellectual.³⁶ This is also similar to Gertrude Stein's different kinds of knowledge: what we know because it is what we see and do, and what we know because it is what we think (Morris, 2006: 1).

So if we view the original poem as falling into the first classification that which speaks of objects and the translation of the poem to fall into the second, a second language or meta-language, thus a poetic translation in this view is a metapoem. This is outlined in the diagram below developed by Holmes (1994).



The metapoem is a "nexus of a complex bundle of relationships converging from two directions: from the original poem, in its language, and linked in a very specific way to the poetic tradition of that language; and from the poetic tradition of the target language, with its more or less stringent expectations regarding poetry which the metapoem, if it is to be successful as poetry, must in some measure meet" (Holmes, 1994: 24-25).

And so this delicate balance of relationships contributes to the quest to attain the most appropriate form for the metapoem. Holmes argues that the question of form is in fact crucial to the process of poetic translation. "The decision regarding the verse form to be used, made as it must be at a very early stage in the entire process, can be largely

determinative for the nature and sequence of the decisions still to come” (Holmes, 1994: 25). As we shall see later on, the same early decisions regarding the “verse form to be used” will be similarly important when translating analogue poem to the eMedia.

The ePoet Mateo Parilla (2009: q11) tells us that his “objective was to communicate the poet’s meaning. Although I think it is impossible to do this because when you read a novel or a poem, you will always get a mental visualization of what you are reading. And this mental visualization of each one is different”. Here Parilla is making a valid point that although the ePoets set out to communicate the poet’s original meaning in their translation this is a nearly impossible task as through the ePoets’ reading they create their own interpretation. This is similar to Holmes’ (1994: 84) model of poetry translation whereby the translator is a reader first by the act of decoding the poem and only then goes on to recode it in its new language or form through translation. Interestingly O’Hagan and Ashworth (2002: 151-152) list similar concepts from Filimore (1977) and Seleskovich (1977). Filimore (1977) proposes semantics of scenes and frames, that is to say if the translation can evoke the same scene in the reader’s mind upon reading the translation then the translator’s use of “frame” is successful (O’Hagan & Ashworth, 2002: 151-152).

H. Holmes’ Levels of Translation

In addition to the problem of form there exists a much wider range of problems that translation faces. In his paper *Rebuilding the Bridge at Bommel: Notes on the Limits of Translatability* (1994: 45-51), Holmes offers as examples the problems of the different syntax of various languages and cultural references such as place names.³⁷ Interestingly Dass (1993: 20) outlines Derrida’s proposition that names cannot be translated, that in fact they point to the necessity and the impossibility of translation. “By its very nature, a proper name does not belong to a language, though and because it lends possibility to that language. Its translation occurs when it allows itself to be inscribed in that language, that is *interpreted* by its [the language’s] semantic equivalent” (Dass, 1993: 22). This demonstrates the vast array of problems and choices and paths that a translator faces. The choices made by the translator at the

start of this process will dictate the path the rest of the poem will take and automatically shut off certain choices and open others (Holmes, 1994: 45-47).

Holmes states (1994: 47) that the problems such as these that arise from the translation of poetry can be set into three levels.³⁸

1. The first level is a poem's *linguistic context*, the significations of the words of the poem draw upon the meanings and context of the specific language used.
2. The second is the *literary intertext*, as the first level has to do with the context of the meanings of words in a specific language so the second plane has to do with the linkages of different texts or bodies of poetry within that literary tradition. This refers to a poem's interaction with imagery and rhythms and themes of other texts within that textual framework. It was Ezra Pound's view that all poetry involved endless links and connections with writers from other times and cultures, reshaped and rethought through his own individualistic process (Bassnett, 2007: 143). Similarly Roland Barthes stated in his 1968 paper *The Death of the Author* that "a text is made of multiple writings drawn from many cultures" (Buescu & Duarte, 2007: 173). In ePoetry not only do we have the potential for links to other literary works but also the visual and aural elements mean that ePoems can potentially reference films, games, animations. For example the background audio could be reminiscent of the *Jaws* movie theme song adding to the suspense and dread in a piece. Alternatively the font used in a piece brings to mind a retro movie poster so adding an extra dimension to the creader's poetic experience. This is similar to the sense in which O'Hagan & Ashworth (2002: 152) speak of the capabilities endowed in the shared mediated communication space afforded by environments (in this instance the ePoem) that allow multimodal and multimedia communications. In this case the sender and receiver can begin to explore each other's understanding of the intended meaning of the message.
3. The third and final level Holmes suggests is a poem's *socio-cultural situation*, as the first level dealt with language and the second level dealt with texts so

this level deals with society and culture. Objects, symbols and abstract concepts will, depending on the specific socio-cultural situation, function differently. The translator has to negotiate all three levels when translating. Therefore this allows for the differences in meaning in poetry from those regions that have a different culture but have a similar language such as France and Quebec for example. In this example the linguistic context of French is similar but the socio-cultural situations are different. Or vice-versa other regions might have a different linguistic context but a similar socio-cultural situation such as within Ireland where both Irish and English are spoken. The socio-cultural situation is the same as it is the same country, people and culture but the linguistic context is different, as there exists the Irish language and the English language. For example an Irish person in Ireland who speaks English could have the same socio-cultural situation as an Irish person in Ireland who speaks Irish but a different linguistic context.

Holmes' view of poetry in relation to these three levels is reiterated by Bassnet (2007: 134) when she states "to arrive at an understanding of literature is to acknowledge that there are relationships between writers and the texts which they produce, relationships which cross temporal, linguistic and cultural boundaries".

According to Holmes (1994: 47) the basic problem that the poetry translator (who has set out to create a text that is closely related enough to the original to be called a translation and that also displays enough of the basic characteristics in the target language to be called a poem) faces, is the fact that the translator not only has to shift the original poem to another linguistic context but also to another literary intertext and socio-cultural situation. The range of choice presented to the translator ranges from the *exoticizing* to the *naturalizing* plane, and the *historicizing* to the *modernizing* plane.³⁹ In these planes a translation can range from being the most different (*exoticizing*) or similar (*naturalizing*) to the source text. As well as this a translation may take a historical (*historicizing*) form or contain historical content as opposed to a modern, contemporary form and/or content (*modernizing*). Similarly Williams (2005: 14) states that the "greatest challenge in poetry translation is to translate in such a way that both the potentiality of meanings and the linguistic nuances of the (in this case)

German poem are available in the poem in the other language. The fact that this may be ultimately unattainable is not an argument for abandoning the translation project”.

Monica Ong is an example of an ePoet dealing with problems such as this is by situating *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online) in a historical context and specific socio-cultural situation. Evidence to support this can be seen in the response: “When I read *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online), I sense a voice of longing, lingering in a time passed. I ended up visiting many antique shops in the rural part of Hudson Valley where I collected vintage postcards. I think there is something about old correspondences, letters and belongings that evoke that same longing” (Ong, 2009: q10). In fact in Ong’s piece *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online) we can see graphics of these same vintage photos, postcards and letters all which contribute towards placing the translation within a specific historical and socio-cultural context. Her response as well as the visuals of the piece itself shows us that her ePoetry translation is situated with the socio-cultural situation of Hudson Valley, 1950 or 1960s rural America in the state of New York.

Similarly Dylan Sheehan in his piece *Ten Doors Closing* (Online) also situates his piece within a specific socio-cultural context, namely that of contemporary London city life. With its shots of the urban underground and characters in contemporary clothing going about modern tasks that most readers can identify with, such as catching the last train at night. Considering that the content of the poem references ancient Greece and the story of Orpheus it has even more impact for the reader. This due to the dynamic tension brought about by the marriage of contraries (as per Orr’s [1996] theory) at play between the contrasts of the old and new, modern and ancient. So in this case if we follow Holmes’ theories, the socio-cultural situation (contemporary London underground) would be charted in the *modernizing* realm and the literary intertext (story of Orpheus in Hades) would be charted in the *historicizing*. Another example *Hunger* (Collins & SamuelChristopher: Online) through the use of contemporary urban scapes for the visuals of the ePoem is also situated within a socio-cultural situation, that of contemporary urban city life in the Western world.

The use of Asian traditional music as the soundtrack in *The Last Day of Betty Nkomo* (Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries, 2009: Online) situates it within a different socio-cultural situation. This is also reflected in the literary intertext as the text is reminiscent of a Japanese haiku, however the linguistic context is modern western English. It seems to be the case in most of the ePoems that the choice of music and or graphics contribute to placing the piece in a socio-cultural situation and increased poetic impact can be arrived at by the combination of the socio-cultural situation, the linguistic context and the literary intertext. However, as in the screen shot below of *A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House*. (Anderton & Robinson: Online), it is not as obvious in this piece what part the music, graphics, or text have to play regarding the socio-cultural situation, literary intertext, or linguistic context. The choice of song is crackly and old but it is impossible to make out the words. The text is modern English so that does give us the literary intertext. The graphics contribute to the same historical feeling by showing some scratches and water damage stains, the visuals show remote rural countryside but more than that is hard to discern.



A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House. (Anderton & Robinson: Online)

I. Holmes' Serial & Structural Planes

Holmes also proposes that when a poem is translated it takes place on two planes, a serial plane and a structural plane. The serial plane deals with translating sentence by

sentence and the structural plane deals with the overview translation “on which one abstracts a ‘mental conception’ of the original text. This mental conception is then used as a kind of general criterion against which to test each sentence during the formulation of the new translated text” (Holmes, 1994: 82). What this means is that when translating a poem it is not enough to translate the individual elements but also the overall sense of the piece.

Evidence of this point can be found in Jenny Williams’ (2005: 13) description of her translation of Sabine Lange’s *In My Dreams* (Williams, 2005: 65). Williams felt it necessary to insert ‘I’ in almost every line despite the fact that in the original text it is only used once explicitly in the first verse and three times in the second verse. The original poem in German uses the perfect tense and sets up a series of actions conveyed by the past participle in each instance. Williams felt it was necessary to exact this change in the translation because in English when she omitted the ‘I’ the result sounded like a series of random actions and the overall sense of dramatic action that the original poem exuded was consequently lost. To apply Holmes concept of the serial plane here it is clear that when translating this poem sentence by sentence Williams ended up with lines that sounded like a series of random actions. However on the structural plane Williams felt that the overview translation needed to transmit a sense of dramatic action and so used this mental conception as a kind of criteria to test each sentence against. When they came up lacking, Williams then went ahead and added ‘I’ to each sentence to give the overall sense of dramatic action she felt was needed as you can see in the first verse of *In My Dreams*, which is quoted below (Williams, 2005: 13).

In my dreams
a road I built
some trees I felled
a tent I pitched
pine cones I gathered
to light a fire some sticks I rubbed
a flock of sheep down from the hills I moved
(Williams, 2005: 65)

Similarly when discussing his translation of Han-shan's *Cold Mountain Poems* Gary Snyder describes a similar use of a structural and serial plane if you view what he refers to as the linguistic level the serial plane and the "picture" as the structural plane.

My method of translation is – first, to understand the poem thoroughly on a linguistic level. Second, by an effort of concentration to project the "picture" of the poem inside my mind, like a movie – to see what's happening. Third, to write down, in my own language, what I see happening. Fourth, to check that back against the original language and be sure they line up (Tsai, 2007: 156).

Likewise there is clear evidence in the ePoet interview responses to link to Holmes' structural and serial planes. The structural plane deals with the overview translation and nearly all interviewees mention reading the poem in its entirety first and then begin to deal with the poem line by line or couplet by couplet. So we start with the structural plane and then move to the serial plane which Holmes states deals with sentence by sentence or what Young-Hae Chang (2009: q7) calls "keyframe by keyframe" or as the ePoet Bill Dorris (2011: q7) suggests "word by word".

For example, many respondents stress the importance of immersing oneself in the poem at the beginning of the process. Such as "The poet sent me the poem. I read it carefully, out loud, repeatedly" (Ong 2009: q4). Also Robinson (2009: q7) "The first thing I did was read the poem that was emailed to me and reflect on the overall themes and my own personal interpretations. Then I isolated each two-line segment and read it several times while writing down any imagery that came to mind". Despite the majority of respondents stating they were trying to put the poet's interpretation across it is also clear that the majority spent some time developing their own interpretation before beginning work. Samuel Tootal (2009: q10) states this explicitly when he tells us "It is entirely our interpretation of the poem" and that he and his partner worked "Line by line" (Tootal 2009: q7). This is a particularly evocative piece

so perhaps this freedom from worrying about the poet's interpretation liberated them and allowed them to concentrate on evoking their interpretation.

To summarise, this chapter established that it is translation as communication as purported by McLuhan (1962) as well as Haitim and Mason (1997) that is referred to in this research. It was also ascertained that it is in fact the ePoet and not the poet who is the translator. Interviews with ePoets confirmed that it is in fact the interpretation of the ePoet that is the message being transmitted rather than that of the poet. This also brought to light the fact that interpretation lies at the core of both adaptation and translation, which are inextricably linked. Holmes' (1994) forms of translation were applied to ePoems and similarities between translation and adaptation theory were outlined when it was seen that translations, like adaptations, can take different forms. Notably discussions from the previous chapter were also built upon when it was found that an ePoem is a simulation not only through the logic of game studies as previously discussed, but also through translation theory which can be seen to stem from postmodern theory.

The specificity of poetry translation was then reviewed towards furthering understanding of the process of translation of a poem to an ePoem. Differing concepts of translation such as Nida's (1964) *equivalence* and Reiss and Vermeer's (1984) *skopos rule* were analysed in order to provide a context of understanding for Holmes' (1994) framework. Through Holmes' (1994) model of translation it was ascertained that many different aspects of a translation can be studied such as, its process, forms, levels, and planes. It is therefore possible to map a translation on each of these different aspects. For instance we can look at the form of a translation (mimetic, analogical, organic, deviant) and then look at its linguistic and literary contexts, as well as its socio-cultural situation. Also it is important to look a translation's serial and structural textual processing planes to truly encompass all aspects of the translation. This is seen to be applicable to both poetry and ePoetry translation. Evidence from ePoet interviews conducted allowed further analysis of the ePoems in light of Holmes' (1994) theoretical framework of translation.

Following on from this in the next chapter, ePoet interview responses are again used, however this time in conjunction with digital media theory to further unlock ePoetic

methods of signification. This is towards the goal of identifying the broad characteristics of ePoetry in order to understand how these in turn help to construct meaning. This is a core issue that lies at the heart of this research.

Chapter 6. Meaning Making in ePoetry⁴⁰

A. Visual Communication

- i. *Ten Doors Closing – Sheehan*
- ii. *American Bible Society’s eMedia translations of The New Testament*
- iii. *The Dead – Collins & Delcan*
- iv. *I didn’t know infants in arms until – Petrosino & Weychert*
- v. *Backbeat – ARCantú*
- vi. *Fallow – Givens & Ong*

B. Hypertext

- i. *In praise of an elevator – Schroeder & Handplant Studio*
- ii. *A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House. – Anderton & Robinson*
- iii. *The Last Day of Betty Nkomo – Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries*
- iv. *The Burning - Dorris & Kuypers*
- v. *Ambient Fish – Bergvall*
- vi. *Concatenation – geniwaite*

C. Narrative

D. Patterns

- i. *When you reach Kyoto – geniwaite & Stefans*

E. Co-authorship

- i. *Arteroids – Andrews*
- ii. *Hunger – Collins & SamuelChristopher*
- iii. *Luz – Glazier*
- iv. *Vniverse – Strickland & Lawson*

To understand how it is that ePoems construct meaning allows a more thorough comprehension of what potentially has changed in human poetic expression with the advent of digital technology. Recognising these affordances also allows us to identify the changing form of the poem and correspondingly begin to understand this new literary artefact. It is clear from discussions found in the preceding chapters that the characteristics of the digital technologies impact significantly on poetic expression, but how exactly? This chapter seeks to answer this question by specifically looking at the process of meaning making in ePoetry. This is achieved by using the ePoetry examples to focus discussions around the characteristics of the digital medium and their impact on meaning making.

Furthermore, as well as drawing on the ePoems and ePoet interviews, this chapter also draws specifically on the areas of media literacy (Kress [2003] and Ong [1982]), film studies (Metz [2004] and Vernallis [2004]), and digital theory (Hayles [2006], Weight [2006], and Strickland [2006]). This follows on from discussions regarding the characteristics of the digital apparatus that were begun Chapter 2 Digital Theory

Literature Review and followed through in succeeding chapters. Holmes (1994) translation theory and Orr's (1996) poetry theory are also drawn on where appropriate in order to further elucidate the relevance of drawing on traditional cultural studies theories as valuable frameworks in which to examine the digital poem as a new artefact. In particular this chapter deals with the areas of visual communication, hypertext, narrative, patterns, and co-authorship. These areas emerged as those that most significantly impact on ePoetic meaning making through interviews with ePoets, an examination of the ePoems themselves, and a review of the relevant literature.

For example the ePoet Claire Allan Dinsmore (Sapnar: 2004) posited that "as a craftsperson especially, real knowledge and control of my medium was a very important element of creation for me" however she states, "I am often haunted, as it were, by the limits the medium entails for me. For instance by the fact that, the work does change upon almost every reading/viewing depending on the venue, the surfer's platform, monitor settings, speakers or lack there of, etc. The artist has NO control over this, and that's rather frightening in my opinion" (Sapnar: 2004).

This is an important factor to consider regarding ePoetry, despite the fact that the ePoem was created on the ePoets' computer with its own specific hardware and software. When accessed online there is no control over the software and hardware (and even wetware as previously cited Morris [2006: 8] terms the human element) that the creader will use and this contributes to the uniqueness of each poetic experience and evidences the malleable nature of the medium. What are at play here are in essence malleable signifiers, units of meaning that can and will change depending on the technological, emotional, and experiential context of the creader.

However the emotional and experiential aspect of malleable signifiers doesn't really differ to traditional print poetry. As even in print one person's interpretation of a poem can differ widely to another's as each individual has their own unique imprinting of emotions, memories, experiences and beliefs. So in this regard it is clear that though the extent of the difference in poetic experience has a greater variation in ePoetry (as we must consider changes not only in the person who experiences it but also in hardware and software) than in analogue poetry, in both cases there does exist

a difference in poetic experience from one individual to another. Even should the same individual read the print poem in different time frames the experience quite possibly will differ due to a difference of coding (this can refer to personality/experiences/memories/language). I know for example a poem I have read in my youth and then reread in later years has given me a whole new depth of meaning on the second reading due to the added experience of personal development of a few years. This reaffirms the appropriateness of Jenny Weight's (2006: 414) arguments to this research as she states that we must consider not only the apparatus (hardware), the algorithm (software) but also the human interpreter (wetware) (Morris, 2006: 8). This also corresponds to what Morris (2006: 8) previously quoted opinion that all poems be they oral, written or digital, draw on the databanks of a culture such as its language, its knowledge archives, its symbol sets, its emotional networks.

As previously mentioned in the introductory chapter, Landow (2006: 13) tells us that when Bush conceptualised the Internet in *The Memex* in his 1945 seminal paper *As We May Think*, he created what are essentially *poetic machines*. That is machines that work "according to analogy and association, machines that capture and create the anarchic brilliance of human imagination". The ePoems that I discuss in this section can be considered as such, and many examples of these digital poetic machines or ePoems can be found on the Internet. In some of these same examples the ePoem allows the creader freedom to explore the poetic environment to such an extent that each person will find their own way through the interactive poetic environment in a non-linear fashion, constructing their own meaning. Others provide non-interactive, linear experiences for the creader. There also exist examples in which a traditional print poem was translated into the eMedia and others in which the poetry was created specifically for it.

In this section I will explore the question of how ePoems construct meaning by considering the characteristics of ePoetry in conjunction with extracts from ePoet interviews. In light of this the characteristics of new media or eMedia as discussed by Bolter and Grusin (2000), Flew (2008), Kress (2003), Lister at al. (2003), Manovich (2001), Miller (2006), Ong (2002), Weight (2006) and Strickland (2006) will be

investigated. In addition to these, other practitioners and theorists whose work is central to the question of both the creation of ePoetry and the potentials for translation of existing poetry into the eMedia, will be incorporated. These discussions take place in order to identify the broad characteristics of the digital poetic machine and how these in turn contribute to the creation of meaning in the ePoetic space.

A. Visual Communication

Gunther Kress (2003: 65) posits that today the screen more than the page is the dominant site of representation and communication and that the logic of the image dominates the semiotic organisation of the screen. Written text now has to look good and text is accompanied more and more by image. Similarly Bolter (2001: 56) proposes that we are now dominated by reverse ekphrasis, this means that the visual is becoming the primary means of communication and words the secondary, instead of ekphrasis, where the words are the primary and the visual the secondary. For example in the ePoetry examples cited in this chapter the creader is nearly always presented with visuals before they are presented with text. This is quite a dramatic change from poetry in print when the reader is always presented with text first. Or even for the listener as they also hear the words first before visualising the imagery. One exception however is concrete poetry whereby the reader is first presented with a visual image or shape before reading the words.

Likewise Strehovec (2010: 71) tells us that in “the digital medium, the word loses its authority and solidity – which characterized its role in printed texts-and it appears as the raw material for numerous transformations and interventions”. Strehovec (2010: 82) discusses digital poetry by placing it within the broader field of new media art and interface culture. He posits that we “bear witness to the birth of a highly visualized, malleable, and flexible word, incorporated into the film of verbal messages” (Strehovec, 2010: 63). It is clear therefore that text in ePoetry does not hold the same power as it does in print. Nonetheless despite this, text in a sense is always present in ePoetry in that words are always present visually and/or aurally. As such, though text might not hold the same power as it does in print, words do. For example the ePoem *The Dead* (Collins & Delcan: Online) consists of an animation, text does not appear visually on screen, however the words of the poem are still present in the form of a

voiceover. I will return shortly to the ePoem *The Dead* (Collins & Delcan: Online) in order to discuss it in greater depth.

Nonetheless, no matter what form the poetic content takes, either aural or visual, Kress (2003: 64) believes it is necessary to focus on each element with equal attention and that all these now need to be treated as signs. Though Kress' position was primarily meant to apply to visual elements it could equally apply to the aural components of ePoetry. The alphabet, according to Kress (2003: 73) "disposes its users towards a view of language which foregrounds sound – language is sound and combinations of sound, meanings can be attached to combinations of sounds and letters can represent sounds. Language is meaning and combination of meaning, meanings can be represented by conventionalised images and sounds can be attached to images" (Kress, 2003: 73). This therefore can support the view that image can represent meaning in a not identical but similar way to language. Kress in fact proposes multimodal literacy, in that he believes "that we can no longer treat literacy (or 'language') as the sole, the main, let alone the major means for representation and communication" (Kress, 2003: 35). Furthermore Kress (2003: 35) observes that "language and literacy now have to be seen as partial bearers of meaning only". In this sense when Kress refers to language and literacy he is referring to words and text, so Kress' is proposing that other modes needs to be considered. In the case of ePoetry not only is there spoken and written language but there is also animation, interaction, visuals, and audio which all contribute to the communication of the message of the poem. This is why in this chapter we will look at what methods, other than text and words, ePoetry employs to create meaning.

Ong's (2002: 115) view regarding how "print both reinforces and transforms the effects of writing on thought and expression" is worth mentioning here as correspondingly digitality can be also be seen to build on this same transformation. Ong (2002: 78) however likens writing to computers in that he purports, when comparing them to orality, to be passive. This can no longer be said to be true; granted in the 1980s when Ong wrote this, computers were viewed as advanced typewriters, this is not what they are today. We can therefore see that, by incorporating Weight (2006) and Aarseth's (1997) technosocial theories (discussed in

Chapter 2), computers are clearly not passive but rather integral contributory members of the cybernetic loop and as such need to be incorporated to any discussion or analyses of electronic content.

It is clear that Kress' (2003) position builds on Ong's (2002: 117) explication regarding the domination of hearing rather than sight in oral times before writing and print reified the word, and hearing dominance yielded to sight dominance (Ong, 2002: 115). Therefore this confirms that technology has always had a transformative impact on poetry. As Ong (1982: 117) states, in oral traditions the impact of the technology of writing reified poetic activity, in this same sense we can now see the computer reifying the digital. For example, as per Ong (2002: 117) poetry became tangible through print, thus an equivalent contemporary application of this theory leads to the conclusion that cyberspace is visualised and therefore tangible through code. In fact Murray (2012: 2) views the digital itself as a medium, "all things made with electronic bits and computer code belong to a single new medium, the digital medium, with its own unique affordances". However despite Murray's proposition regarding the digital medium possessing its own unique affordances, existing media theories are still useful as starting points for ePoetic analysis.

A case in point is Metz's (2004: 65-86) theory of the language of film, as much of the visual communication inherent in ePoetry can be seen to draw on well-known filmic methods. Metz (2004: 71) purports that cinema is not a language system however it can be considered *as* a language in that it serves communicative functions. Metz compares the complexity of the "shot" in film to an equivalent complexity of the "word" in language. Yet he proposes that it is more appropriate to compare the shot to a "statement" in that "it is already the result of an essentially free combination, a 'speech' arrangement" (2004: 70). Similarly in ePoetry much of the visual methods used aim to recreate the filmic "shot", the movement of the camera is artificially recreated in order to draw on the "procedures of filmic language – the close-up, the pan shot, the tracking shot, parallel montage, and interlaced, or alternative, montage" (Metz, 2004: 67). For instance a common technique in Flash animation is to make an object change in size from small to large in order to mimic the movement of a camera zooming in. When this happens there is in fact no distance being covered merely the

computer changing the size of an object, yet due to audiences' familiarity with the techniques of film, the effect is instantly recognised as a 'close up' or a 'zoom in' shot.

In this manner we can see that in many of the ePoetry examples visuals and motion graphics have often come to take on the communication functions of language and evidence from the interviews supports this. For example the ePoet Monica Ong (2009: q3) states, "I think I brought a visual space to the words, a sort of setting in terms of landscape - not a literal one but perhaps one that taps into the reader's landscape of memory". Also, "What is the emotional space, what is the voice longing for? That question depends on the reader, so I just incorporated images that would make the question more compelling, rather than trying to answer it." (Ong, 2009: q11). Samuel Tootal (2009: q11) tells us, "the words and structure are unaltered from the reading that we received by Billy Collins. We've obviously given it other levels of subjective meaning by virtue of the fact that we set it to sound design and images". So here we see that sound design and images are playing the same role that language plays, that of communicating meaning. A noteworthy example of this is the previously mentioned ePoem Ten Doors Closing (Sheehan: Online).

**i. Ten Doors Closing – Sheehan
(Video/Animation Linear ePoetry)**



Ten Doors Closing (Sheehan: Online)

Ten Doors Closing (Sheehan, *Ten Doors Closing*: Online) falls into the category of *Video/Animation Linear ePoetry*. It was a written piece first and then the ePoet who was also the original poet translated it into eMedia (Sheehan, 2009: q2). This piece, a video piece, begins with the visuals and sound effects of a train which are particularly relevant to this poem whose words have a strong rhythm. It opens to the rhythmical beat of a train to the visuals of a moving escalator. A soft woman's voice gently speaks the word of the poem as we see a couple in a passionate farewell embrace at the entrance to an underground station. The man reluctantly breaks the clinch and runs downstairs, speeding and jumping to try and catch the last train at 00:31 hours. The visuals are urban night-time, with a rushed tempo to correspond with the man rushing to catch his train and train station security camera video is used to tell the story once the protagonist enters the underground.

As outlined in Chapter 4 *Poetry Transformations* the ePoem *Ten Doors Closing* (Sheehan: Online) is based on Orphic poetry, which has a hexameter, a rhythm of six.

In this ePoem the references to the underworld are visually translated into the London underground, which echoes Orpheus' adventure in the underworld. The poem tells of love and desire and the video and audio elements of the piece help us to understand the original meaning of the poem in our own context. This is done through video shots of the modern underworld of the underground commuter train. This confirms Adalaide Morris' (2006: 17) belief that we can see that "the virtual space of the image is transformed from an impersonal cognitive schema...into an immediately graspable, profoundly personal experience". In this case the modern context of the video imagery allows the audience to engage in a way that they might not have even considered if they had just read the piece or even simply heard the poem being read aloud. The contemporary setting allows the reader to more directly relate experiences from their own life.

Ten Doors Closing (Sheehan: Online) is an example of eMedia visually helping us to discern the intended interpretation of a poem, which in this case is made even stronger as the author is also the director of the piece. The poetic experience is reinforced through audio, text, graphics and video. Communication therefore in this ePoem can also be seen to take place visually. By allowing the reader to not only hear the words of the poem but also to see the visuals of the London underground and a couple's embrace the ePoet is communicating not only aurally but also visually. The pace of the editing, quick short shots as one of the main protagonists rushes to catch the last train, also visually communicates a sense of urgency to the reader. This is similar to how Melo e Castro (2007: 176) asserts that the poetic function of language "emphasizes the message and its materials and structure. Thus the importance of phonetic values in oral poetry, of scriptural values in written poetry, and of visual values in visual poetry, and of technological values when it is the case of the use of the computer and video for the production of poetry".

The ePoet Nick Robinson's (2009: q1) response relating how in his case, "the poem has very strong and dark undertones and I was able to highlight them in a visually-stimulating way" is significant. This can be seen to elucidate Clive Scott's point in *The Spoken Image: Photography and Language* (1999: 13) when he "considers the capacity of the photograph to match, complement and even supplant language in

narrative enterprises”. Robinson’s response demonstrates that he was able to communicate and draw out the tones or themes of the poem through visuals; again this brings forward the concept of a visual language.

Also Robinson (2009: q9) tells us, “I decided pretty early on that I wanted to keep the art more subdued and let with [*sic*] the words speak for themselves but for some of the frames I felt they needed a little accent”. Interestingly here Robinson is even using terminology that we usually associate with language such as “accent” when discussing visuals, this helps confirm Gunther Kress’ (2003: 65) view that the logic of the image dominates the semiotic organisation of the screen.

In fact as Ong (2002: 98) states, “visual presentation of verbalized material in space has its own particular economy, its own laws and structure”. This is exemplified when Robinson carries on to outline how he used colour to emphasise a particular line which was a favourite of the poets. “Her favorite line was : *of a glittering scream, hangs an egg. Icy* And I tried to add some emphasis so it is the only frame that has a word as an object and this is the first frame that you notice any Flashes of red which build to the end so it offers something pretty different to what the reader has seen at this point” (Robinson, 2009: E-mail). He also states that, “I treated each line as a “frame” that I wanted to stand on its own as an appealing visual” (Robinson, 2009: q7), this clearly shows Robinson using visuals for one Flash frame to communicate visually a line of text from the poem.

Furthermore the ePoet Ong (2009: q1) mentions the “artistic experience” thus this indicates that ePoetry is both art and a poetic experience, in other words it is both visually and poetically communicative. Monica Ong (2009: q7) also mentions that, “when I read a poem, I see what scenes come into mind. Then I group the words into a set number of ‘scenes’ and then build the movie based on the scenes”. This can further emphasise the view that the textual words are being translated into visuals that will communicate to the creader in the same way that the text of the poem did, in other words the ePoems are communicating through visual language.

Strickland (2006, Online) in her paper *Writing the Virtual: Eleven Dimensions of E-Poetry* asks the question, “is there a language without any native speakers, an all-border-crossing language”? She proposes that some would argue for a visual or a programming language to fill that role, and here in ePoetry I believe we can see evidence of a language such as this.

Kress (2003: 140) supports this when he describes the move in the current landscape of communication from telling the world to showing the world, and a move to the dominance of meaning attached to image and the medium of the screen (Kress, 2003: 1). The ePoetry translator then can use this vocabulary to create a piece in which the ePoet can anticipate potential interpretation. However no matter what, every creader’s experience will be unique. Not surprisingly much of the ePoetry available online relies on the use of motion graphics or video and audio which convey narrative much more directly, such as with less granularity and in larger chunks, than is common to the generative poetry examples I discuss later on. This reliance on movement (both visual and aural) in the creation of ePoetry is in interesting contrast to the reliance on collage and montage in much of eMedia art. As Mirzoeff suggests “digital media and digital art is increasingly dominated by the aesthetics of collage and montage” (1999: 15). This is perhaps indicative of the greater potential for nuances in movement (whether heard or seen) to capture the nuances inherent in poetry (whether translated into or created) within the eMedia. What is interesting here is that this is possible due to the uniqueness of the digital media, that is their mutable nature. As such movement as visual effect can be seen to be a communicative dimension at play in ePoetry.

With regards the visual expression of language Kluszczynski in his paper *Arts, Media, Cultures: Histories of Hybridisation* (2005) discusses Lev Manovich’s concept of Net Art which he views as a main component of eMedia art, the digital, interactive art of communication. Digital, interactive, poetry clearly falls into this realm of new art. Kluszczynski (2005: 126) cites Simon Biggs’ idea of the potential of the Net leading us to an accelerated localization of creative activity in relation to socio-linguistic space. The ePoetry examples, which we find on the Internet, are an example of such creative activity in relation to the socio-linguistic space. They contain creativity in which visual expression has often come to take on the communication functions albeit at an implied, implicit and often non-verbal level. At this communication level

meaning and symbolic complexity is both refined and enhanced by evocation of wider cultural discourses associated with the likes of film genres, artistic movements and advertising. This is similar to how Metz (2004: 67) purports film operates, through semiotics of denotation and connotation. Communication not only takes places on the denotive level but also on the less exact connotative level.

ii. American Bible Society's eMedia translations of The New Testament

For example the American Bible Society's (A.B.S.)⁴¹ eMedia translations of the New Testament, though not examples of ePoetry they are eMedia translations. As such they are relevant to this research in that they demonstrate similar characteristics to those of ePoetry namely that of a visual expression of language. As well as this, bible translations are often an interesting starting point as examples of translations due to the fact that much translation theory stems from the practice of the translation of the Bible.⁴² In this instance New Testament parables were translated into music videos and an interactive web site, *The New Media Bible* (A.B.S.: Online) with interactive games, music, video, articles and text. The parable of *The Resurrection* (A.B.S.: Online) was provided as a short film on the web site, which renders the twentieth chapter of the Gospel of John into visual form. The video uses a combination of a modern day setting with strong emotional imagery such as heavy rain on a window to mirror the grief and tears of the characters at the beginning of the piece as they mourn their loss. Then as the emotional voice of the narrator tells of the realisation and belief in the resurrection by Mary, the imagery used becomes more optimistic and brighter with sunshine reflecting the now smiling faces of the protagonists. This video production's imagery mirrors the emotional meaning of the *New Testament* parable while providing the viewer with the original story read aloud and emotionally reiterated with powerful visual imagery.

The Neighbour (A.B.S.: Online) tells the story of the *New Testament* parable of *The Good Samaritan* and contains a cast of Anglo, African-American and Hispanic children. These videos target a mainly young American market, and so the choice of medium and cast reflects the preferences and life experiences of this target audience. This provides greater scope for identification with emotional experience. *The Neighbour* (A.B.S.: Online) is situated in a web site where you are given the options

to both *Travel* and *Explore* the parable of *The Good Samaritan*. In the *Travel* section you can read and view the parable as well as being able to explore the background behind it. In the *Explore* section you can play a mix and match game where, when you correctly piece together pieces that form the image of a character from the video piece, you are then given additional information on that character.

The strengths of these pieces lie in the use of modern symbols and imagery that make up the contemporary language of their target audience and the use of culturally relevant symbols. Rather than make the target audience learn a new language, the A.B.S. have taken what already exists and translated this into a modern form. The result is a form and language that a contemporary audience understands to such an extent that even the younger viewer (being so fluent in televisual language) understands that rain dripping down a window pane is the visual form of a pathetic fallacy and simply denotes great sadness.

Dr. Robert Hodgson the director of the A.B.S.'s Research Center of Scripture and Media said of the pieces "young people love the MTV style...but parents and pastors weren't comfortable with it" (Schaeffer: Online). Here we can clearly see that the "MTV style" to which Dr. Hodgson refers is in essence a visual language, in which the "young people" were fluent but which "parents and pastors" were unable to understand. The ePoetry translator can never know for certain how the reader will interpret the piece but certain emotional reactions can be anticipated in the selected target audience through a fluency in audio-visual language; a contemporary language in which most of the world is literate but perhaps not aware of it. What we see therefore at play in these examples of visual communication is an affective response through the immediacy of the real and symbolic rather than a distanced logical reflective gaze. This is a language of direct feelings and emotion rather than distant logic and thought. Our fluency in this type of language is, thanks to exposure to TV, cinema, radio and the Internet from an early age, quite developed. An advertisement for a car shows unpopulated landscapes, long winding open roads, bright airy colours and grandiose background music. We know this means freedom, liberty, and independence (presuming of course we buy the car). A dark screen, with fuzzy white text and eerie music, equates darker constricted emotions and negative aspects.

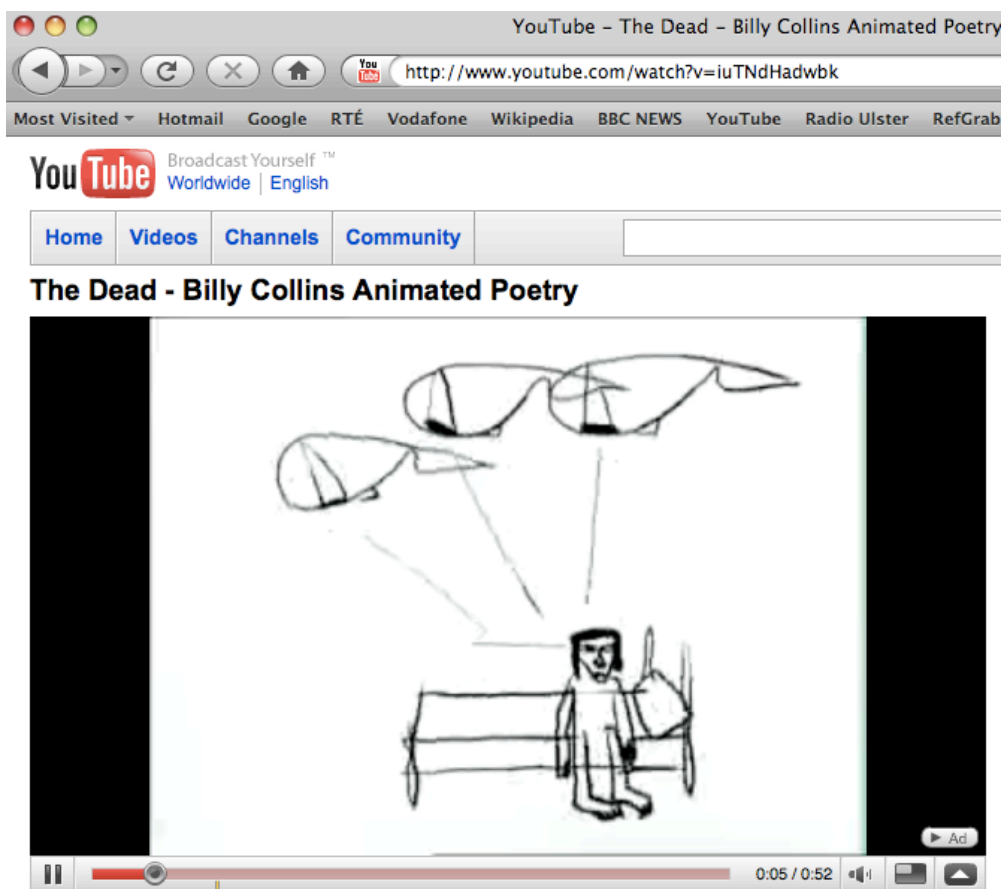
Similarly in music videos you will see repeated imagery which is played simultaneously to the repeated verse or chorus of the song, often for this part of the song as the singer sings the chorus we see repeated motion graphics and or imagery to mirror the pattern of the language of the verse. We are used to this type of visual language and are often not even aware of our fluency in it.

Vernallis (2004: 33) tells us for instance that the use of camera angles can tell us a lot about the visual language of music videos, for example low-angle shots are used extensively in music videos because they replicate the relationship of the audience and performer in a concert. These shots place the performers in a position of strength and authority thereby imbuing them with increased sexual charisma, something the target audience would be familiar with if they attended concerts. With reference to the target audience of music videos it would be safe to say that the large majority of them would also have attended music concerts. Similarly in ePoetry the creader is fluent enough in visual language through exposure to existing media such as music videos or ads on TV to know that dark muted colours and graphics for example can convey a sombre tone. Conversely bright, colourful graphics conveying a lighter, happier more playful tone to a piece.

iii. The Dead – Collins & Delcan (Video/Animation Linear ePoetry)

The Dead (Collins & Delcan: Online) is an interesting example of an ePoem using visual language in that it contains animations that, though of a high quality, perform their job almost too well. The visuals in this piece distract the audience from the actual content of the poem; they are in fact so literal that they take over the creader's mental visualisation for the poem. In this case the animation reflects exactly through visuals the poetic imagery and as a result the animation does not provide anything extra that would not be achieved by the creader simply closing their eyes and listening to the audio of the poem. The poem speaks of the dead looking down on us and the animation literally shows this, which is too literal for such a strong poetic image, and so reduces the efficacy of the ePoetry piece. In this instance the visual language of the ePoem is communicating the exact same literal message as the audio, resulting in (as

mentioned in Chapter 5 (*ePoems as Translations*) over literal diegesis. The two communicative channels should complement, not cancel out, each other.



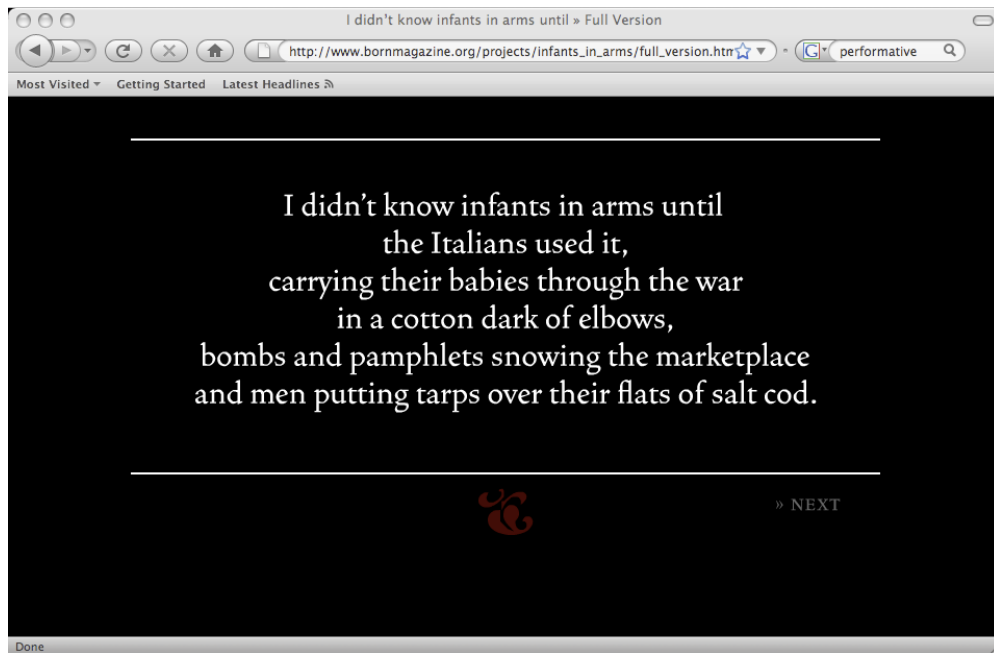
The Dead (Collins & Delcan: Online)

So to recapitulate, in terms of meaning-making in ePoetry from discussions so far, we can see that image is afforded as much communicative value as text, as per Kress (2003: 64). As already stated an affective response is evoked in readers through the immediacy of the real and symbolic rather than a distanced logical reflective gaze. Furthermore we can see that movement as visual effect is a communicative dimension of ePoetry, an ePoem therefore can communicate textually, visually, and aurally. Yet, as we can see from the examples we have just looked at, in order to maximise the communicative value of an ePoem and so maximise the potential affective response in a reader (which in turn heightens the impact of a piece) each of the elements should complement each other. An ePoem, in which for example a reader is presented with the text of the poem in conjunction with a voiceover reading out the exact words of the text combined with images also literally animating the exact imagery of the text, will lead to a piece that falls short of the desired poetic impact. The different strands

of communication should provide instead “a marriage of contraries” which results in a dynamic tension, as suggested by Gregory Orr (1996) in his paper *Four Temperaments and the Forms of Poetry*. As already outlined in Chapter 4 Orr (1996) proposes four categories, or as he calls them *temperaments* to poetry. These are: Story, Structure, Music and Imagination. Orr (1996: 270) proposes that the dynamic tension of a poem is brought about through a marriage of contraries that occurs through the contrast of each of these temperaments and it is this aspect of Orr’s theory that echoes meaning-making in ePoetry. Notably in this we can also see reflected Lévi-Strauss’ structuralist position, in which he proposes that all meaning-making depends on oppositions or conflict (Branston & Stafford, 2010: 49). It would seem therefore that the same applies to poetry and thus ePoetry. I discuss this and the implications of such in relation to poetry and ePoetry in more detail in Chapter 4 *Poetry Transformations*.

iv. I didn’t know infants in arms until – Petrosino & Weychert (Interactive ePoetry)

I didn’t know infants in arms until (Petrosino & Weychert: Online) is a Flash piece that requires a click to next in order to make the next line of the poem appear. Though in its original text form the poem is effective and powerful, the ePoetry version is so due to the necessity of the creader having to click their mouse frequently. The creader is required to click not only after each verse but also after each line. The font is white on a black background and each time the creader clicks the next line fades on to the screen, this takes place for each verse along with background audio and sound effects. To proceed, the creader must click the next button on the bottom right hand of the screen after each line. The animation involved is simple, using what basic motion tweening and alpha channel fades for each line of text. The necessity however of the creader having to click so many times to proceed in fact breaks the poetic flow and rhythm of the piece. The creader must lift their eyes from reading the text of the ePoem and move them to the next button to ensure the cursor is clicking in the right place.

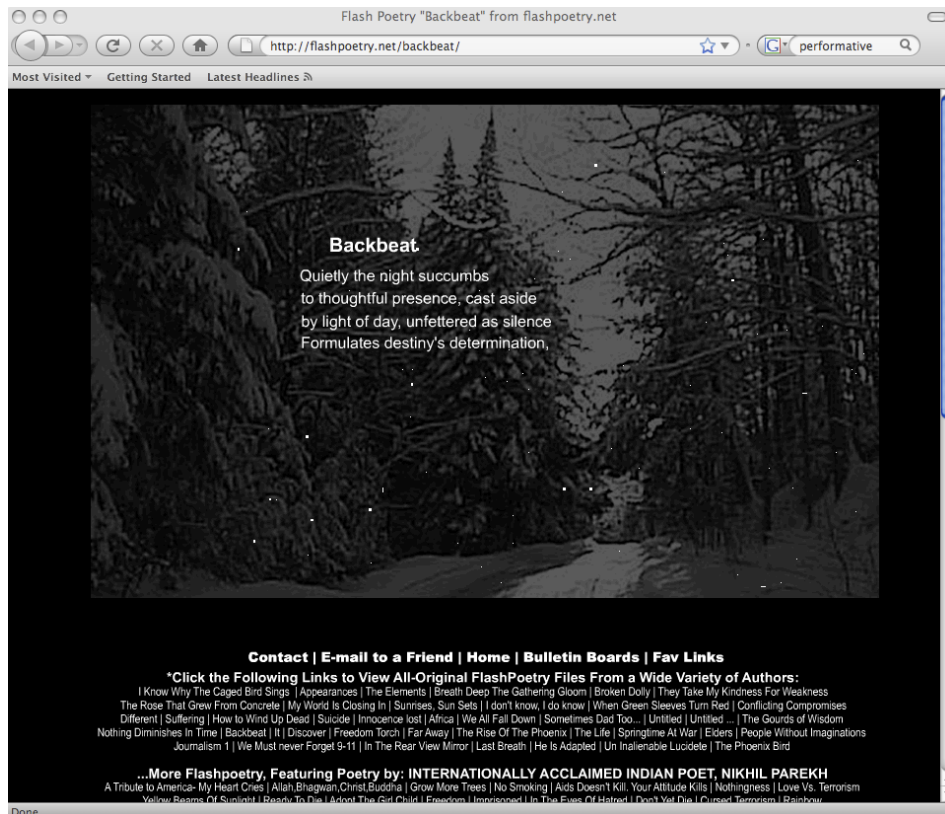


I didn't know infants in arms until (Petrosino & Weychert: Online)

v. Backbeat – ARCantú

(Video/Animation Linear ePoetry)

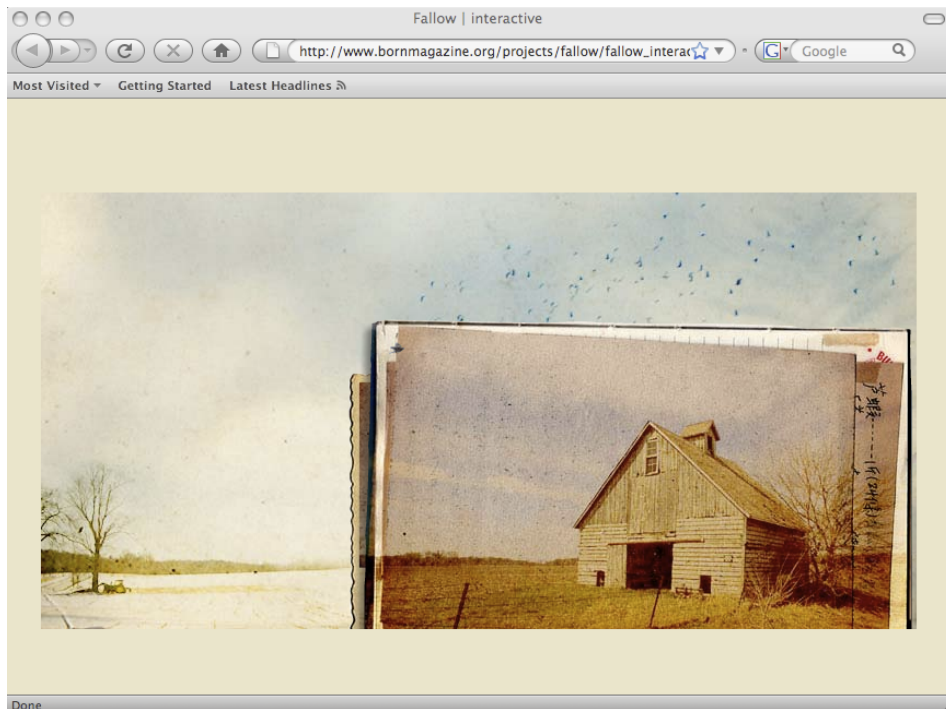
By way of contrast *Backbeat* written by ARCantú (2008: Online) is another online Flash piece. It uses very basic *Flash* techniques, but the eMedia poetic experience is more effective as the rhythm of the piece is not broken by requiring the reader to click a button or otherwise interact apart from a click to play. The words instead fade slowly onto the screen line by line requiring no interaction on the part of the reader. The background is a black and white photograph of trees and a snowy path, flecks of snow fall down the screen generated by Flash ActionScript while ambient background music plays as the lines fade onto the screen. The poetic magic, the immersive illusion of the poetic world is not broken by the need for technological interaction.



Backbeat (ARCantú: Online)

vi. Fallow – Givens & Ong (Interactive ePoetry)

Fallow (Givens & Ong: Online) is an ePoem from *Born Magazine* (Online) and as such is a result of collaboration between a Poet and ePoet although input from the poet was minimal (Ong 2009: q2 & q4). It falls into the category of *Interactive ePoetry*. Monica Ong's eMedia translation of Rebecca Givens' *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online) allows the creader freedom to explore the poetic environment to such an extent that the creader will find his/her own way through the interactive poetic environment in a non-linear fashion. For instance, it is possible for the creader to miss a part or even to repeat the same part over and over. The creader is presented with what is essentially an interface cleverly disguised as elements of the world created by the poem. The creader can click on old photographs or birds in the sky to be brought to the next poetic piece.



Fallow (Givens & Ong: Online)

It is clearly possible to create eMedia translations that allow the reader freedom to create his/her own poetic experience with interactivity within the existing source text, such as in the example of *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online).⁴³ Curiously the use of such interactivity is not at all common among existing eMedia translations. More common is the use of interactivity simply to control the pace of presentation of the poem, as in *I didn't know infants in arms until* (Petrosino & Weychert: Online), a use of interactivity which inevitably breaks the rhythm of the poem. Rhythm is of course an integral component of any poem; so breaking that rhythm by pausing the piece until the user takes action can result in a disjointed poetic experience. The very act of distraction, inherent in the process of interaction via mouse or key, disrupts the rhythmic experience of the original.

Pierre Lévy however posits that interactivity “has more to do with finding the solution to a problem, the need to develop new ways to observe, design, and evaluate methods of communication, than it does with identifying a simple, unique characteristic that can be assigned to a given system” (Lévy, 2011: 228). Helen Kennedy (2011: 206) on the other hand observes that if you understand gameplay as cybernetic, “then issues of interactivity and player agency are recast in terms of networks and flows that are

entirely interdependent”. This is relevant to this research as the manner in which the creader interacts with the ePoem can be similar to gameplay in that the creader manipulates objects in a created digital world to proceed. While both positions have merit what is clear is that two-way communication, a communication loop between apparatus and creader is integral to effective and engaging interactivity. The traditional author as sender, text as message and reader as receiver relationship shifts focus to (as previously cited) a cybernetic intercourse between those involved in the process (Aarseth, 1997: 22). A fusion of human, machine and content whereby the poetic experience is similar to gameplay in the sense that it is a cybernetic loop (Kennedy, 2011: 206). We can see how this clearly differs from the traditional one directional, author – reader relationship of analogue media.

B. Hypertext

However in order to examine interactivity in any depth we must also look at the main technological structure of the Internet and that is hypertext. *Hyper* is from the Greek word which means above, beyond or outside and hypertext is defined as a work that is made up of units of material which each contain paths or links to other units of material (Landow, 2006: 3).

Hypertext is viewed as the meeting place of European literary theory and American cyberculture theory (Lister et al, 2003: 28). James Holmes (1994) a prominent poetry translation theorist (whose theories were discussed in Chapter 5) suggests charting a poem by its literary intertext, in other words, charting the linkages of different texts or bodies of poetry within that literary tradition (Holmes, 1994: 47). This retains echoes of a linking hypertext system whereby a translation in the eMedia could literally link to other bodies within that literary tradition. Hypertext moves us away from a linear approach to information and communication towards a multi-linear approach, with each node of text carrying within it links to other nodes. The eMedia are the perfect modern vehicle to apply a post-modernist approach to translation. We leave behind rigid pre-ordained translations to find a more fluid, lexically liberated text with a confusing, but extensive, network of meanings, signifiers and signs through which the creader navigates creating a personal path that echoes the core meanings of the source text. Glazier (2002: 56) suggests that if “the electronic text is mutable, then a theory of mutability must replace theory of the “embalming” of the text”. Yet according to

Saussure “in language there are only differences” (Neal, 2007:122) therefore analogue poetry can also be mutable albeit to a lesser extent. This is because analogue text also contains signifiers that change depending on who, where, and when the reader is reading. However the mutable potential of the analogue is not as extended as it can be in the digital because of the “expanded field” (Krauss, 1998) afforded by interactivity. In fact Glaziers’ (2002) book *Digital Poetics* purports that the very nature of writing has changed in the digital medium. “Electronic writing is not simply the e-equivalent of paper writing, because writing that is electronic has different properties than writing that is on paper” (Glazier, 2002: 84). This is never more obvious than when dealing with hypertext.

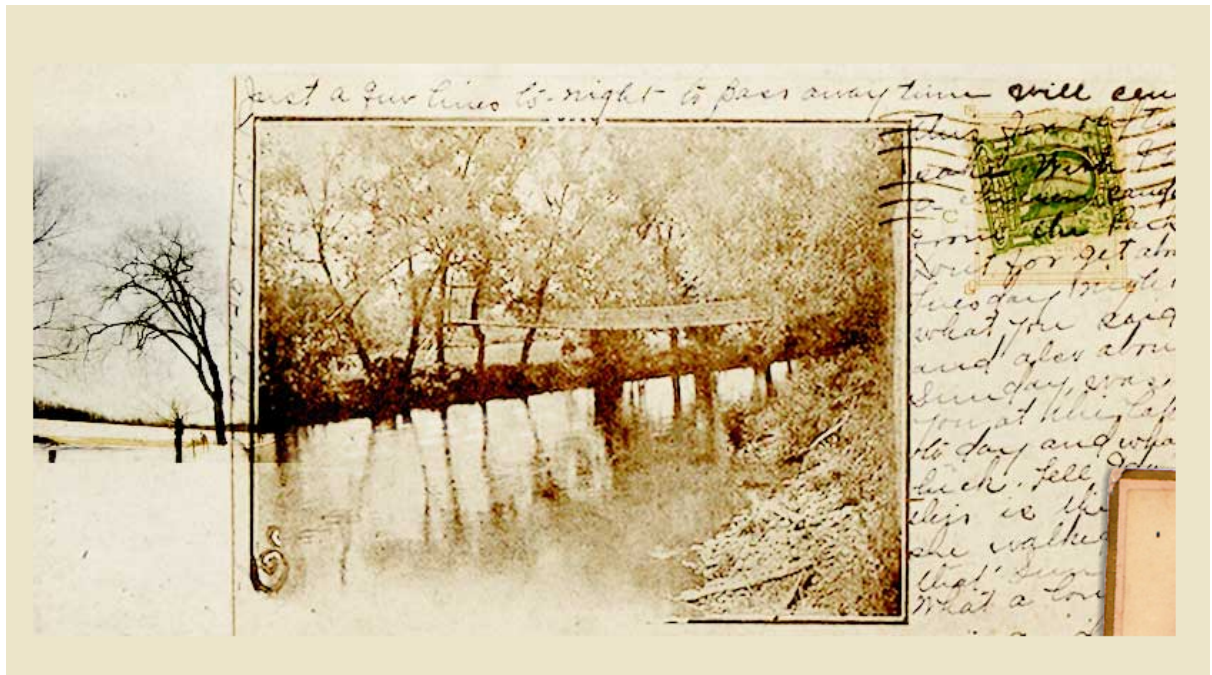
The post-structural literary criticisms of Barthes (1970), Derrida (1972) and Foucault (1969) are embodied in the form of hypertext in that all texts are seen to be part of a web of textuality. Said (1978: 673) in his paper *The Problem of Textuality: Two Exemplary Positions* discusses the contrasts between textual criticisms that claim there is no *hors texte* (outside of text), as per Derrida (1972), and those that claim a plurality of texts, as per Foucault (1969). In this sense we can see hypertext as a system that literally allows linkages to other texts. We can in fact compare this to how James Holmes (1994) views the translation of a poem, or metapoem, which he states is a “nexus of a complex bundle of relationships converging from two directions: from the original poem, in its language ...and from the poetic tradition of the target language” (Holmes, 1994: 24-25).⁴⁴ Correspondingly Sloane (2000: 20-21) argues that computers mirror a number of post-structural theories and that they also anticipate other theories and realise new structures that correct and extend many post-structuralist notions. Sloane further mentions that the work of “Bolter, Landow and Joyce, and others has rightly identified many points of correspondence between post-structuralist theories and hypertextual practices” (Sloane, 2000: 20-21).

Morris (2006: 7) however states, “unlike hypertext narrative, the digital poem does not normally depend on lexia or blocks of semi-autonomous text joined by hot links into variable user-driven configurations”. Rather digital poems are joined by hot links to pieces of video, text and/or audio. Nonetheless no matter what the end form of the digital poem, be it hypertext, video, or animation, it is undeniable that interactivity

alters the entire spectrum of poetic potential even if we simply limit ourselves to the question of words, letters and punctuation as in traditional poetry. With interactivity (since any bit of digital data can be assessed and reassessed at will via appropriate programming with or without reader interaction) we now have the potential, for example, for extended or repeated iteration, emphasis or intonation of rhythmic cadence in the words. Similarly there is the potential for spatial displacement and reorientation of words in relation to each other, or for that matter in relation to evocative visual or aural assets or referencing linked lyrics, prose, in multiplicity of manners. For example we could bring Holmes' arguments regarding translation to life on the screen by visually charting the linkages of different texts or bodies of poetry within (the relevant) literary tradition (or any other for that matter) in relation to the poem on screen (Holmes, 1994: 24-25).

Monica Ong (2009: q5) talks of using interactivity to "signal" the viewer but in doing so "it is important to be invisible" (Ong, 2009: q16) and not get in the way of the words with bells and whistles "just because you can do it doesn't mean you have to" (Ong, 2009: q16). However though Ong's piece *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online) contains considerable interactivity she is not concerned and states, "I enjoy non-linear narrative because it mirrors the way we experience our memories. We make visceral or emotional connections between things, traveling [*sic*] from one place to the next in a more instinctual way. I think there is a kind of freedom in that, not only for the artist, but in terms of a sense of possibility the audience is experiencing" (Ong, 2009: q9). She also comments, "I think it was the interactive interface that was most challenging... I really had to look for ways to signal the viewer to explore the space with their mouse without being too vague and without being too ambiguous" (Ong, 2009: q5) and it's "really important to give the audience room to participate. It's not about the artist or the poet, but about creating a space for the viewer/user to be transported to" (Ong, 2009: q8). Here we can see from Ong's comments that the use of interactivity in the ePoem allows the reader to explore the poetic space in a manner not possible in the original print poem and this in turn allows for a more personal evocative poetic experience.

For example in the screen shot below from *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online), in the bottom right hand corner the edge of an old photograph is visible.



Fallow (Givens & Ong: Online)

To progress within the ePoem the creader must click and drag on the visible edge of old photograph to bring it to the centre of the screen as in the next screen shot.



Fallow (Givens & Ong: Online)

Lines from the poem fade onto the screen and then fade away. In the screen shot above you can see the edge of another old photograph peeking out. The creader may click on this if they wish, however in time it too fades away along with the lines of text and the photograph in the centre. As such if the creader does not click/drag that second old photograph it fades away. When this happens another edge of an old photograph appears in the bottom left corner that the creader must click on to proceed, as per the screen shot below.



Fallow (Givens & Ong: Online)

The interactivity apparent in *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online) is subtle and non-intrusive. It allows elements to fade in and out rather than appear on the screen with a bang after each mouse click as in *I didn't know infants in arms until* (Petrosino & Weychert: Online). Some elements of interactivity are essential to progress others are not, this all contributes to maintaining the illusion of the world of the poem, cocooning the creader within.

Regarding interactivity Nick Robinson (2009: q12) also mentions, “Another thing that really excited me about this format was that a sense of suspense could be created by adding this button and not allowing someone to simply ‘flip through’ the piece”. We can see from this comment how an interactive button can add an extra dimension to the poetic experience that didn't exist before in its original text form. One must also continuously bear in mind that when many of these ePoets created their ePoems the

technical capabilities and possibilities for interactive experiences in Flash were much less than exist now. The speed at which these eTechnologies develop must never be forgotten and as such this must be remembered when reading respondents answers such as Robinson (2009: q12) who outlines what now would be considered very basic interactivity such as click to go to next screen.

Mateo Parilla (2009: q5) however believes that interactivity can be a way of “driving the user way [*sic*] to read the poem in a correct way” and that restricting the interactivity as he did to linear interactivity with the elevator buttons in *In praise of an elevator* (Schroeder & Handplant Studio: Online) was important because the creader must “read the poem in the right order. If not, the meaning was altered” (Parilla, 2009: q9). In this case Parilla is using interactivity not to create a new poetic experience but in fact to recreate the original textual poetic experience as faithfully as possible. This can be linked to Holmes’ (1994: 26-27) *analogical* form of translation whereby the translation seeks functionally to parallel the form in the original’s poetic tradition. The ePoem is not *mimetic* (an exact copy) as it is no longer a written poem however it is seeking to imitate the original poem so it cannot be classed as an organic (no resemblance whatsoever to the original) or extraneous translation (which bears little or no resemblance to the original apart from content).

Interestingly Miller (2004: 82-83) discusses the disruptive influence of interactivity in digital entertainment, a fixed sequence of events she tells us, is impossible when you offer users the freedom of choice. This is a challenge for digital storytellers or even in this case ePoets to overcome. The potentials of interactivity impact most strongly on narrative, as the more choice offered to a creader means that the ePoet has less control over the specific order of events the creader will experience. The ePoem *In Praise of An Elevator* (Schroder & Handplant Studio: Online) is an appropriate example to demonstrate how the ePoet forwent the vast potentials of interactivity in order to better control the poetic experience.

**i. In praise of an elevator – Schroeder & Handplant Studio
(Interactive ePoetry)**

I came across this ePoem on the web site *Born Magazine* (Online) and like all ePoetry available on *Born Magazine* (Online) it is a translation of a print poem and was developed through collaboration between a print poet and an ePoet. The poem is told from the point of view of a janitor who works in an old building transporting corpses for medical research in an elevator (Parilla, 2009: q2 & q8). Once the home page has loaded the reader has the choice of selecting the static print HTML version or the interactive Flash version.⁴⁵ To proceed in this piece the reader must press quite old fashioned looking buttons, similar to those we might find on an old TV or elevator. So though the piece is created with contemporary eTechnology it still retains echoes of the past.

When looking at different examples of ePoetry it is apparent that when interactivity is included in the eMedia translations, the number of choice points is greatly reduced and the outcomes are scripted by the author. For example *In praise of an elevator* (Schroeder & Handplant Studio: Online) made with Adobe Flash, a Shockwave program, limited interactivity is provided. As you can see in the screenshot below, to proceed in the poem the user must click one of the elevator buttons on the right hand side of the screen. However only the next sequential button becomes active at any one time so despite the opportunity of interactivity the reader is forced to proceed in a linear fashion.



In praise of an elevator (Schroeder & Handplant Studio: Online)

Limited interactivity is also evident in the ePoem *A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House*. (Anderton & Robinson: Online).

**ii. A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House. – Anderton & Robinson
(Interactive ePoetry)**

A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House. is made with Flash, (Anderton & Robinson: Online) and requires the creader to click to proceed but only allows them to proceed forwards in a linear fashion and replay the whole piece once they have reached the end. All action takes place within a picture frame with lines of the poem appearing as text at which point the creader must click to continue. In the background scratchy old fashioned music plays. This again is an ePoem from *Born Magazine* (Online) and so is a translation of an original print poem made through collaboration of a poet and ePoet though the collaboration involved was minimal (Robinson, 2009: q6). It is similar to the previous example *In Praise of An Elevator* (Schroder & Handplant Studio: Online) in that it also has quite a strong old fashioned or nostalgic feel to the piece and again the creader has a choice of selecting the poem in text HTML version or the Flash version from the home screen.

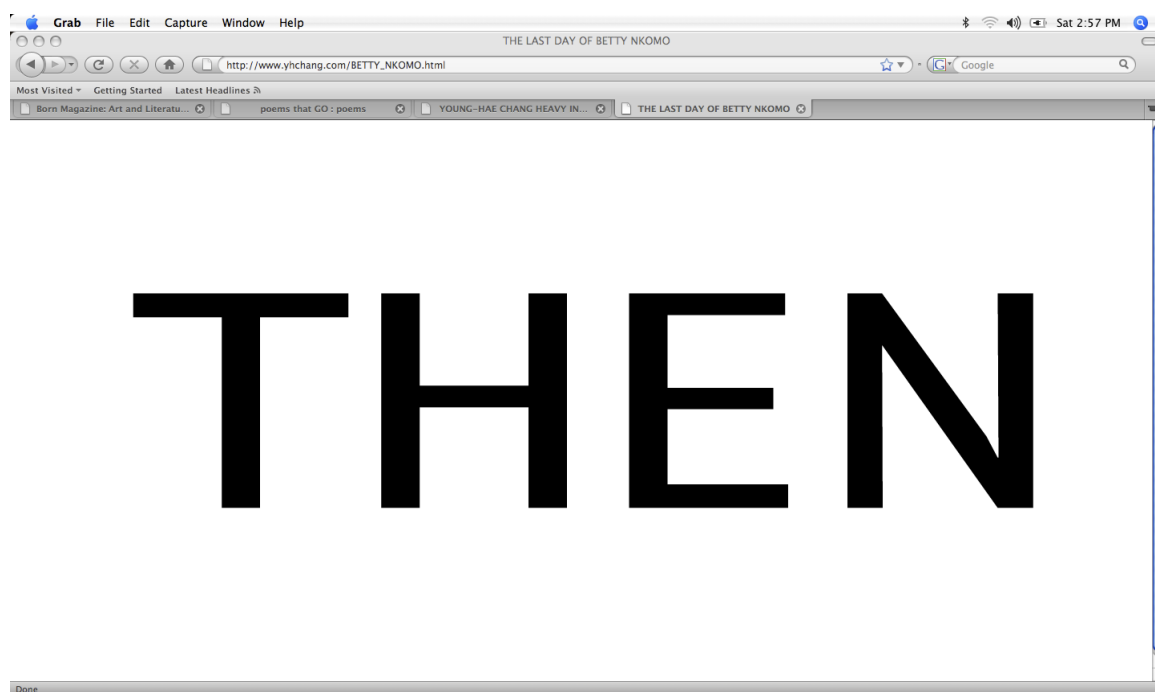


A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House. (Anderton & Robinson: Online)

Discussion now moves from these aforementioned ePoems with limited interactivity to an example of one with no interactivity, *The Last Day of Betty Nkomo* (Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries: Online).

iii. The Last Day of Betty Nkomo – Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries (Video/Animation Linear ePoetry)

Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries in their online Flash piece *The Last Day of Betty Nkomo* (Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries: Online) made with Adobe Flash have reduced the interactivity even further by allowing the users no choice but letting each piece play through to the end. It is a simple piece using large black Monaco font, which appears in time to the background music, this is the well-known style of this eMedia duo Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries (Young-Hae Chang, 2009: q8). This ePoem was not translated from print (Young-Hae Chang, 2009: q10) but it was created for and in Adobe Flash and it falls into the genre of *Video/Animation Linear ePoetry* as it is a linear piece and the click to play falls outside of the piece itself. It was written for International AIDS Day and tells the story of the last day in the life of a South African mother who is dying of AIDS (Young-Hae Chang, 2009: q2 & q10).



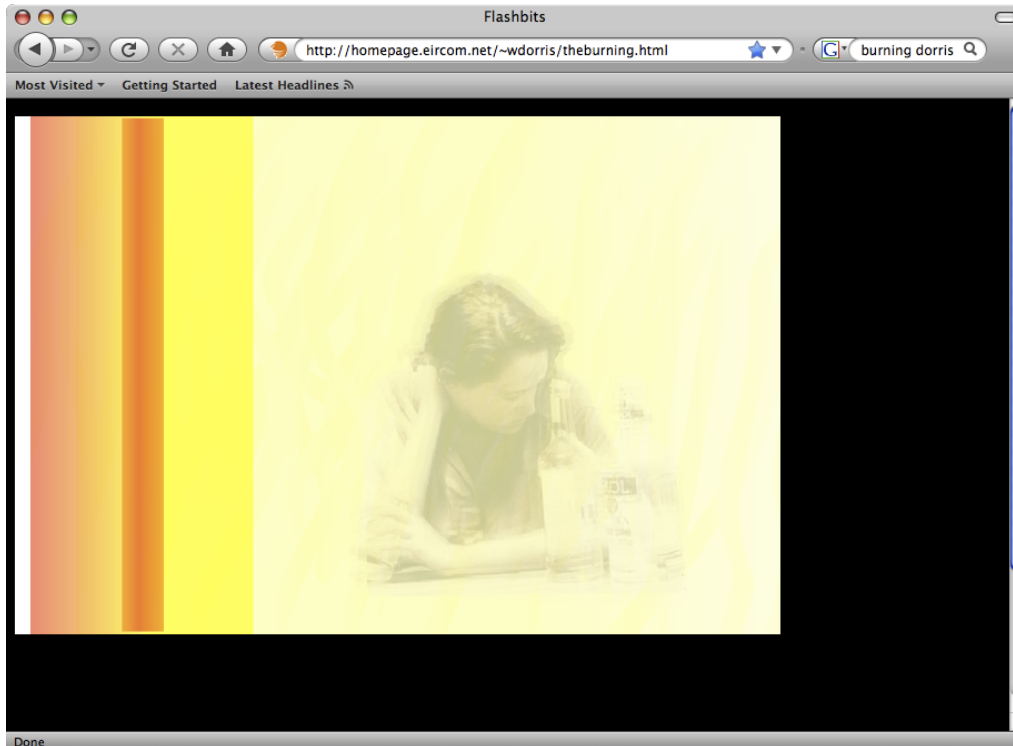
The Last Day of Betty Nkomo (Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries: Online)

There also exist examples of ePoetry that contain simple use of once off interactivity, which can trigger powerful eMedia poetic experiences such as *The Burning* (Dorris & Kuypers: Online).

iv. The Burning - Dorris & Kuypers (Interactive ePoetry)

The Burning (Dorris & Kuypers: Online) is an interactive ePoem with what appears on the surface to be minimal interactivity. The ePoem opens to a title screen that gives you a choice of selecting the Flash or Text version of the poem but these options are situated within the same *fla* file. On clicking on the Flash button you are presented with a woman's voice reading the lines of the poem with distorted visuals fading in and out on the screen. The rhythm of this fading in and out animation matches the rhythm of the woman's voice reading the poem and also the rhythm of gradient colours changing from orange to yellow to purple playing across the screen. The relative simplicity of the appearance of the graphics is belying, as in fact the colour gradients changing rhythmically in the alpha channel require some relatively complex ActionScript programming involving `Math.random` scripts to take place (Dorris, 2011: q5).⁴⁶ Also quite a bit of audio editing in the audio editing software DigiDesign Pro-tools would have been required to achieve the rhythmical background music and repetition of a key line of the poem with the narrator's voice overlying (Dorris, 2011: q2). The rhythm of the piece is its strength as the audio, animation, graphics and language of the poetry all combine to form a rhythmical mantra, which enhances the poetic experience.

The interaction seems on the surface to be minimal requiring the creader to perform a button click at the beginning of the piece in order to select the Flash or text version of the poem. However each poetic play of this ePoem is different as a slightly different sequence of images and colour gradient plays each time the ePoem is run. This is dynamically decided by the ActionScript coding that is invisible to the creader. Each time the creader plays the piece the pattern of animated gradient colours in the background are slightly different.



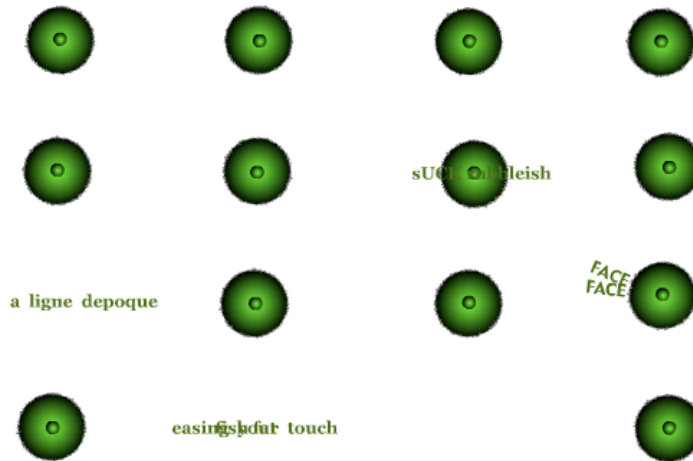
The Burning (Dorris & Kuypers: Online)

Another ePoetry example that displays similar invisible and minimal once off interactivity is *Ambient Fish* (Bergvall: Online).

v. Ambient Fish – Bergvall

(Interactive ePoetry)

Marjorie Perloff discusses *Ambient Fish* (Bergvall: Online) in her paper *Screening the Page/Paging the Screen: Digital poetics and the Differential Text* (Perloff, 2006: 143).



Ambient Fish (Bergvall: Online)

This ePoem is interesting in that it requires the creader to click a button to play but from that point on user interaction is dynamic. By this I mean that (in a similar manner to *The Burning* [Dorris & Kuypers: Online]) though the experience has the potential to change for each creader this is brought about not through creader interaction with say mouse or key but through ActionScript coding. A woman's voice reads out phrases and lines from the poem as the onscreen graphics change and display also words from the poem. Each time the creader experiences the ePoems the animated words on the screen vary. What is interesting regarding *Ambient Fish* (Bergvall: Online) is that in its current form interactivity exists just to trigger coded interactivity built into the poem, rather than interactivity generated through creader interaction.

There is the potential in this case for the use of interactivity to be extended beyond what currently exists and so drive the poetic experience, and I will return to this point later. Note here how much more powerful the use of interactivity could be in ePoetry if instead of initial couple clicks of mouse triggering a predetermined – albeit powerful – poetic experience, the piece were scripted so that a much wider range of audio and textual assets could be brought into play thus creating a more powerful individual experience. This poem could be programmed so it has repeated interactivity thus allowing the player to create a whole range of unanticipated, but

poetic, experiences. The poetics would come from the unexpected mix of words containing slight sound shifts with huge meaning or almost meanings which are then augmented by both the text and the audio combinations. This could be made into a potentially powerful interactive poetic experience in which the payoff is only attainable via interactivity. An opportunity here could be provided to build your own realms of poetic experience as Ong did in *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online). This could be done via learning which sequence of button push works for you and provides the most satisfactory poetic nuances in sound, rhyme, and implicit meanings (Naji, 2010: Online).

To reiterate, so far examples of ePoetry that use interactivity as page turning devices including *A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House*. (Anderton & Robinson: Online), *I didn't know infants in arms until* (Petrosino & Weychert: Online) and *In praise of an elevator* (Schroeder & Handplant Studio: Online) have been examined. These examples use interactivity as a controlling mechanism in order to mirror the experience of the original print poem as closely as possible. At the other end of the spectrum, an example of an ePoem that provides a poetic experience that is the furthest removed from conventional print is *Concatenation* (geniwaite: 2006) a generative ePoem.

vi. Concatenation – geniwaite (Generative ePoetry)

Concatenation (geniwaite: 2006) is an online generative poetry piece made with Macromedia Director a Shockwave program. Jenny Weight describes it as “a text-as-apparatus which was necessarily created in and experienced via the computer” (Weight, 2006: 417). The reader is allowed much more scope for interactivity clicking wherever and whenever they want, creating a unique experience in each instance for each reader. Weight describes text unfolding according to complex algorithmic rules in unrepeatably ways in this piece. As the program executes, the interpreter interprets and a poetic dialogue results in which programmer, apparatus and interpreter have distinct and equally important roles (2006: 422). The programming required for this compared to the previous examples created in Adobe Flash would be quite extensive. This is partly the reason why it was made using Director as this

authoring software used to provide greater scope than Flash for dynamic user interaction through programming.⁴⁷ Now however this is no longer necessarily the case with the latest version of ActionScript, ActionScript 3.0. This is now an object-orientated language and so now allows for greater control and dynamic interactivity.

Interestingly *concatenation* is a computer science term used in programming that signifies the combining of separate elements to form a whole. As Hopcroft and Ullman state in their book, *Introduction to Automata Theory, Languages, and Computation*, “the concatenation of two strings is the string formed by writing the first, followed by the second, with no intervening space” (Hopcroft & Ullman, 1979: 1).⁴⁸ So in this case geniwaite’s ePoem *Concatenation* (Online) presents separate words (or strings) concatenated to form the whole of a poem. The selection of which words to be concatenated is made through the interpretation of the creader interaction (depending on where and when they click the interface) by the code. We can see the relevance and appropriateness therefore of such a title for an ePoem such as this as through the interaction of the creader, separate elements are concatenated together to form the whole of a poetic experience.

In *Concatenation* (geniwaite: 2006) the creader interacts with the poem through a white square, which takes the place of the cursor and looks very similar to the eraser tool in most image editing software. As the creader clicks the screen sequences of words, graphics and audio are generated by the ePoem creating a unique poetic experience each time. The audio varies from background static to soft piano playing, the words vary from clear intelligibility to random surrealness. The greater scope for interactivity in this case comes at the cost of the poetic experience which though unique can vary from cohesive to fragmented. The greater the scope for interactivity in an ePoem comes at a greater risk to the poetic experience.



Concatenation (geniwaite: 2006)

The use of a cursor reminiscent of the eraser tool in image editing software brings to mind one of Stephanie Strickland's (2006: Online) characteristics of ePoetry that is, *Ruin*. By this Strickland is referring to the gamelike searching and questing navigation of ePoems that leads to "a seductive environment of archaeologic ruin and erosion" (Strickland, 2006: Online). The poetic experience in *Concatenation* (geniwaite: 2006) does suggest a destructive process and the use of such a cursor leads the reader to believe they are erasing or peeling away layers of the ePoetic environment to reveal the poetry beneath. However this concept does not fully ring true as in fact it is clear that the opposite of destruction and ruin is taking place. Through repetitive use and navigation a reader is creating a whole from many separate interactions as opposed to destroying the whole through interaction as Strickland (2006: Online) suggests.

Alternatively as previously discussed there exist ePoems that use interactivity in a subtle manner, that provide the reader an opportunity to gently explore the poetic world such as *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online) at their own pace. These examples seek to offer the reader an immersive and personalised experience that isn't possible in the print medium.

Then there exist ePoems that incorporate no interactivity at all but allow the piece to play straight through in a linear fashion similar to a film, such as *The Last Day of*

Betty Nkomo (Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries: Online). In these instances it is mainly the communicative value of motion through animation or video along with audio that provides an added dimension to the poetic experience that otherwise would not be present in the analogue version.

Also considered were ePoems that on the surface seem not to contain much interactivity but in fact unbeknownst to the reader each instance of execution dynamically changes the poetic world. Each time the ePoem plays the reader is provided with a unique poetic experience. This was evident in *Ambient Fish* (Bergvall: Online) and *The Burning* (Dorris & Kuypers: Online). Whilst in the print medium the poem is static and unchanging however if a poem was to be read aloud then it is possible for the listener to gain a unique experience each time it is read aloud.

Most of the examples discussed have displayed relatively simple narrative structures in that all paths have been anticipated in some shape or form in advance by the ePoet. Jenny Weight (2006) however argues that more complex narratives are possible, and in fact has demonstrated this in her own work such as *Concatenation* (geniwaite: 2006). Narratives such as these require an immense amount of programming know-how and effort on the part of the ePoet. Weight notes (2006: 433), “many early texts-as-apparatuses...explore the problematic of narrative and expanded affordance”, a problem that arises as soon as one moves to the digital (unless simply using it as a means to retain text as print on screen). To continue with an analysis of meaning-making in ePoetry it is necessary to next look at narrative in the digital medium.

C. Narrative

With eMedia poetry and the provision of poetic experiences generated by the trilogical relationships inherent within the eMedia, it is important to ask how such meaning is created and what are its characteristics. As Ryan in *Beyond Myth and Metaphor – the case of Narrative in Digital Media* (2001: Online) argues, “...narrative coherence is impossible to maintain in a truly complex system of links” and in order to maintain narrative within eMedia texts we need “...simpler structures, structures with fewer branches and fewer decision points, so that every path can be individually designed by the author...otherwise, the system would lead to a

combinatory explosion-or fall back into randomness, the deathbed of narrative coherence” (Ryan, 2001: Online).

It is important to note here the ‘ludology versus narratology’ debates in games studies. Ludology is the study of play, narratology is the study of narratives; the overriding debate that currently exists is that ludologists believe that games should be understood on their own terms whereas the narratological view is that games can be understood as new forms of narrative (Eskelinen, 2004: 36). This then recalls the debate regarding whether a game is a representation or a simulation, a debate that is discussed in relation to poetry and ePoetry in Chapter 4 *Poetry Transformations*.

To look at the game *Grand Theft Auto* (Rock Star North, 2008) as an example that is demonstrative of the limit to which interactive linear narrative can be extended. In Timo Arnall’s words (Online), *G.T.A.* is a:

realistically modelled discrete game world in which linear narratives occur in any order, and in any place. It is a model of a truly interactive matrix where the player is free to move as she pleases... *Grand Theft Auto* is now in its third version on the PC and PS2. Aside from the controversy that it has generated over the unusual level of violence, it has always had an extraordinarily developed narrative structure... The game is set in a number of fictional cities – the player is encouraged to explore the gameworld as much as she pleases. Narratives and sub-narratives are discovered as the city is explored, leading to new explorations, money, notoriety, and ultimately new cities... This highly developed simulation of a real world, in which story elements are randomly distributed, is very compelling. As a player there is never the feeling of being trapped by a linear storyline, or by unnatural game constraints. The narrative elements are thus more credible and intense... When the gameworld presents itself as an open, explorable environment, free of constraints, it is possible to start feeling that the world is yours, instead of an authors (Arnall: Online).

This freedom allows the player to contribute to his or her own unique sense of immersion in the fictional gameworld.

Kerr et al. (2006) in their paper *New media – new pleasures?* list immersion as one of the key pleasures in new media. This too applies to poetry both analogue and electronic, losing oneself in the world of the poem ensures a powerful connection and poetic experience for the reader. In this case we can see interactive narratives being more intense and believable for the reader as greater choice can provide the illusion of complete freedom in a digital world and this in turn makes the experience immersive and so affecting.⁴⁹

Unfortunately for poetic expression in eMedia, the narrative feats of C.O.T.S. (commercial off the shelf) or *sandbox* games such as *G.T.A. (Grand Theft Auto, 2008)* are achieved with sizable highly paid teams of professional designers and programmers and in fact have few linguistic narratives, such as dialogues, that are maintained across interactive choice points. In short the development of interactive narrative in ePoetry at the present state of development is not likely to extend beyond the sort of implicit narratives already made prominent in the work of traditional poets such as John Ashbery. Although the amount of variation possible will be greatly enhanced and even with much simpler programming the reader's capacities to participate in the nuancing of such narratives is certainly possible. For example Loss Pequeño Glazier (2006: 8) describes his ePoetry piece as "a poem-program that refreshes every forty seconds with a new iteration of text on the screen". The piece entitled *Io Sono At Swoons* (Glazier, 2002: Online) presents collages of lexical fragments from various languages and it is virtually impossible for a reader to see the same poem twice.

Apart from budget and audience, ePoems are not so different to games such as *G.T.A.* except perhaps the overriding goal is different. In *G.T.A.* the point is to complete the game successfully navigating increasingly more difficult challenges and levels until you 'win'. In the ePoetry concerned in this research the goal is to evoke in the reader a poetic experience as close to that evoked by the original print poem or perhaps even to amplify the potentiality of the print experience. As Holmes (1994: 50) states, the goal of the verse translator is to produce a text (in this case an ePoem) that is both a translation of the original poem and is at the same time a poem in its own right within the target language (in this case the eMedia).

Correspondingly Vermeer (1996: 17), a translation theorist, claims that certain acts of translating, such as literary translating, belong to an activity similar to games and by games Vermeer is alluding to actions that seem to have no purpose. However though games may seem to have no intrinsic purpose, the game itself has a purpose as in *G.T.A.*. Perhaps the goal is to entertain or educate, or to kill all the bad guys, but Vermeer tells us there is no purposeless act, every action has a purpose whether intentional or not (Vermeer, 1996: 17).

In this sense we can see similarities between games and ePoems, but what about other aspects such as narrative? Games do in fact have clear narratives, they are interactive but there is usually very clear cause and effect taking place and recognisable story elements such as characters and quests. In ePoetry there is sometimes a very clear narrative such as in the ePoems of Billy Collins poetry, *Hunger* (Collins & SamuelChristopher: Online) and *The Dead* (Collins & Delcan: Online). Other times the narrative is less clear in a manner similar to that described by Vernallis (2004: 13) when describing music videos, narratives constructed by the tangled accumulation of music/image conjunctions such as can be seen in *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online). Also in music videos the point-of-view often changes (Vernallis, 2004: 4), sometimes we see a character miming the words of the song, other times we see the singer, this however is a more disjointed storytelling than we find in ePoetry. Even in those ePoems whose poetic experience is the furthest removed from the traditional poetic experience (such as generative ePoems *Concatenation* [geniwaite: Online] and *Arteroids* [Andrews: 2003]) the point of view does not change, there is consistency in the storytelling. Coherence to the reader is still a priority in both ePoetry and games whereas in music videos usually the commercial aspect is felt to be more present with a need to sell songs being the driving force behind the creation of most music videos (Vernallis, 2004: 13).

However trilogical 'narratives' such as *Concatenation* (geniwaite: 2006) have a different type of power than those of traditional novels or movies, they represent possibility rather than closure, the privilege of contingency over fate. Their patterning is different, because combinations of user behaviour and algorithm do not result in a

standard narrative trajectory (Weight, 2006: 433). So texts in text-as-apparatus may be better conceived as environments rather than traditional, standard narratives. They may in fact most usefully be conceived as environmental texts in which narrative or not becomes a choice that the creader makes. Murray (2003: 11) describes the digital medium “as much a pattern of thinking and perceiving as it is a pattern of making things”.

The move to the digital medium can be seen as both a blessing and a curse for narrative as the mutability of the medium allows for greater narrative freedom but at the same time this can occur at the cost of narrative coherence. The timing or appearance of objects and programming in the ePoems with or without interactivity can draw attention to or distract from existing poem lyrics. This can be done for example by repetition, timing, changing sequence and/or location etc. however this often does not necessarily generate new linguistically coherent poetic narratives. For example in *A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House*. (Anderton & Robinson: Online) Nick Robinson used Flash, with minimal programming, to simply control the timing of appearance such as no new linguistic narrative. When asked about his decision to leave the words ‘my tongue’ for the very last screen he explained “they present themselves in a very “final” tone and I wanted to have them linger and give the viewer something to think about” (Robinson 2009: q10). This shows that Robinson was using the potential of expanded narrative affordance to nuance the last lines of the poem, allowing them to echo in the creader’s sight and mind.

Regarding the narrative in her piece Monica Ong tells us, “I enjoy non-linear narrative because it mirrors the way we experience our memories. We make visceral or emotional connections between things, traveling [*sic*] from one place to the next in a more instinctual way. I think there is a kind of freedom in that, not only for the artist, but in terms of a sense of possibility the audience is experiencing” (Ong 2009: q9). I mentioned this quote earlier in this section with reference to discussions regarding hypertext and interactivity. However in this case, Ong is telling us that the function of interactivity in her ePoem was to give the creader a sense of possibility that they would not have reading the poem in its original text form with a linear narrative. Here the creader can enjoy a narrative similar to their thoughts, a spider web exploring

alleyways and paths off the main road through memory associations. As every creader will have different memories this truly does then allow for a unique experience and expanded narrative affordance. Interestingly this also mirrors Vannevar Bush's proposal regarding the Memex a method of information retrieval and storage that was purported to be truer to the human mind's method of memory or information retrieval as it worked by association. It is believed to be the earliest incarnation of the Internet as it appeared in his essay *As We May Think* from 1945 and his argument has informed the technology and practice of hypertext today (Lister et al., 2003: 25). This interconnectedness also recalls James Holmes' view on the translation of a poem, or metapoem, which he states is a "nexus of a complex bundle of relationships converging" (Holmes, 1994: 24-25). Discussions in this body of work have therefore shown that narrative in ePoetry has huge potential for nuances and changes. Logically this then raises the question of how else meaning is formed in the ePoetic realm as narrative can no longer be relied upon to help construct meaning to the same extent as it does in the analogue medium. This brings the critical argument of this thesis to the topic of patterns.

D. Patterns

In *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online) repetition is in fact pivotal to the aesthetics of the poetic experience, the likelihood that users experience chunks from the media database more than once can reinforce the poetic effect. Weight (2006: 434-435) suggests that repetition is an effect of the iteration and re-iteration that is almost the defining feature of performance works from databased media. Iterative change in this context harmoniously co-exists with repetition, the impetus to always move forward with such texts is strong and such forward momentum suits the short and condensed rhetorics of poetry. Transience and repetition – patterning – seem to reinforce each other (Weight, 2006: 434-435). In geniwaite's generative poetry for example, the creader can actually experience these sort of poetic effects through interaction with the screen, and it is this potential for interactivity or, as Jenny Weight terms it, 'freedom' (2006: 432) that such effects are achieved in ePoetry. Such effects are of course not new to the poetics of data based media. They can be experienced in the repetition, especially when read aloud, of many traditional poems, for example Thomas Hardy's *Timing Her*, or W.H. Auden's *Night Mail*. Here the cadence, intonation, and repetition of words, generate the same sense of powerful forward

momentum as one might experience in generative ePoetry. In ePoetry however the control of the pacing and patterning of such repetition, not only of sound and word, but also equally of the spatial and motion graphic patterning, can be given over to the creader.

**i. When you reach Kyoto – geniwaite & Stefans
(Generative ePoetry)**

For example in the piece *When you reach Kyoto* (geniwaite & Stefans: Online) though initially confusing for the creader, through repetitive use, meaning begins to be formed in a manner outlined by Seaman. “Each new context adds another layer of thought and experience to the accretive nature of meaning production – generating a hybrid of a hybrid” (Seaman, 2005: 14).



When you reach Kyoto (geniwaite & Stefans: Online)

The generation of such *pattern flows* while using text is also, perhaps more importantly, generating forward momentum in the form of visual movement – in movement, change of pace, size, rotation, colouring, alpha, style etc. of the text and other visual patterns associated with it. These repetitions create multiple levels of impact via their visual, symbolic, and sometimes aural resonances with each other, and implicitly with whole worlds of meaning for creaders.

When you reach Kyoto (geniwaite & Stefans: Online) falls into the category *Generative ePoetry* and as evidenced by the preloader screen of the piece was made with Director software.⁵⁰ This ePoem uses distorted audio and imagery, small and large white blocky font and white square cursor for interaction reminiscent of the eraser tool in image editing software. Seemingly random sequences of words appear on screen to form the line of a poem, the creader then chooses one of the words from the line to click on and then the audio and background imagery changes as a new collection of words appear on the screen to form the next line of the poem. This continues until the creader closes the browser window. Each time the creader interacts with this piece different lines of poetry appear although the imagery and audio remain similar. The poetic experience like the visuals and audio seems disjointed and distorted and yet through repetition of visuals and audio a narrative is formed.

The ePoet Stephanie Strickland lists *Recursion and Looping* as a characteristic of ePoetry (Strickland, 2006: Online), to navigate in an ePoem Strickland suggests is to travel in a loop, it is the illusion of travel. Interestingly however this idea from Strickland is similar to Harvey's (1990: 29) description of "a radical change in the experience of space and time in Western capitalism". To quote what was previously quoted in Chapter 4 *Poetry Transformations* Harvey (1990: 271) observes, "Gertrude Stein... interpreted cultural events, such as the advent of cubism, as a response to the time-space compression to which everyone was exposed and sensitized". The time-space compression brought about by modernity and its corresponding technologies such as typewriters and planes (locations that took weeks to travel to were now accessible in a day, tasks that took days now took hours) echoes somewhat Strickland's characteristic of *looping*.

Similarly Lister et al. (2003: 12) list as part of a schema to understand the eMedia, *new experiences of the relationship between embodiment, identity and community*, this means "shifts in the personal and social experience of time, space and place (on both local and global scales) which have implications for the ways in which we experience" (Lister et al., 2003: 12). We could take e-mail as an example of this as it allows us communicate at an incredibly fast speed both with distant and near

locations, this has changed the way in which we experience ourselves and our place in the world. Distant locations are no longer so distant and yet sometimes we will never see those situated nearby.

Reflecting this the ePoet Parilla (2009: 7) regarding his communication with the original print poet tells us in his interview that, “During the process we keep [*sic*] in touch via e-mail” and “today is [*sic*] very easy to work side by side with persons that could be in the other side of the planet” (2009: 2). Clearly here we see at play what Lister et al. (2003: 12) categorise as part of their schema regarding shifts in space and time. Nick Robinson (2009: q2) also believes that because “we were not in the same city, we communicated via e-mail” but Robinson believes that this “made things a little more difficult”. So though we can see evidence of this time-space compression at play in answers such as this from ePoets, the concept of time-space compression is flawed. This is because despite it being possible for a a loop to occur, as per Strickland (2006: Online), in terms of the experience for the creader a linear process has still taken place. It looks like a loop but it is not really, it is still a linear path, the creader is not going back in time. It is the poetic experience of the creader that makes the ePoem a reality and their experience is still operating on a linear time-based path, it is only the illusion of time-travel. We may seem to have gone back in time and yet the creader has still aged. This is why the concept of patterning as accretive meaning production as outlined by Seaman (2005: 14) is more appropriate for ePoetry. Through repetition the creader accretively constructs a coherent narrative. This ability of the creader to construct their own poetic experience then raises another dimension of ePoetry that requires consideration in order to understand how meaning is constructed, that of co-authorship.

E. Co-authorship

Sloane (2000: 98) tells us that in the past, “reading was a matter of responding to a locked visual field, a habit of responding silently within one’s own skull and body, to a prefigured text...traditional engagement with text is more private than public” however now “the materials of interactive fiction have made reading become a public and responsive act of visibly inscribing self on text”. By this she is referring to the ability of the creader to contribute to the digital story should he/she wish as in the case of hypertext fictions. As Italo Calvino stated in his 1986 essay *Cybernetics and*

Ghosts “the ascendancy of the ‘eye of the reader’ will guarantee the disappearance of the author” (in Sloane 2000: 12). Readers are no longer passive receptors but contribute to the creation of their own story.

McLuhan (1962) purports that the separation of words and music by the print technology was no more decisive than the separation of visual and oral reading and until the advent of printing the reader was literally involved as a consumer. So consequently we are now seeing as Umberto Eco (Online) suggests, technology moving crabwise, in a return to a more participatory culture where the reader is a consumer, relying increasingly on word of mouth such as Facebook (Online) rather than one authoritative centralised source for our news. It is reminiscent of oral traditions when there was a less formal author and reader relationship as stories were passed on and embellished as in Barthes’ (1970) *active reader*. We see this once again, empowered through today’s collaborative eMedia as online worlds (Second Life: Online) are added to and co-created by their users. However participation does not always need to be as extensive as building worlds, for example with reference to digital art Simanowski (2011: 213) contends, “participation is not reduced to mechanical interaction but extends to interpretation”. In this thesis however co-authorship is referred to in the sense of extensive participation whereby the creader contributes significantly to the construction of the text.

Sherry Turkle in her book *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit* (1984: 64-92) believes that when users begin to do their own programming and are no longer merely players in a game programmed by someone else (in fact move from being players or users to being creaders) that they begin to enter into a new relationship with the computer. A relationship in which they begin to experience it as a kind of “second self” (Turkle, 2003: 513).

This topic follows on from discussion regarding interactivity and meaning-making as it is this very interactivity that defines the field as expanding rather than pre-given and allows for a new poetic experience not normally attainable in the poem’s original form before translation into the eMedia. What this then expands is the role of the creader as Ong (2009: q8) tells us, “It’s really important to give the audience room to

participate. It's not about the artist or poet, but about creating a space for the viewer/user to be transported to", it is this ability of eMedia to allow for greater individual identification and interpretation that expands the potential of the poetic experience. The full potential of this is as yet still unreached as the technology continues to evolve and so too does our mastery of it. This potential can not only enhance the poetic experience but it can also diminish it, "There are many examples of new media art where people use text in the interface: Perhaps the audience is playing with the letters that react to their movement, or dragging text around the screen with the cursor. In this case they are not "reading" the poem anymore, they are just playing with shapes. At that point, the poetic experience is dead" (Ong, 2009: q16). Birkerts (1994: Online) similarly asserts that contemporary interaction is ungainly and the reader is not only affronted aesthetically by ugly type and crude display options but is required constantly to click the mouse to keep the interaction going. The reader Birkerts (1994: Online) suggests, has not been able to get past the feeling of being infantilised and that their reflexes are being tested as if in a video arcade. This approach provides for technological interactions that rely on the reader's ability to click the mouse the appropriate amount of times or to drag an object to a specific location rather than attempting a deeper more thoughtful opportunity for interaction which contributes to the construction of meaning.

i. Arteroids – Andrews

(Generative ePoetry)

Arteroids (Andrews: 2003), which Adalaide Morris (2006: 1-46) cites, is an example of this type of video arcade format as it is basically a 'shoot 'em up' game in its poetic form. Jim Andrews, the creator, states "Arteroids situates itself between entertainment and art" (Andrews: 2003). In *Arteroids* the player uses the arrow keys to drive the red word around the screen and uses the 'x' key to shoot blue and green texts that attack you as you play. There is a game mode and a play mode with greater restrictions on the player in game mode and greater freedom to experiment and explore in play mode. As you go up in level in game play there is less chance for the player to actually read and experience the audio and text that appears. It certainly achieves the creation of a game experience but whether it achieves a poetic experience is questionable as after a while the player becomes mainly fixated on destruction not

poetry. When writing about *Arteroids*, Andrews (Online) explains, “Writers realize, in their confrontation with the page and with language, that they need to understand their medium or it will have its way with them. When writers move to the Web and/or the Net (which includes email etc.), they often do not acknowledge that the change in media has consequences for their work, how it is distributed, read, contextualized, and understood”.

However despite the seeming inadequacies of these examples to provide meaningful opportunities for interaction it is clear that the ePoems *Concatenation* (geniwaite: 2006), *When you reach Kyoto* (geniwaite & Stefans: Online) and *Arteroids* (Andrews: 2003) offer an author-reader relationship that differs to that found in print. This corresponds with what Skains (2010: 104) suggests when she cites Birkerts (1994: Online) with reference to the expanding author-reader relationship from the print dynamic activating the text of the story as a bridge rather than a barrier. “The relationship between the author and reader becomes more equal in digital delivery systems; the offered text is still controlled by the author, but the digital elements grant the reader more choices and control over the text (Skains, 2010: 104). In other examples of ePoetry such as *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online) and *Ambient Fish* (Bergvall: Online) the creader is presented with illusion of such a relationship but in reality they are allowed minimal freedom to interact. Others do not even offer such an illusion of choice and agency over the poetic environment such as *I didn't know infants in arms until* (Petrosino & Weychert: Online) and *A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House.* (Anderton & Robinson: Online). Most notably however none of the *Interactive ePoetry* examples allow creaders to contribute to their poetic environment more than superficially, this diminishes the potential of the poetic experience in the digital medium. Nonetheless it is clear that when this potential is offered to creaders as it is in *Generative ePoetry*, it can come at the cost of the poetic experience as per discussions to date regarding interactivity.

So this chapter has so far explored how the characteristics of the digital medium can impact the construction of ePoetic meaning for the creader but it is also important to consider how they have impacted the authoring process. Respondent's answers reveal that the mutability of the electronic medium means that during authorship lines blur and it is nearly impossible to know how many versions or reworkings of the

translation come about. This can also be seen to correspond to what Lister et al. (2003: 12) list, *new patterns of organisation and production*, as a constituent part of new media. Young-Hae Chang (2009: q6) tell us that when “it comes to our digital work, reworkings are many, possibly, but they get lost in the process, because they’re digitally fluid. There’s no distinct first, second, third...drafts. We’re not into documenting how many times we rewrite a piece even if the software is capable of documenting it. Not to mention that every time we present the work in a new context we tweak things”. This is contrary to what I had anticipated before I conducted the interviews as I had believed that as it is possible for the software to save different versions of a piece that the ePoets would have saved a specific number of versions on their computer, but as has been confirmed by ePoet interview responses this is not the case. Sam Tootal (2009: q6) for example states “no revisions beyond our own quite specific, detailed judgment of it”. Similarly Sheehan (2009: q4) reveals, “there was no “major” reworking as such” and Parilla (2009: q6) states, “There were not [*sic*] any major revision”. Robinson (2009: q6) when asked about revisions similarly responds that “there was very little time for back-and forth”. However Monica Ong (2009: q6) differs slightly in her response when asked about revisions tells us that there were “many of them – I don’t remember exactly, but editing is going to happen [*sic*] whether it’s with code, or making the interface more clear, or reworking images”. This shows that though Ong admits that there were many revisions she still observes that this is a more fluid, constant process as opposed to a regimented, fixed, version A, version B structured process.

Nonetheless it is important to note that it is still possible and most probably very likely that different versions of the ePoems would have been saved and be accessible. What may have happened here is simply that some of the transitional versions were deleted simply because it was too much to keep track of and also it may be that asking for such an account via email questions was simply too hard to adequately answer in any detail. Therefore the lack of information regarding transitions in the creative process could simply be due to a combination of too much to keep track of and communicate via email interviews, and similarly too much to keep all of it for the ePoet to systematically go over it all in trying to adequately answer such a query from an unknown researcher in an email.

This blurring of borders and changing of relationships is a central issue that lies at the core of understanding ePoetry. The impact of this conflict of human representation in cyberspace on poetic expression in the eMedia is apparent in some of these ePoetry pieces through for example a comment from the ePoet Monica Ong, “I like creating a poetic space online that is just as engaging or transformative as a book or museum. The common activities online can tend to be commercial transactions or “junk” activities. I believe that online space can be so much more than a wasteland, rather it has the potential to be a destination for artistic experience” (Ong, 2009: q1). This shows that for Ong the online space, a place with no geographical location, is being used as a place for thought and artistic experience, not just as a jumped up selling tool but a real space for expression.

Concurrently Lister et al. (2003: 12) state that another part of the eMedia schema would be to provide *new conceptions of the biological body's relationship to technological media and new patterns of organisation and production*. This involves challenges to our established distinctions between “the human and the artificial, nature and technology, body and (media as) technological prostheses, the real and the virtual” (Lister et al., 2003: 12). We could look at the online phenomenon of *Second Life* (Online) and *World of Warcraft* (Online), both online virtual 3D worlds, as examples of this, as for many they have blurred the line between the real and virtual.

In terms of the modern world blurring the line between the real and unreal, Augé (1995: 78) proposes that “supermodernity produces non-places, meaning spaces which are not themselves anthropological places and which, unlike Baudelarian modernity, do not integrate the earlier places: instead these are listed, classified promoted to the status of ‘places of memory’” (1995: 78). We can see evidence of these in the ePoetry with which this research is concerned when ePoet Tootal (2009: q9) tells us, the “stills we used are urban compositions we’re interested in in general, the kind of thing you glance at whilst travelling around a town or city but that at first glance is just derelict and messy no man’s land – spaces in between what is deemed functional, communal pretty habitat”.

This echoes somewhat Vernallis' (2004: xii) observation that the locations that appear in most music videos tend to be generic descriptions, representing a kind of place or a suggestion of a concept of a place rather than a specific real place. This can also be seen in the ePoem *Hunger* (Collins & SamuelChristopher: Online) which shows video shots of empty, worn, modern life locations with the words of the poem, dripping, projected onto the walls. These locations are generic places that most of us will recognise (high school, car park playground) empty and in slight disrepair together with the sound effects of subtle creaking & fluorescent lights flickering, places that embody Augé's (1995: 78) supermodern non-places.



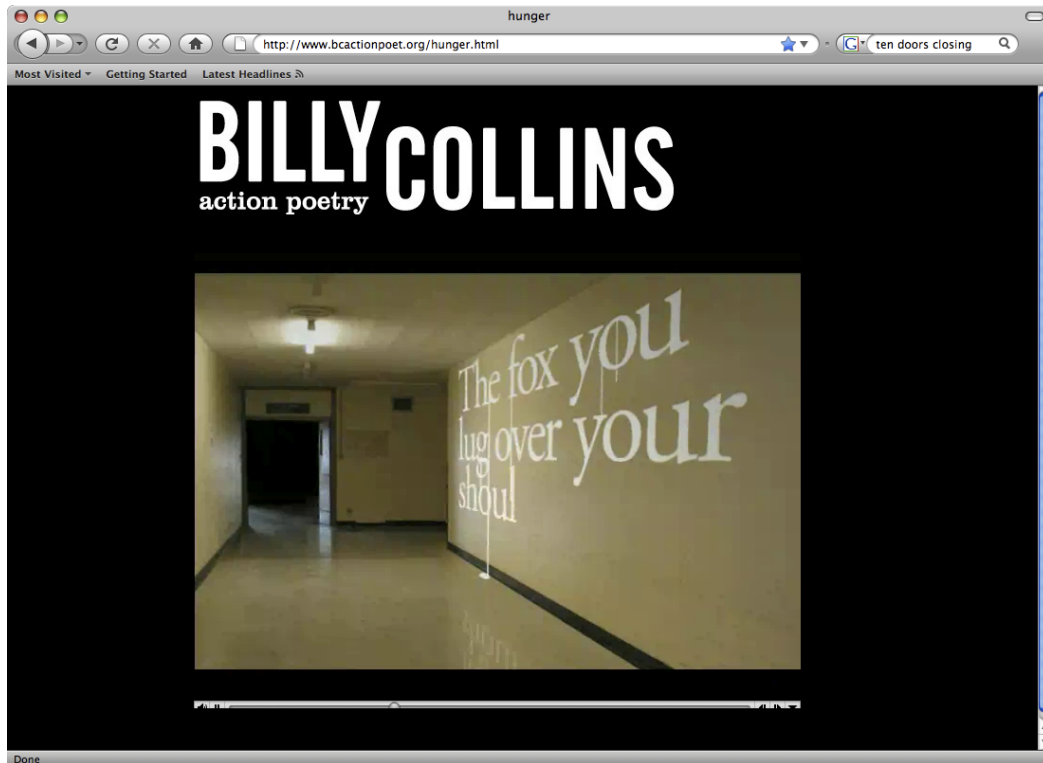
Hunger (Collins & SamuelChristopher: Online)

ii. *Hunger* – Collins & SamuelChristopher

(Video/Animation Linear ePoetry)

Hunger (Collins & SamuelChristopher Online) is an ePoetry translation of a Billy Collins poem. The poem tells you that you are walking through a forest, which covers the world, carrying a bag in which you have a fox, but the fox has cut a hole in the bag and escaped. We see shots of urban decay - empty, worn, modern life locations with the words of the poem, dripping, projected onto the walls. The sight of these

locations that most of us will recognise (high school, car park, playground) empty and in slight disrepair together with evocative sound effects contributes to conveying a much stronger sense of desolation than the original poem in written form manages to convey. Much stronger audience engagement also results, as these are scenes and locations that most of us are familiar with from our everyday lives.



Hunger (Collins & SamuelChristopher: Online)

This is an excellent example of how relatively simple use of audio and motion graphics, manipulated at far less granulated level than the generative poetry of geniwaite and others, can create powerful translations of traditional poetry into the eMedia – translations which enhance the original poetic experience and often take it into new and unexpected realms.

On discussing her foray into cyberspace Dinsmore (Sapnar: 2004) tells us, “I love to learn, and to be able to bring that element of the creative process, of one’s relation with and to one media/um into the work itself – this work seemed to speak of that process in a new way for me... The media/um is never static and that’s an inspiration in itself – relentless discovery”. “I’m sure that was the newness – the interesting thing I’ve found though, after five years of working within the media/um, is that it never

seems to lose that, how shall we say? pulse of life for me: it remains vital” (Sapnar: 2004). We can see in this quote from the ePoet Claire Allan Dinsmore that she finds that the realm of ePoetry and technology continues to maintain a sense of newness and feeling that it is continually expanding and living.

To further elucidate this point we can look at an example from the interview of a ePoetry author simply attempting to recreate the original analogue poetic experience as closely as possible. This can also be seen as a link to Holmes’ (1994) theories of translation as this example would be situated in the *exoticizing* and *historicizing* plane emphasizing retention and not recreation.⁵¹ Nick Robinson (2009: q16) when asked about his approach to translating a poem into eMedia states he “read the poem a few dozen times and a couple of times aloud... fully immerse yourself... know what options are available in terms of technology and to pick carefully when trying to find a match”. Here we can see that Robinson is using the technology to mirror the original poem’s medium as opposed to seeking out and exploring the potential reconfiguration of human subjectivities in cyberspace.

Monica Ong (2009: q16) however when asked the same question regarding her approach to eMedia translation states, “You have to love the poem...It’s like doing your research as a tour guide of a foreign country before you can adequately point out to your guests the places of discovery”. Here rather than seeking to exactly imitate the original poem in the new environment, Monica describes the poem itself as a foreign country where eMedia translation is going to take readers in their own language that is the language of eMedia. Ong (2009: q16) continues, “the designer is not a literal translation-robot. Creating [*sic*] new media poem is not a direct illustration of words...The designer needs to bring something to the experience that will complement and partner with the voice of the poem. For me, I’m thinking about adding space, opening dimension, identifying details of the environment to give audiences an “entry point””. This is not what Robinson does in his ePoem *A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House*. (Anderton & Robinson: Online), he has chosen to work in the *exoticizing* and *historicizing* plane emphasizing retention and not recreation. The experience Ong mentions here is the eMedia experience and the environment the eMedia world, through this we can see Ong is exploring cyberspace and signposting

creaders to the possibilities inherent in new locations while pushing, extending and exploring this new environment unlike Robinson. In fact these two opposing approaches produce very different results as is apparent in the ePoems, Ong's *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online) with its extended interactivity and exploratory environment and Robinson's *A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House*. (Anderton & Robinson: Online) with its linear interactivity and sequential storytelling.

Sam Tootal when asked about *Hunger* (Collins & SamuelChristopher: Online) states unashamedly "It is entirely our interpretation of the poem" (Tootal, 2009: q10). The idea of constraining their interpretation to mirror exactly the original poem is not even considered. When asked about their approach they "find a way of communicating our own subjective interpretation of the poem, what we deem to be its over arching themes" (Tootal, 2009: q15). Then they "Brainstorm / document these ideas into a cohesive narrative structure / decide the appropriate medium with which to tell the story / collate image references found and self created. These then further informs the focus of the narrative and the creation of the aesthetic; the production design of the film. Figure out where is best to produce the film...Schedule the timeline for pre-production, shoot and post-production (including edit/animation/audio). Then start making it happen! This is all within the parameters of what the budget for the job will allow of course" (Tootal, 2009: q15). This is an example of ePoets operating entirely within the eMedia. They do not even consider any other way of working and don't even comment on it.

This is slightly different to Ong (2009: q16) who does comment on it and is aware of doing so and completely different to Robinson (2009: q16) who stays within the restrictions of the medium of the original poem, print, and this restricts his embrace of the eMedia. Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries (2009: q14) state, "We don't move from traditional poetry to new media poetry. We start off right in the middle of new media poetry". They like the ePoets SamuelChristopher and Ong, are fully engaged in the eMedia and this in turn can lead to the creation of a truly evocative experience fully engaged in the expanded potentialities of digital poetics. For example in *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online) the extended use of interactivity such as when the creader rolls over a specific area of the ePoem with their cursor an image appears

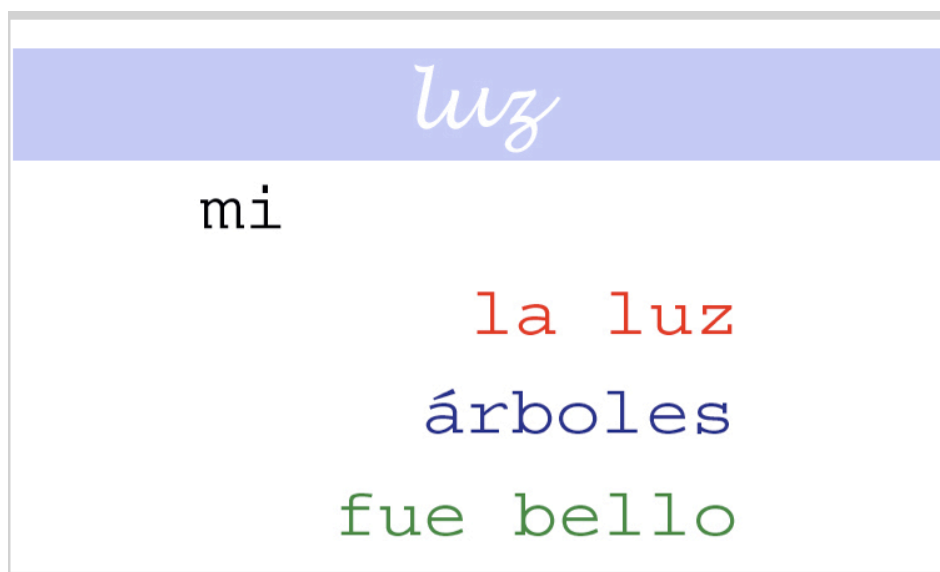
corresponding to a different line of the poem. There are different rollovers for different lines each once nuancing the original meaning of the poem by displaying black and white photographs of people places and things. The images themselves evoke a deeper meaning than would originally be apparent in the text on its own in its original form and the varied choices of these rollovers means that one more than other will appeal to a reader and so they will click and chart their own path through the poem.

Finally I will look at ePoems that are illustrative of perhaps the defining characteristics of ePoetry created solely in eMedia (or positioned within the eMedia in such a way that the traditional poetic experience derived from reading or hearing poetry cannot be attained). This is different when compared to some of the traditional print poems translated into eMedia such as *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online) and *Servant* (Anderton & Robinson: Online) amongst others that we have already discussed.

iii. *Luz* – Glazier, 2006

(Generative ePoetry)

In the ePoem *Luz* (Glazier, 2006: Online) once the player clicks on the word *luz* a short poem appears using different combinations of several words and short phrases in different colours. Click “back” and click “Luz” again for a new mix of the same, the words change, the colours change and their positioning on the screen changes. Spacing varies to create different experiences. This is a very simple yet engaging interactive piece. *Luz* is perhaps reflective of the early days of trying to think poetically when using the eMedia.



Luz (Glazier, 2006: Online)

However it is these very attempts at thinking poetically in the eMedia that manage to create engaging ePoetry experiences. For example in the ePoem *Hunger* (Collins & SamuelChristopher: Online) that we looked at earlier the translators did not seek to merely reproduce the text of the poem from its original print medium. Instead they used the advantages of the electronic medium by incorporating atmospheric audio and visuals, which enhanced the poetic experience in a way the original print poem could not.

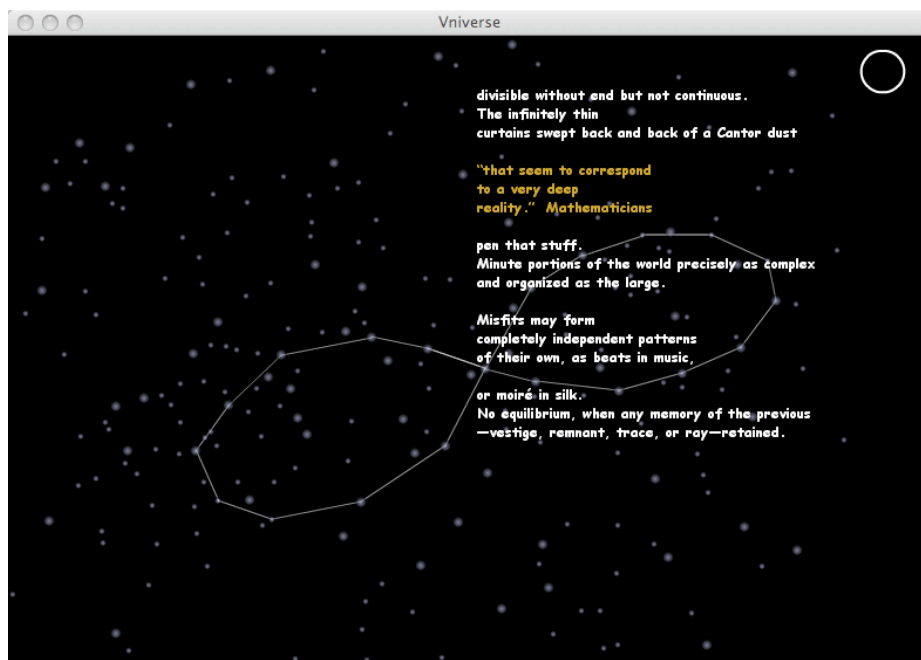
iv. *Vniverse* – Strickland & Lawson (Interactive ePoetry)

N. Katherine Hayles (2006: 181) discusses *Vniverse* (Strickland & Lawson: 2004). This is an interesting project as the poetry not only exists online in this interactive format but also exists as a book by the poet Stephanie Strickland, *V: WaveSon.nets / Losing l'Una* (Penguin, 2002). In their essay *Making the Vniverse* Strickland and Lawson (Online) state:

Our most important goal in implementing the *Vniverse* was to give the reader ways to chart their own new courses...Clicking a star on the constellation releases the text of a *WaveSon.net*. Each poem begins, not as it does in print, but rather with the star/triplet chosen by the reader, and assembles itself not sequentially, but in relation to that chosen triplet,

which displays in color while the other lines of the *WaveSon.net* display in white (Strickland & Lawson: 2004).

The creader can chart a course through the stars and *WaveSon.nets* by sweeping the cursor across the screen and tracing imagined constellations. Hovering the cursor over a star allows the creader to see its constellation and number, and then clicking on that star brings that constellation to the fore and allows more detailed exploration. Double clicking on the star brings the related *WaveSon.net* to the screen. It is also possible to interact by typing in a number in the circle at the top right hand corner of the screen and this will bring the related constellation and *WaveSon.net* to the fore.



Vniverse (Strickland & Lawson: 2004)

Similar to many of the ePoetry examples previously mentioned *Vniverse* (Strickland & Lawson: 2004), made in *Director*, was brought about through collaboration with a poet and a technologist. While *Vniverse* (Strickland & Lawson: 2004) certainly offers a creative and interesting form of interaction for the player, the poetic experience attained is questionable. In this case though the electronic medium is embraced the message of the poem is forgotten. The focus of the piece lies on the mechanics of the electronic medium instead of focusing on the poetic experience. It seems to be a case of the translator trying to show what complicated 'wizardry' the technology is capable of. For example an important element of a poem is rhythm and music (Orr, 1996: 270), this is also something that can be incorporated into the electronic medium,

however this is entirely omitted from the piece and instead the creader is encouraged to click through constellations and calculations. This has the result of distracting the creader from the poetic experience and immersing them instead in a technological process instead of the world of the poem.

In these last examples by Glazier (2006: Online) and Strickland and Lawson (Online) it is clear that the poetic experiences though widely varied have completely left the realm of traditional poetic experience. There is no evocation of rhythm, rhyme, story, narrative structure, imagery, movement, or metaphoric experiences such as one finds in the lyric of traditional poems. There is not even the emphasis on certain central features of traditional poetry such as the repetition we found in *Concatenation* (geniwaite: 2006) or the potential for such, along with all others aspects of traditional poetry which could be achieved in our example of rescripting *Ambient Fish* (Bergvall: Online) as suggested earlier in this chapter.

This reminds us of previous discussions within this chapter regarding the impact of interactivity on the immersiveness of the ePoem. As previously mentioned when looking at different types of ePoems it becomes clear that those pieces that are less effective in conveying the sense of a poem are often those that require greater user interaction. The poetic experience is jarred by the necessity of the creader removing themselves from the poem's illusion to move the mouse before re-immersing themselves in the piece. The player would be required to interact by, for example, clicking on the screen to proceed to the next portion of the poem. This has the effect of creating 'hypermediacy' (Bolter & Grusin, 2000: 272-273) which reminds the user of the medium and so shatters the illusion. *Remediation*, or "the representation of one medium in another...is a defining characteristic of the new digital media" (Bolter & Grusin, 2000: 45) and the central underlying characteristic of much visual representation in the eMedia.

The next section will now conclude by drawing and reflecting on all that has been discussed and explored in this body of work in order to formulate an ePoetry rhetoric that deals with the impact of the characteristics of the digital apparatus on poetic expression.

Chapter 7. Conclusions

A. What is an ePoem?

i. The Essentiality of both the Apparatus and the Human to ePoetry

B. eTemperaments - Poetry Criticism Revisited

C. The ePoet as Translator

D. Future Research Potential

E. Limitations of the Research

F. Concluding Thoughts

In summation it is important at this stage to draw on all preceding chapters and connect the dots (or as I more appropriately might call them, pixels) in an attempt to solidify an answer to the central issue. That is, an investigation into the process of a poem moving from the analogue to the digital, towards the goal of identifying the affordances and specificities of ePoetry in order to understand how they operate poetically in light of the ePoems and ePoets selected for this investigation. While theoretical analysis within previous chapters formed specific conclusions, it is necessary for this final chapter to synthesise these concluding strands towards further development of ePoetry rhetoric. Most importantly this chapter builds on Chapter 6's analysis of the multimodal communicative nature of ePoems and Chapter 4's revisit of poetry criticism to argue that an essential feature in the recognition and definition of an ePoem is in fact the apparatus and therefore correspondingly the human. Following on from this, poetry criticism is problematised and extended in order to incorporate the expanded potentialities that the digital form affords poetry. The chapter then concludes by discussing future research potential and the limitations of this body of work.

A. What is an ePoem?

In Chapter 4 *Poetry Transformations*, discussions took place using Abrams (1953), de Man (1970), Giddings (2007), Hayles (2004), and Yeats (1936) that showed ePoetry to be similar to a computer game but unlike an analogue poem in that it is a simulation of a representation. Further support towards a view of ePoetry as simulations arose in Chapter 4, which incorporated Holmes' (1994: 26-27) theories regarding the forms of translations. Interestingly this was also seen to reflect Baudrillard's (1983) postmodernist discourse regarding the simulacra and simulation.

A further similarity between digital and analogue poetry was identified using Miller (2004: 114) in that in order to have impact both types of poetry need to be affective.

Reflecting this Chapter 6 *Meaning Making in ePoetry* discussions focused on the recognition and identification of the nature of meaning making in ePoetry towards the recognition of the ePoem as a new artefact. This correspondingly elucidates the impact of the digital apparatus on human poetic expression and provides clear evidence that the affordances digital technology shaped the nature of poetic communication.

i. The Essentiality of both the Apparatus and the Human to ePoetry

Chapter 6 further established, using Bolter (2001), Kress (2003), Ong (2002), and Strehovec (2010), that ePoems are multimodal in nature (text, image, sound). Text in a sense was always present in the ePoems in that words appeared either visually or aurally. For example the ePoem *Ten Doors Closing* (Sheehan: Online) is video based and the only visual text that appears is the credits and therefore non poetic, however the words of the poem are present in the form of a voiceover. It was also seen that movement as visual effect is a communicative dimension at play in ePoetry something that is not present in analogue poetry. Correspondingly it could be argued that the presence of this dimension (motion) is essential to the recognition of a piece as an ePoem. This logic concurs with the E.L.O.'s statement regarding electronic poetry being "kinetic poetry presented in Flash and using other platforms" (E.L.O.: Online). The word "kinetic" here signifies movement or motion, without such motion the poetry simply mirrored the print medium, that is, static and unmoving, irrespective of whether it included images or just text. So motion is present, visual and audio elements were similarly most usually present but not necessarily always co-present.

According to this reasoning, without movement the apparatus is merely recreating the poem in its analogue form. Despite the fact that this is being done by the computer, a simulation machine (as per Hayles, 2004: 71), by recreating the static analogue form it is not utilising the potential of the medium, that is the dynamic processes of which the computer is capable. Notably this concurs with the E.L.O.'s (Online) explanation of the term electronic literature. "The term refers to works with important literary

aspects that take advantage of the capabilities and contexts provided by the stand-alone or networked computer” (E.L.O.: Online).

However as per this logic without movement a poem is not an ePoem, it is a poem with audio and/or visuals, it is static as it is in print. Therefore it is not an ePoem, however *it has been created by the apparatus* namely the computer, a simulation machine. Consequently to synthesise the argument of Chapter 4.C.i *Simulations of Representations*, by virtue of having been created by the simulation machine an ePoem is therefore a simulation. So as per postmodernist discourse it is a simulation of a representation, which as previously stated is a core feature of ePoetry. *Therefore a piece without movement that has been created and is experienced through a computer is still an ePoem, as it is still a simulation of a representation. Subsequently motion is not an essential characteristic of ePoetry but the apparatus is.*

Therefore this reasoning in fact accounts more completely for all potential kinds of ePoetry that could be encountered, most probably online but also possibly hidden away on an unknown ePoet’s hard drive somewhere in the world. As per this logic an ePoem may for example consist of only visuals and motion but contain no interactivity. Alternatively an ePoem may consist of visuals and interactivity but no motion, or even just visuals, yet by dint of it being created and experienced on the computer it is still recognised as an ePoem. Granted, as we have concluded from discussions to date in this body of work, it may not be an engaging or affective ePoem, but this research is not overly concerned with value judgments regarding ePoetry. Rather it is more concerned with understanding the process of its creation and resulting implications on form and meaning-making in the digital space. This revised ePoetry rhetoric then corresponds more closely to Jenny Weight’s description of her work. “My work *Concatenation* is a text-as-apparatus. It was necessarily created within, and necessarily experienced via the computer” (Weight, 2006: 417). Despite the fact that Weight proposes this definition in relation to generative ePoetry we can now see that it can be applied to all types of ePoetry. This further supports Weight’s (2006) technosocial theory that it is necessary to view communication in ePoetry as a trilogical relationship whereby the apparatus is considered as much a part of the undertaking as the creader and the ePoet.

This logic however raises another question. If motion is not a defining characteristic of ePoetry but the apparatus is, then what about a poem written in Microsoft Word? Could this in itself constitute an ePoem? As long as it is being accessed on the computer, then yes, it is an ePoem. If the poem in Microsoft Word has links within it to a web site or to another document then it is clearly an ePoem at its most basic level. However if it does not then it could equally have been created without the apparatus so it is not an ePoem. Nonetheless when viewing a poem in Microsoft Word on the computer the reader has the option of deleting or moving words if they wish, an option not available to him/her in print. This corresponds to Vos' (2007: 199) previously quoted view that ePoetry is "innovative poetry created and experienced within the environment of new communication and information technologies – and it could not have been created nor cannot be experienced in other environments". As soon as the poem is printed it is no longer an ePoem, it has been transformed into an analogue poem. In this case it should be recognised that the apparatus is used as a tool for the creation of a poem but is not essential for accessing it. Therefore the apparatus that is an essential feature of ePoetry is not the Internet, it is not Microsoft Word, it is not Adobe Flash, it is in fact the computer. As Murray (2012: 8) states, "calling objects made with computing technology 'new' media obscures the fact that *it is the computer that is the defining difference not the novelty*". Logically then it is also clear that *humans are also an essential characteristic of ePoetry* as in order for the computer to run it needs a human to press a button. Here then we can see further confirmation of Weight's (2006) proposed technosocial trilogical relationship.

This logic then expands considerably the definition of an ePoem. If every poem written and viewed in Word is an ePoem then there are many more ePoems in existence than initially anticipated. Much contemporary poetry is written directly onto a computer but it is unknown how much of it is ever printed out. As Bassett (2010: 145) referenced Hayles (2008: 43) in suggesting that the printing out of a poem "is simply one way to view what is *already* a digital text". Further exploration of ePoetry in light of this is a potential avenue for future research. For example interviews could be conducted to see how many poems in Microsoft Word or other similar text editing software are stored on computers, and how many of these were ever printed out.

This study has made it clear that not only is the apparatus essential to ePoetry but so too are we. Therefore appropriate importance was afforded to the consideration of Jenny Weight's technosocial theory regarding the trilogical relationship that consists of three partners - the human programmer or artist, the executing apparatus and the human interpreter (Weight, 2006: 414). The apparatus may perform in unanticipated ways along with the added variable of the human interpreter now becoming active in determining the actual form of the poem. When we also add to this the increased range of elements that the ePoets now have at their disposal (sound effects, links, music, text, buttons, colours, images, motion graphics) it means that in ePoetry there exist many more potential variations in levels of meaning than in traditional analogue poetry. However this expanded scope for expression and interpretation does not change the basic mechanics of poetry. It merely expands their potential to augment or diminish the poetic experience. What it *does* change is knowledge regarding our part in the process, the human and apparatus communication within the exchange, the cybernetic loop (Aarseth, 1997: 22).

When referring to Mangan's translations of Irish poetry to English, Robert Welch suggests, "it brought a freedom of approach to verse translation from the Irish, so that frequently the question arises as to whether what he did at his best can fruitfully be seen as translation at all. Thus, while strictly speaking playing havoc with the original Irish, freed the old verse to new uses and experiences through the transforming power of Mangan's restless imagination" (Welch, 1988: 119). It is clear how this can equally be applied to poetry translation from analogue to digital. The ePoems are freed to "new uses and experiences" through the transformative power of the digital imagination of the ePoet. We can also see that those examples that proved more effective were those that completely embraced the freedom of the digital realm, such as Monica Ong's *Fallow* (Online). Conversely the ePoet Robinson chose to stay within the limitations of the old analogue realm for poetic and imaginative expression in his ePoem *A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House*. (Anderton & Robinson: Online).

B. eTemperaments - Poetry Criticism Revisited

Moving onto an analysis of the ePoems themselves in Chapter 4 *Poetry Transformations*, Orr's (1996) theory of poetry was revisited and revised for the digital realm.

According to Orr (1996: 270), the temperament of music refers to the interaction of syllables, syntax, and sounds inherent in the reading or reciting of the poem, and is that which creates its aural and rhythmical structure. However in ePoetry this temperament now needs to incorporate sound effects and audio as well as the rhythm contributions created by the use of eMedia potentialities such as motion graphics and interactivity. Evidence of all of these possibilities has been seen in this research. For example, the video of the underground and escalators in *Ten Doors Closing* (Sheehan: Online) had the effect of almost exponential rhythmic expansion in combination with voiceover recitation of the Orphic poetry. Similarly in *The Burning* (Dorris & Kuypers: Online) the additional underlying audio track which repeats the key line, "how these were the hands that should have pushed you away from me" along with the dynamic accompanying transitions in the alpha and colouring of colour gradients can likewise be seen to have a similar multiplier effect. There is the rhythm of the music of the song but there is also a visual rhythm to the imagery of the poem. And, as is the case for both music videos and ePoetry, these can provide an extra rhythmic layer just outside of the music or poem's grasp (Vernallis, 2004: 266-267).

Notably however we saw that the temperament of music can also be reduced through the use of interactivity. For example, in the ePoem *I didn't know infants in arms until* (Petrosino & Weychert: Online), when the reader is required to click "next" to make the subsequent line of the poem appear. The necessity of having to click the mouse so frequently reduces the emphasis on the rhythm of the poem in this particular case. However though the emphasis on rhythm is reduced, sound effects are used to a great extent in this piece and these also fall into the category of music thereby maintaining some element of this temperament at play. It was evident that such offsetting of one source of the temperament of music with another one is not uncommon in the ePoems.

Chapter 6 *Meaning Making in ePoetry* delved into interactivity in ePoetry and established that it is possible to create ePoems with extensive interactivity (as in Jenny Weight's generative ePoem *Concatenation* [geniwaite: 2006]) that allow the creader the freedom to create their own poetic experience within the existing source text. However it also became apparent that the use of interactivity in this manner is not common, rather it is more often used to control the pace of presentation of the poem. Conversely it was also seen that when extended interactivity was provided it had the potential to allow the creader freedom to such an extent that interaction came at the cost of the poetry. The poetic rhythm of the piece was negatively impacted on by reducing the experience to a series of technical interactions devoid of poetic content such as in the case of *Vniverse* (Strickland & Lawson: 2004). This brings the ePoem to the point where it is questionable whether there is poetic expression taking place at all. Rhythm, it is clear however is essential to poetic meaning whether analogue or digital, and as such, patterning as accretive meaning production as outlined by Seaman (2005: 14) is particularly relevant here. Through repetition the creader accretively constructs a narrative. Interestingly this is a feature particularly suited to the repetitive rhythmical nature of poetry.

When referring to Orr's temperaments of poetry the dynamic tension or marriage of contraries, when applied to analogue poetry, refers to the dynamic tension brought about by a marriage of contraries of the temperaments. In ePoetry this differs as a result of interactivity and the incorporation of motion graphics. In ePoetry the marriage of contraries can *still* be found to be within textual levels and sequencing as before (as per Holmes [1994]).⁵² However the marriage of contraries is also evident in the interplay between text and visual displays and motion graphics. Alternatively the marriage of contraries might be within the visual displays themselves (text itself here can be considered as a visual display independent of textual meaning). Text is now accompanied more and more not only by image but also sound and interactivity.⁵³ This reaffirms discussions in Chapter 6 *Meaning Making in ePoetry*, which cites Kress' (2003: 64) belief in the importance of focusing on each element with equal attention be it text or image and that all these now need to be treated as signs that have communication value. As previously cited, Kress (2003: 65) tells us that the screen more than the page is now the dominant site of representation and communication.

Chapter 4 *Poetry Transformations*, problematised traditional poetry criticism in terms of its applicability to online content. It was therefore suggested that ePoetry requires eTemperaments to be brought into Orr's theory (1996), for example the inclusion of audio as an eTemperament. The rationale for this being that incorporating audio (such as sound effects or background music) into Orr's (1996) temperament of music as well as the rhythm of a piece is requiring too much from one temperament. Due to the increased potential in the digital realm for elements in the ePoem to effect the musical temperament, it makes more sense to consider Music in terms of sub categories, such as tonal contributions (from voice or other audio), rhythmic contributions (from tonal factors, plus for example, motion graphics and interactivity). Overall it can be argued that Orr's temperaments might now best be considered in terms of how they are expressed not only in relation to both the analogue dimensions of expression (as in traditional poetry), and the eMedia dimensions (eTemperaments) but also in terms of how these two dimensions relate to each other in a given ePoem. It is evident that for example the visual language of the ePoem should not communicate the exact same literal message as the audio, the two should complement through a dynamic tension of opposites, otherwise they are seen to cancel each other out (as per Orr [1996] and Lévi-Strauss' pronouncements [in Branston & Stafford, 2010: 49]). Therefore ePoetry needs not only to be considered in light of Orr's (1996) temperaments of story, structure, music, and imagination but also and most carefully in light of eTemperaments which could consider, audio, visual motion, and interactivity. The increased communicative dimensions, brought about through the interplay of temperaments and eTemperaments, demonstrates the extended potential of the digital realm to facilitate or undermine poetic expression.

C. The ePoet as Translator

Chapter 5 *ePoems as Translations* established that it is in fact the ePoet (the eMedia technologist) who is primarily steering the process of translation. The contributions of the original analogue poet to the process of translation were so minimal as to be considered non-existent. It is the interpretation of the ePoet that is the message being transmitted and that interpretation lies at the core of both adaptation and translation which are inextricably linked.

An important conclusion arrived at through the course of this research is that the ePoets and translators are in fact the eMedia technologists. These are in fact the poets and poetry translators of the electronic age, not the original analogue poets.

Regardless whether the ePoem is an organic, analogous or mimetic translation, as per Holmes' (1994: 26-27), it is clear that it is the ePoets who are making the creative decisions and putting forward their own interpretation. The only exception to this is when the ePoet is also the poet, for example Kate Greenstreet uses Final Cut Pro and Motion to create eVersions of her own analogue poems, such as *The Ballad Form* (Online). On entering into this research I anticipated a collaborative process between the ePoet and the original poet, but after conducting interviews it was clear that this was not the case. A collaborative relationship is evident most specifically between the ePoet and the apparatus as per Weight's trilogical relationship (Weight, 2006: 414). Likewise the readers should not be forgotten, as they too will bring into play their own personal blend of memories and experiences. In the case of *Generative* and *Interactive ePoetry* the interactivity present can allow the readers to create an even more unique (as due to each individual's coding we all interpret poetry uniquely anyway, whether analogue or digital) poetic experience.⁵⁴

What is interesting regarding translation theory is that although the translators are first and foremost eMedia practitioners and their focus is on the explicit or implicit characteristics of the eMedia, many aspects of Holmes' (1994) classic model regarding analogue translation are still evident. This comes about despite these aspects not being consciously considered by the translators or ePoets when translating to eMedia. As previously outlined in Chapter 5 *ePoems as Translations* we can see through application of Holmes' (1994: 26-27) theories of translation to ePoetry examples and ePoet interviews, they did indeed create translations which were mimetic, analogical, organic or deviant. Although, as we have seen, the majority of the ePoems discussed fell into the category of *organic* translations whereby the content was similar to the original poem but the form was different. Evidence of translation on both the structural and serial planes is also apparent. Translations were also clearly seen to be charted (albeit unknowingly) on the linguistic context and literary intertext, and the socio-cultural situation. Quite often we saw the potential for

audio and graphics to place the translations within a specific socio-cultural situation and the text and/or voice-over placed it within a literary intertext and linguistic context as in the case of, for example, *The Last Day of Betty Nkomo* (Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries: Online). In this ePoem English words in modern western large black Monaco font are used in conjunction with old-fashioned Korean music towards simple but effective poetic effect.

D. Future Research Potential

The evaluations of the poetic experiences evoked and the effectiveness of such evocation in the ePoetry discussed in this research are of necessity based on my own interpretation. Future research into these topics, such as readers' evaluations of their ePoetic experiences and their explanations of such, could readily be designed on the basis of the findings reported here, which at least suggest the sorts of dimensions that necessitate consideration. Such research would need to focus on the demographic groupings in relation to ePoetry. These might include, for example, comparisons of appropriate samples of high versus low/no (1) expertise in working within eMedia, (2) consumption of eMedia, and (3) background in reading/writing traditional poetry/literature.

My current plan however for developing this research further is to take what I have learned here in terms of the various poetic, translation and electronic factors at play in the creation of ePoetry and to use such knowledge to construct an ePoem. The standard project design cycle of design, build, and user test could then be initiated towards the end goal of creating an ePoem that is informed by this research and as such is in a position to harness the full poetic potential of the eMedia. The ePoem that I create would then serve as an example of incorporating theory and practice together (praxis) and be emblematic of effective poetic expression in a digital age. This would enable me also to gather further information on the consumption of ePoetry as to date in this research I have dealt primarily with the creation of ePoetry.

The consumption of ePoetry is also a possible future area for research rich in potential and currently unexplored in a systematic academic manner. Judging from the reactions to date at conferences where I have presented papers based on this research

the initial reaction has been one of curiosity around this contemporary field, followed by growing interest in the potential applications of the findings to other areas of eMedia such as interactive TV and game design.⁵⁵ The logic of this being that the dimensions at play in making an effective ePoem could similarly be used to create effective interactive content for the contemporary digital realm.

It is clear however that interactivity can be a double-edged sword and interactivity ought not come at the cost of for instance the music or overall meaning of the ePoem.⁵⁶ As was seen in *I Didn't Know Infants in Arms* (Petrosino & Weychert: Online) which constantly required the creader to click the mouse to proceed. This requirement essentially served to withdraw the creader from the immersive environment of the ePoem and so shatter the illusion and emotional connection. This corresponds to what Kerr et al. (2006) suggest when they list immersion as one of the key pleasures in the eMedia.

However on the other end of the spectrum in the ePoem *Backbeat* (ARCantú: Online) the music of the piece is not broken, but the lack of any real interactivity means the creader does not form a strong connection with the poem. The trilogical relationship (Weight, 2006) of the cybernetic loop (Kennedy, 2011: 206) is one sided, resulting in an unrewarding experience for the creader, as is true of any conversation where only one party speaks. This need not be the result if, for example, the use of interactivity actively engages the creader in the process of creating his/her own poetic experience. See for example previous discussions of *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online) and *When you reach Kyoto* (geniwaite & Stefans: Online). Interaction should not come at the cost of the music of the ePoem but neither should we restrict the potential of interactivity as it is this very potential that is at the core of a rewarding ePoetic experience for the creader.

One solution would be to embrace emerging technologies such as gesture based technology or indeed haptic screens to overcome such limitations. Larissa Hjorth (2011: 437-448) refers to haptic screens in relation to the touch screens of mobile media, she suggests that the screen is no longer about visuality but about touch (2011: 440). This is ideal for the purposes of ePoetry as the more intuitive nature of these

technologies mean that the spell of the ePoem need not be broken by the need for the creader to lift his/her head and look for the mouse, a simple hand movement will be enough to proceed within the piece. As Hjorth (2011: 444) proposes when discussing mobile media “it is the touch of the device, the intimacy of the object, that makes it so meaningful”, the tactile process of the analogue is recreated in the digital through the haptic screen.

The iPad for example provides access to such technology and yet still offers a large enough screen and high quality resolution to be able to comprehensively view the visual representation of the ePoetic environment. The current small screen size of haptic mobile phones will restrict the visual potential of the piece, this is a restriction not suffered by the iPad. Also a requirement for the creader to use headphones could help cocoon him/her in the poetic environment aurally with minimal distractions from the outside world.

As Holmes states (1994: 45-47), the choices made by the translator at the start of this process will dictate the path the rest of the poem will take and automatically shut off certain choices and open others. In order to maximize the poetic impact and connection with the creader I could potentially chart the ePoem I create using Holmes’ (1994) model.

It is clear that allowing the creaders to construct their own experience using the ePoetic machine allows for a more personalised and therefore more memorable, affective and engaging piece. An example of such could be to present creaders with interactive objects on screen that each have the potential to evoke a memory. As they select perhaps an old photograph from the screen, the image distorted just enough that the creader’s own memories will fill in the blanks. An exploratory ePoetic environment similar to that of *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online) would allow creaders to construct their own ePoetic experience through the piece. The option for the creader to save his/her own unique ePoetic experience could also be provided so that he/she might play it over and over again like a song or film.

The audio ought to be evocative but not distracting, SamuelChristopher's (Online) *Hunger* is a good example of this. Audio of creaking and groaning that correspond to the visual environment has been incorporated in a subtle manner in order to suggestively enable the creader's mind to fill in the mental spaces those visuals have left blank. Collins and Delcan's (Online) ePoem *The Dead* is indicative of the opposite of this type of approach. The creader is provided with not only the audio of the poem spoken aloud but also each image of the poem is presented in detail through animation. This leaves no space in the creader's mind to personalise and visualise the poetic imagery themselves.

Considering also the scope for expanded creader interaction that is now available through the use of haptic screens and gesture technologies such as respectively the iPhone or the Nintendo Wii, much more complex and rewarding creader interaction can be provided. Flash has been proved compatible with Nintendo Wii motion sensor technologies and it is in fact becoming evident that the Flash player is permeating throughout many different platforms and operating systems.⁵⁷ However the antagonism between Adobe and Apple being what it is, the alternative of HTML5 is also available (Dilger: Online).

Essentially technology can and will change, but the use of this technology to create new literary experiences is something that ePoets can and will become more expert in. This research has provided an in depth study of the processes surrounding the translation of ePoetry from print to digital towards the goal of expanding our knowledge and mastery of the digital realm. We have learnt to walk and even run in cyberspace, but we have not always planned our routes and often found ourselves somewhere other than our intended destination. Now however we are more experienced travellers in the digital landscape so through an analysis of past experience let us calmly and thoughtfully chart our route to our desired destinations such as that of targeted poetic expression in the electronic realm.

E. Limitations of the Research

The ePoets and ePoems examined here are a sample cyberspec of what is currently in existence. Whilst this research has examined a representative sample of ePoems and

correspondingly ePoets whose ePoetic forms were chosen in order to be inclusive of the variety of ePoetry in existence, there exist many more that are not accessible through the Internet. As such this study was limited to those ePoems and ePoets that were accessible online.

Another limitation is that the field of digital media changes so rapidly that innovative technologies can radically impact upon the ePoetic form. However this study remained cogniscent of this and the extended period of six years that part-time PhD study requires, allowed me the added benefit of being able to monitor the rapid changes in technology and online content during this period. As well as this, the fact that I continued throughout to lecture full time meant that every year my students provided a fresh cohort of 'research assistants' constantly drawing my attention to new and interesting forms of online content.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that this investigation focused on specific ePoetry examples, namely non-commercial examples that began their life as analogue print poems before the move to digital. Therefore it is imperative to recognise that the conclusions arrived at in this investigation regarding the poetic affordances of the digital poem as a new literary artefact can only be fully corroborated with reference to the ePoetry examples cited in this work. Nonetheless it is possible to more broadly conclude that translation theory can potentially be considered a useful trope, which can be effectively used to analyse ePoetry and digital culture in general.

F. Concluding Thoughts

This study has shown that translation theory can be a useful prism through which we are able to examine digital poems, specifically those that have moved from analogue to digital. It was found that although digital poetic expression provides greater potential for expansion compared to analogue poetry, nonetheless the basic mechanics remains essentially unchanged. The reception and consumption of poetry however has changed radically, for example the technosocial relationship evident in cybernetic discourse is a novel form of reciprocal collaborative communication that cannot be traced back to previous incarnations of technology or poetry. To use a basic metaphor, while the hammer might change the form of the nail, the hammer itself does not

noticeably change through usage to the same extent that the computer potentially can in the future as it evolves within the ever changing digital landscape.

As previously quoted in this thesis, Hayles (2004: 71) proposes a media specific analysis and posits that while it is seductive to think of text on the screen as similar to text on the page, it is nonetheless imperative to recognize the differences inherent in this new medium. To reiterate, it is these very differences from print (that is the dynamic processes at play in the machine) that are the reasons that the computer is such a good simulation machine (Hayles, 2004: 71).

So we see how integral the technology is to this new form, seeking to recreate print poetry in the electronic medium is not what ePoetry sets out to achieve. “It is a poetry based on the integration of characteristic features of these technologies in the strategies that underlie the writing and reading of poetic texts” (Vos, 2007: 199). With Morris’ “technoenvironment” (2006: 1) the development of ePoetry is still young. At this point we’re still in the period between, as Adalaide Morris (2006: 1) puts it, the lag between two kinds of knowledge. Morris (2006: 1) discusses Gertrude Stein’s belief that there exist two kinds of knowledge: what we know because it is what we see and do, and what we know because it is what we think.

This is relevant to this research as the manner in which we approach poetry is based and inherited from analogue generations however this now needs to be updated for the digital age. As Stein tells us we are each “nimble citizens of an always newly technologized, mediated world that hasn’t yet entered, much less altered, our categories of thought” (Morris, 2006: 2). Morris explains Stein’s belief that “what is seen depends on how everybody is doing everything” and Morris adds “that what we see and do is conditioned by a technoenvironment of digital computers, cell phones: DAs, video games, email, networked chatrooms, networked archives, and ubiquitous online banking and commerce” but what we think is conditioned by concepts developed mostly for print (Morris, 2006: 1). And so according to Stein our thinking has not caught up with our doing. We have all inherited our thinking from the analogue generations and this now needs reconsideration in light of the fact that the vast majority of human expression and communication is conducted through a digital apparatus.

Bill Maher, on his show *Real Time With Bill Maher* on HBO on Friday June 12th 2009, announced with relish it was the first day on which analogue television signals ceased transmission, so any one with an analogue T.V. watching his show was obviously hallucinating. In Ireland analogue television broadcasting is to cease in 2012 (Saorview: Online). Things have changed, our knowledge has changed but so too must our thinking.

This thesis has considered translation, adaptation, literary, digital media, and games theories in preceding chapters with reference to ePoetry examples and ePoet interviews. The present research addresses these issues and questions with particular reference to the translation of traditional poetry into the eMedia (although consideration is also given to the creation of ePoetry as it is relevant to the issues of concern). As such it is appropriate to use translation theory as a framework (in conjunction with the responses from ePoet interviews) to analyse the process of creation of ePoetry.

However if, as discussed in Chapter 2 *Digital Theory Literature Review*, ePoetry is not simply a remediated form of what has gone before but something entirely new, what then is my justification to use traditional poetry and translation theory as a framework in which to analyse ePoetry? The interdisciplinary use of cultural theory to study emerging forms allows us to create a contemporary hybrid framework more appropriate for analysis of emerging cultural and technological forms. Just because things have changed does not mean we completely disregard what has gone before, in fact what emerges now builds on previous models. As Branston and Stafford (2010: 3) state, “‘old’ approaches to different sets of power still produce valuable ways of exploring media forms for use in these times”. Similarly Buzetti and McGann tell us “present work and future developments in digital scholarship evolve from critical models that we have inherited” (Buzetti & McGann: Online). That is not to say however that these critical models do not merit revisiting and reviewing in light of recent cultural and technological developments.

The Man and the Machine

By right of fires that smelted ore

Which he had tended years before,
The man whose hands were on the wheel
Could trace his kinship through her steel,
Between his body warped and bent
In every bone and ligament,
And this 'eight-cylinder' stream-lined,
The finest model yet designed.
He felt his lesioned pulses strum
Against the rhythm of her hum,
And found his nerves and sinews knot
With sharper spasm as she climbed
The steeper grades, so neatly timed
From storage tank to piston shot –
This creature with the cougar grace,
This man with slag upon his face.
E. J. Pratt (1932: Online)

Glossary of Terms

ActionScript: the programming language of *Adobe Flash*.

Adobe (Adobe Systems): an American multinational computer software company.

Adobe Flash: *multimedia* authoring software. Previously known as *Macromedia Flash* prior to *Adobe's* purchase of *Macromedia*.

Animated Poems: See *Video/Animation Linear ePoetry*.

Auto Poetry: see *Generative ePoetry*.

Automatic Poetry: see *Generative ePoetry*.

Alpha Channel: *Adobe Flash* allows for an object's opacity to be completely faded out at 0% to fully in view at 100% in the alpha channel.

Apparatus: any programmed or programmable machine (Flusser, 2000).

Avatar: the visual representation of a computer user or game player's self in the digital realm, it can be either 2D or 3D.

AS: see *ActionScript*.

Creader: a combination of the words *creator* and *reader* to refer to what Barthes (1970) termed the *active reader*. eMedia content may require reading, viewing, listening, playing or using. Therefore for this research when appropriate I will replace the terms *user*, *viewer*, and *reader* with the single term *creader*.

Codework: the digital composition whereby code or code elements seep onto a screen to meld with existing elements such as text and image. In this case the code is not read by the *apparatus* but by the *creader* (Sondheim cited in Morris, 2006: 29).

Communication Media: see *Media*.

Computer Poems: see *ePoetry*.

Concatenation: a computer science term used in programming that signifies the combining of separate elements to form a whole (Hopcroft & Ullman, 1979: 1).

Concrete Poetry: poetry whereby the text is formed in a visual shape emblematic of the theme of the poem.

C.O.T.S.: Commercial Off The Shelf Game.

Digital: the content used/produced by machines with electronic circuits.

Digital Media: the product(s) of the *apparatus*, see also *eMedia*, *New Media*, *Multimedia*.

Digital Poems: see *ePoetry*.

Digital Videopoems: See *Video/Animation Linear ePoetry*.

Director: *multimedia* authoring software. Previously known as *Macromedia Director* prior to *Adobe's* purchase of *Macromedia*.

eMedia: see *Digital Media*.

ePoetry: poetry created and accessed by humans through the *apparatus*.

eTechnologies: digital technologies.

Final Cut Pro: video editing software.

fla: file extension used in *Flash* files. These are the professional working documents created and used by the ePoets.

Flash frame: in the authoring software *Adobe Flash* a frame refers to single unit of animation in the timeline.

F.T.P.: (File Transfer Protocol) computer application that enables file sharing through the Internet for ease of collaborative work, this is essential for larger multimedia files such as video or audio which are often too large to e-mail as attachments.

Generative ePoetry: ePoetry whereby code generates a unique poem based on programmed variables, variables such as for example, words, sounds, animations. and/or reader interaction.

H.C.I.: Human Computer Interaction.

HTML: (hypertext markup language) the programming language of web sites.

HTML5: the latest version of HTML.

Hypertext: a system whereby text (can also be graphics) displayed on an apparatus can be interacted with a cursor in order to access related content.

Hypertext Poetry: poetry that uses linking *hypertext*, most usually appears only in textual form. This form of ePoetry falls into the category of *Interactive ePoetry*.

Interactive ePoetry: ePoetry that requires interaction from the side of the reader to execute the piece such as clicking or dragging with the mouse or track pad of the computer.

Kinetic Concrete Poetry: animated or moving *Concrete Poetry*.

Lingo: the programming language of *Adobe Director*.

Macromedia: an American *multimedia* software company.

Media: “the press, the cinema, broadcasting, publishing and so on and the cultural and material products of those institutions” (newspapers, books etc.) (Lister et al, 2003: 9).

M.O.O.: MUD Object Orientated.

Motion: video-editing software.

Motion Tweening: this is one of the basic forms of animation in *Adobe Flash* which involves an object moving on screen.

M.U.D.: Multi User Dungeon.

M.U.S.H.: Multi User Shared Hallucinations.

Multimedia: see *eMedia*.

New Media: see *eMedia*.

Object-orientated Language: a programming language that applies elements of code to an object (for example a button or a graphic) as opposed to other methods of programming which are simpler but less powerful.

Pixel: a picture element is the smallest unit that makes up a digital image.

Preloader: an introductory screen that acts as a method for informing the creader that the main application is downloading and will begin shortly, they often also give a dynamic read out of the percentage of the total loaded to date and often some aesthetically pleasing graphics and/or interaction to keep the creader amused while they wait.

Sandbox Game: a game in which the player is free to roam the virtual game world and change and/or interact with any element in an order of their own choosing (Deen, 2011: Online).

Shape Tweening: one of the basic forms of animation in *Adobe Flash* whereby an object changes shape.

Skype: software for making voice calls over the Internet.

swf: file extension to signify *Shockwave Format*.

Shockwave Format: A file format used for multimedia content online. Usually these are the published *Flash* files that audiences can access through their browsers, as opposed to the *.fla* files which require the full professional *Flash* software to open.

Telematics: the combined use of telecommunications and informatics.

Video/Animation Linear ePoetry: ePoetry that is usually *Flash* animation or video pieces and which incorporates no interactivity at all. The *creader* in this case is a passive viewer as in traditional media consumption. These can also be referred to as *Video Poems* or *Digital Videopoems*.

Video Poems: See *Video/Animation Linear ePoetry*.

Video Text: ePoetry that uses only video and text.

Visual Poems: ePoetry that uses mostly visuals and no text.

YouSendIt: computer application that enables file sharing through the Internet for ease of collaborative work, this is essential for larger multimedia files such as video or audio which are often too large to e-mail as attachments.

Text generators: *generative ePoems* that produce only text, no visuals.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ MacPaint was a painting and drawing computer application that came free as part of the Macintosh operating system. HyperCard was a software application that allowed the user to input information on linking cards, it also was provided free as part of the Macintosh operating system in the early years of Apple computers.
- ² See Appendix J *A Taxonomy of ePoetry* for a more thorough explanation of ePoetry categories.
- ³ *ibid.*
- ⁴ Murray (2012: 51) purports that the representational affordances of the digital medium are: “encyclopaedic, spatial, procedural, and participatory”.
- ⁵ Such as for example AnchorFree’s Hotspot Shield.
- ⁶ *Napster* was an online music-sharing site which was shut down in 1999 due to copyright infringement (Silicon Republic: Online).
- ⁷ Please refer to the glossary of terms for an explanation of the term *creader*.
- ⁸ Traditional analogue media such as, audio cassettes, print newspapers, videotapes etc.
- ⁹ Jenny Weight’s online creative poetic work belongs to a sub-genre called *generative poetics*. This work is textual both with regards the programming and the surface display. Weight calls such texts “text-as-apparatus” and outlines their ultimate purpose “is to promote environments in which

interpretation happens”(Weight, 2006: 416). These texts differ from the ePoetry on which I am focusing in my research in that they most often contain a strong computer generative element or game element. The writer/programmer writes something that the apparatus will execute without a definite idea of how that execution will materialize. However in *Video/Animation* and *Interactive ePoetry* the ePoet does mostly know what the end result will look like but the way in which this will be interpreted by the reader is uncertain but anticipated, “depending on the programmer’s design, execution may be in user control, and interpretation most definitely is” (Weight, 2006: 418).

¹⁰ In film studies however the apparatus “refers to the interaction between spectators, texts, and technology” (Miller, 2000: 403).

¹¹ Internet browsers such as Mozilla’s Firefox, Microsoft’s Internet Explorer, or Safari to name but a few.

¹² Such issues regarding the human quest for meaning are central to the discussion and analysis of language throughout all fields of social science and the humanities. See, for example the literature on the attribution of causality in the field of social psychology (Gilbert, 1995) or the literature regarding signs and semiotics (Barthes, 1977) or the study of the pragmatics of human communication in social systems theory (Watzlawick et al., 1967).

¹³ Electronic Literature Organisation – this is an organisation of which I am a member and many of the practitioners and theorists referred to in this body of research are core members. Noah Wardrip-Fruin, Robert Kendall, Talan Memmott, Nick Montfort, Stuart Moulthrop, and Stephanie Strickland are on the Board of Directors. Espen Aarseth, Jay David Bolter, Loss Pequeño Glazier, N. Katherine Hayles, George Landow, and Jim Rosenberg are on the Literary Advisory Board.

¹⁴ See Chapter 2 *Digital Theory Literature Review* for a more detailed analysis of the term codework.

¹⁵ I have included a sample e-mail of an initial interview request in Appendix A.

¹⁶ The interview responses can be found in the Appendices.

¹⁷ The follow-up e-mail is available in Appendix B.

¹⁸ Aristotle’s analysis of tragedy broke it up into the following in order of importance: Plot, Character, Diction, Reasoning, Spectacle and Lyric Poetry (Aristotle, 1996: 11). By plot is meant “the organization of events” (Aristotle, 1996: 11), Character “is the kind of thing which discloses the nature of a choice” (Aristotle, 1996: 12), Diction “is verbal expression; this has the same effect both in verse and in prose” (Aristotle, 1996: 13), Reasoning is “the ability to say what is implicit in a situation and appropriate to it” (Aristotle, 1996: 12), Spectacle, the production of visual effects is “attractive, but is very inartistic and is least germane to the art of poetry” (Aristotle, 1996: 13). Aristotle views Diction and Lyric poetry as “the medium in which actors perform the imitation”, Diction is “the actual composition of the verse” and lyric verse is the rhythm and melody (Aristotle, 1996: 10). It is also important to note that the chorus was an essential element characteristic of Greek plays and most usually embodied by a large group of masked actors speaking in unison in rhyme most often expressing the voice of the Gods. Aristotle mentions the chorus and states “one should handle the chorus as one of the actors; it should be part of the whole and should contribute to the performance – not as in Euripedes, but as in Sophocles” (Aristotle, 1996: 30).

¹⁹ I return to this point in Chapter 6 *Meaning Making in ePoetry* in relation to the dynamic tension that is present in an ePoem when the separate communicative elements of the visual, textual and aural must complement, rather than mirror each other in a marriage of contraries for the necessary affective impact of an engaging ePoem.

²⁰ A detailed analysis of narrative in ePoetry appears in Chapter 6 *Meaning Making in ePoetry*.

²¹ Patterns are discussed further in Chapter 6 *Meaning Making in ePoetry*.

²² According to Barthes a *trope* is a figure of speech in relation to the system of signification in the field of semiotics (Gottdiener in Kellner, 1995: 27).

²³ Associative.

²⁴ Juxtapositional or contiguous.

²⁵ *Mise-en-scène* refers to all the separate elements that contribute to the making of a film such as story, props, characters etc.

²⁶ See Chapter 6 *Meaning Making in ePoetry* for more detailed discussion regard narrative in ePoetry.

²⁷ These elements and their impact on meaning making are discussed in detail in Chapter 6 *Meaning Making in ePoetry*.

²⁸ See Appendix J *A Taxonomy of ePoetry* for further information regarding types of ePoetry.

²⁹ James Holmes a poet and translator of poetry is credited with starting the attempt to map translation studies as an academic field of study in his article *The Name and Nature of Translation Studies* (Holmes, 1994: 67). Holmes broke the field into two main areas, Pure and Applied. The pure deals with the description of translation and the development of corresponding principles to help describe and explain it, this is the main area this research deals with. Applied is more practical and deals with activities such as translator training and developing practical translation aids such as dictionaries and term banks (Baker, 2001: 278).

³⁰ Holmes (1994: 29-30) demonstrates these approaches to form using the example of the opening lines of Book XI from the *Odyssey*, which describes the departure of Ulysses and his men from the island of Circe. Firstly there is Robert Fitzgerald's translation as analogical blank verse:

We bore down on the ship at the sea's edge
and launched her on the slat immortal sea,
stepping our mast and spar in the black ship;
embarked the ram and ewe and went aboard
in tears, with bitter and sore dread upon us.
Holmes (1994: 29)

Here is another version of the same passage in mimetic hexameter form by Richmond Lattimore:

Now when we had gone down again to the sea and our vessel
first of all we dragged the ship down into the bright water,
and in the black hull set the mast in place, and set sails,
and took the sheep and walked them aboard, and ourselves also
embarked, but sorrowful, and weeping big tears. Circe
Holmes (1994: 29)

And finally Ezra Pound's organic verse form reads:

And then we went down to the ship.
Set keel to breakers, forth on the godly sea, and
We set up mast and sail on that swart ship,
Bore sheep aboard her, and our bodies also
Heavy with weeping, so winds from sternward
Holmes (1994: 30)

Holmes' forms of translation can also be seen to be evident in translations of Louise Labé's sonnet *Ne reprises, Dames, si j'ay aimé* cited by Gerard P. Sharpling (2007: 132-133). We will focus in on the following two lines, which appear in the first tercet of Labé's sonnet.

Sans votre ardeur d'un Vulcan excuser,
Sans la beauté d'Adonis acuser, (Sharpling, 2007: 132)

Sharpling offers Dunstan Martin's verse translation of these two lines as an alternative to his own. This translation stays quite close to the original French sonnet in form and meaning and so can be viewed as analogical form of translation.

No need of Vulcan to explain your fire,
Nor of Adonis to excuse desire... (Sharpling, 2007: 132)

Sharpling offers us his own prose translation of the sonnet's two lines, which can be viewed as an organic form of translation, as the form has changed but the content remains much the same.

Love can strike at any time. If that happens, there is no chance of running away from an old, jealous husband, or blaming the irresistible beauty of your lover (Sharpling, 2007: 133).

It is Sharpling's view that the linguistic shift in the prose translation softens the directness of the impact of the imperative forms in the original sonnet (Sharpling, 2007: 133). Sharpling (2007: 134) proposes that the prose is read more like a psychological document and so shows the poet to be more actively involved in her own fate and less of a passive recipient.

³¹ Orr's (2004) *temperaments* are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3. *Poetry Transformations*.

³² Nida's goal was to translate the Bible into the language that people actually speak by working from the original Hebrew and Greek and not by paraphrasing. This was a goal not always welcomed by all Christians, as some would see a studied scholarly approach and dissection of the bible as irreverent. Furthermore Nida envisioned a Bible that was acceptable to both Catholics and Protestants and was the main driving force in the production of cross-denominational bible translations around the world. (Fox, 2011: Online).

³³ Equivalence is a core concept in translation studies. When translating the translator must find a new message that means, *the same as* or *is equivalent to* or *corresponds to* the original message. Holmes (1994: 35-44) refers to equivalence in the sense that Catford (1965: 88-89) proposes as opposed to the sense that Nida (1964: 77) suggests though both define translation in terms of equivalence relations. Catford (1994: 88-89) proposes a referential theory of meaning and argues that translational equivalence occurs when Source Texts (STs) and Target Texts (TTs) can be related to some similar elements of an extralinguistic domain such as persons, objects and memories (Baker, 2001: 101-104).

³⁴ At a cross cultural level take, for example, the use of the phrase in English originally translated from Hebrew or Greek "love the lord with all your heart" in Matthew 28:30. Translated into West African, this would more accurately be, "love the Lord with all your liver" (Schaeffer, 1999: Online).

³⁵ Take for example the English translation of the poem *Rustic Landscape* (*Rustiek landschapje*) by the Flemish poet Paul Snoek, which Holmes' cites in his paper *Poem and Metapoem: Poetry from Dutch to English* (Holmes, 1994: 15).

Rustic Landscape

The ducks are like our cousins:
they waggle and walk
and slavering at the mouth
in the mud grow old.

But all at once a terrific
bang almost breaks
their pleasant peasant membranes.

That was the farmer himself of course:
he's trying the shotgun out,
the lout. He cut an apple
in the snout and cried, stark red
with relief: "I'm dressing,
yes, a golden pear."

And did those quacking cousins have a laugh.
(1) They prune their roses
with a crooked knife;
(2) How old are the ducks?
(Holmes, 1994: 15)

Holmes states that the main theme of the poem in the original Dutch is the juxtaposition of the “ganzen” (geese) and “onze tantes” (aunts) with descriptive “waggelen” but then this translation would create acoustic difficulties with line 14, as geese do not quack but honk. Honking then perhaps leads us to the inappropriate association of honking car horns, so this brings us back to quacking and in English geese do not quack and so we must use ducks. Ducks however are not all female like aunts and so this leads us to relatives, which might be of both sexes, cousins. The image of quacking cousins is quite different to honking aunts. The translator here had to make decisions based on reconstructing the acoustic qualities of the Dutch while possibly sacrificing the poem’s main imagery. Earlier on in his paper Holmes states, “a root problem of all translation is the fact that the semantic field of a word, the entire complex network of meanings it signifies, never matches exactly the semantic field of any one word in another language” (Holmes, 1994: 9). The example used was from Dutch to English, two western languages not completely alien to each other, imagine then the semantic complication of languages, which do not even use the same alphabet never mind cultural semantic imagery.

³⁶ See Chapter 4 *Poetry Transformations* for a more thorough discussion of the metaphor of lamp and the mirror in relation to poetry.

³⁷ Translating the first line of a sonnet *De moeder de vrouw* by the Dutch poet Martinus Nijhoff Holmes (1994: 45-51) outlines some of these problems. The first line reads “Ik ging naar Bommel om de brug te zien”, should the translator choose to translate this line word for word then it would read, “I went to Bommel for the bridge to see”. While this reflects the syntax of the Dutch it is however not correct English. So let’s put it in correct English “I went to Bommel to see the bridge”, while this is grammatically correct, it sounds like a nursery rhyme not a sonnet (“I went to London to visit the Queen”) and so is not appropriate for this piece. Therefore let’s adjust the text to include a sonnet metre, “I went to Bommel, went to see the bridge”. This however changes the tone of the poem from a colloquial one to a more archaic, sedate tone. However the cultural references must also be considered. For the Dutch reader the place name of Bommel is well known, particularly for the fact that in 1933 a new bridge was opened across the river Waal at “Bommel”. All this is lost on the English language reader who might not even know that Bommel is a place name. So then the question arises whether the translator should substitute the name Bommel for a place name that an English reader may recognise so as to be able to slot it in into the same temporal slot in literary and cultural history as the original. Evidently the problems of translation can be vast.

³⁸ According to Nida when translating we deal with three parameters; linguistic, paralinguistic and extralinguistic (Werner, 2001: 51). Jakobson (1959: 260-6) grouped all forms of translating and interpreting under inter-linguistic, intralinguistic, and inter-semiotic presentation.

³⁹ Though in my writing I use British spelling when Holmes coined these terms he used American spelling so to remain accurate to his terminology when I use these terms I retain his original spelling and italicise the term in order to note this.

⁴⁰ An early version of this chapter (Chapter 6 *Meaning Making in ePoetry*) has been published in 2011 in *Interactive Poetry – New Content for New Technologies* in Vukanovic, Z. & Faustino, P., “Managing Media Economy, Media Content and Technology in the Age of Digital Convergence”, Media XXI: Lisbon.

⁴¹ The A.B.S. was founded in 1816 and is a group that publishes, distributes, and translates the bible. Dr. Eugene Nida was Executive Secretary of the Bible Society’s Translation department and worked with the group for 50 years.

⁴² Such as, for example, Dr. Eugene Nida (1964) who was mentioned in Chapter 5 *ePoems as Translations* in relation to the translation theory of “functional equivalency” or “dynamic equivalency” which proposes a translation of meaning for meaning rather than word for word.

⁴³ There are various scripting solutions in Flash which would allow the reader to modify evocative effects such as sound volume or pan, movieclip properties such as color, size, location, rotation, alpha, etc. via interactivity while the Flash swf movie is playing. Likewise anyone who is proficient in AS scripting in Flash could now write scripting solutions which would create the sort of repetitive, re-iterated text effects used within generative poetry and provides the necessary ActionScripting to achieve such effects in Flash (version CS3 and upwards), such as using AS3.0 scripting.

⁴⁴ I discuss Holmes’ (1994) theories of translation in greater detail in Chapter 5 *ePoems as Translations*.

⁴⁵ Hypertext Markup Language, the basic code used to build web pages.

⁴⁶ Math.random scripts are a type of ActionScript, which is the programming language of Adobe Flash.

⁴⁷ The programming language of Adobe Director is Lingo (Nyquist & Martin, 2000: 4).

⁴⁸ String is a programming term, which refers to the data type of literal text to be displayed (as opposed to code to be interpreted) (Adobe Creative Team, 2010: 25).

⁴⁹ The other key pleasures of new media, that Kerr et al. (2006) list are: play, control and flow, performance and competition, narrative, and intertextuality.

⁵⁰ This information is available on the loading screen which reads, “Powered by Adobe © Director ©”.

⁵¹ This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 *ePoems as Translations*.

⁵² See Chapter 5 *ePoems as Translations*.

⁵³ See Chapter 6 *Meaning Making in ePoetry*.

⁵⁴ See *A Taxonomy of ePoetry* in Appendix J for a more thorough explanation of genres.

⁵⁵ *Poetry as a Game – An Analysis of Online New Poetry Games* - Osaka Symposium on Digital Humanities, University of Osaka, Japan, September 2011 and *Pictelín* Creative Media Conference, DKIT, Ireland, August 2011.
Online Interactive Poetry – Poetry as a game - Symposium on Game-Based Learning, Waterford Institute of Technology, May 2011.
Interactive Poetry – Poets and Programmers - European Conference on Interactive TV and Video, Tampere University of Applied Sciences, Finland, June 2010 - published by ACM.
Games as Art or Artifact – Poetry as a Game – Game Education Summit June 2009, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, U.S.A. June 2009.
Multimedia Translation – Department of Music and Creative Media Research Colloquium, Dundalk Institute of Technology, Ireland, 2006.
Translations – Meanings and Media, Digital Culture Research Colloquium, Dundalk Institute of Technology, Ireland, 2006.

⁵⁶ The interaction of syllables, syntax, and sounds inherent in the reading or reciting of the poem, which creates its aural and rhythmical structure (Orr, 2004: 274).

⁵⁷ Gesture based interaction gaming system.

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In the interest of accuracy I have not corrected any grammatical or spelling errors in the responses to my interview questions, I have reproduced them exactly as I received them.

Appendix A. Sample e-mail of initial interview request

Sent to info@pixelumbrella.com 15/12/08 12:30pm

Dear Mr. Robinson,

My name is Jeneen Naji and I am a member of the Multimedia Faculty in the Department of Applied Communications at Dubai Men's College, part of the Higher Colleges of Technology in the United Arab Emirates. Originally from Ireland I teach new media theory and practice here in Dubai. In addition to this I am working towards a Ph.D., under the supervision of Dr. Bill Dorris in the School of Communications at Dublin City University. My research focuses on the theory and practice of translating traditional poetry into the new media.

I have previously showcased some of your work in this area specifically A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House. by Lucy Anderton online at Born Magazine and your website pixelumbrella to students on my multimedia modules.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to make contact with you and ask you a few questions regarding your approach to creating new media poetry such as A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House. If it is possible to do such an interview, by e-mail or Skype etc. - whatever suits on your end - I would of course send along my interview questions in advance, and limit the interview to whatever time make sense for you.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

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Best Regards,
Jeneen Naji

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Appendix B. Claire Allan Dinsmore Interview

Questions re Dazzle as Question (Sapnar Online)

<http://www.poemsthatgo.com/gallery/summer2002/dazzle/launch.htm> accessed 29/5/09

Interviewed by Megan Sapnar in July 2002 for Poems That Go, Issue Number 10, 2002, available at <http://www.poemsthatgo.com/gallery/summer2002/dazzle/interview.htm>

PTG: Your work "Dazzle as Question" which is featured in PTG Issue 10: Time-Based Media and the Web (Summer 2002), has been published before (February 2001 issue of TrAce's electronic magazine frAme) as well as appearing in Rhizome's artbase and the Electronic Literature Organization's State of the Symposium Gallery. Do you think your work changes depending on the venue/journal and/or audiences that view it? Would you consider this a form of "re-mixing"? Have your own views of the piece changed since you first created it?

CAD: I am not sure that the term 'remixing' is quite apropos in this case - that is, in respect to how I perceive that the work changes via various venues, etc., on the web. I do feel that the work does indeed change, that in fact it's almost constantly in flux - that effect is what The Dazzle as Question piece is about in many ways. Nonetheless, the term 'remixing' connotes something very particular, a specific change applied by a particular person[s] as a matter of choice and/or intention - it's nothing new in art. 'Found Art,' Duchamp's 'Readymade's come to mind in particular - as 'legitimizing' the remix as a genre unto itself really - context/intention as creation. I suppose I could find the term loosely applicable, but I still wouldn't be comfortable with the inexactitude I sense - unless, of course, the term was re-defined. In contrast, regarding web-work in particular that is, I feel that the changes are not so much intentional and designed by a given consciousness [at least in the case of The Dazzle as Question, it being a non-interactive piece], but are instead, generally, rather arbitrary ones. I.e., changes often effected by platform - the technology effecting said changes as opposed to a particular user effecting them.

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My own views of the piece have not changed since the creation of it - I am still, and always shall be I imagine, entertaining some of the doubts and questions posed within the piece. Mmmmm, and then comes the exceedingly loaded question of audience perception ... The notion raises questions of creation vs. outside/audience perception/reception which I believe have 'plagued' many an artist, within every genre and medium, since - well, I shall be a drama queen and say 'time immemorial.' In other words, I don't believe this is a question limited to the scope of web-work, but to creative work, and the [meaning of] the creative act in general. This matter is where the questions of [creative] meaning posed within The Dazzle ... meld into, shall we say, 'universal' questions of creativity. I could harp on forever regarding this subject, but I shall instead be generous enough to spare you my proclivity for pontification ...

PTG: I want to consider "linear" works of new media poetry vs. interactive pieces. Some people I have spoken with feel that non-linear, dynamic or reactive art takes better advantage of the nature of digital media. Yet, there's something to be said for time-based work... it can seem more "complete" I suppose, with a beginning, middle and end. What do you think the advantages are of working without interactivity? What does that enable you to do as an artist or bring to a viewer, and what do you feel are the greatest limitations?

CAD: As with any art, I believe form is an extension of content - the modality of a given work depending on the mood, shall we say, that the individual artist chooses to best voice that particular work, to convey its message as it were. In a recent trAce/ELO chat, I described my choice thus: " ... it's more choreography really - setting up a rhythm was one of the most important things for me. The meaning inferred by that rhythm, placing emphasis in time." When reading a poem for instance, the meaning can be construed very differently depending upon how the work is read - where emphasis is placed, lull - each nuance of elocution lending meaning to the distinct content of each particular word, and thus to the work as a whole. I wanted to further the levels upon which this piece functioned by lending the 'reading' a voice beyond how the words would tell if the piece were, say, straight prose. Poetry, of course, takes advantage of this by breaking lines,

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lending credence to the eloquence of silence via stanza, spacing, etc. - here I chose to lend the element of time to that play visually.

PTG: During a panel discussion at the ELO State of the Arts Symposium conference (April 6 2002), you mentioned that you became more involved with computer media because of your disability. Can you expand a little more on this? I was wondering how the Dazzle as Question and the conflict between the human and machine, left and right brain, might be influenced by your own experiences merging visual artist and computer guru.

CAD: Computer guru! I love the sound of the phrase, but I'm afraid I would never feel it fit quite right for me - I'm far from left-brain oriented enough. Not to say that I'm at all uncomfortable with the media/um, it's just too vast and prolific for, I think, any one person to really know. Well, one who puts art first anyway. The computer, for me, is chiefly a means - as paint to a painter, language to a writer.

To really answer this question though, I have to go back a bit: I've been making and designing things for as long as I can remember. A large part of creative visual work for me has always been the sensual element of the particular media I was working with, the tactile/textural element of it. Via the discovery of a brain tumor and ensuing surgery about 12 years ago, I lost the use of my right hand, and a lot of creative doors were closed to me. At the time I was a practicing metalsmith, and I kept trying to create work as I had before the disability. But it was never the same because, as a craftsman especially, real knowledge and control of my medium was a very important element of creation for me. A 'mastery' thing I suppose you could call it - rather densely honed when I studied ceramics in Japan. All of a sudden, although I could fake it, I no longer had that control.

A few friends suggested I try computer graphics. Being a staunchly right-brain type, I'll admit I rather balked at the idea: how could something so cold ever be a tool of expression? After a number of rather frustrating attempts at various new creative

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mediums, I decided to try the computer regardless of my blocks, shall we say, and immediately I was hooked. I was entranced by the media/um because, as a metalsmith especially, the technical elements of it satiated my 'mastery' cravings. I love to learn, and to be able to bring that element of the creative process, of one's relation with and to one's media/um into the work itself - this work seemed to speak of that process in a new way for me, one which I found quite enthralling. To some extent, I'm sure that was the newness - the interesting thing I've found though, after five years of working within the media/um, is that it never seems to lose that, how shall we say? pulse of life for me: it remains vital.

The media/um is never static and that's an inspiration in itself - relentless discovery ... On the other hand [or, rather, the other lobe], I am often haunted, as it were, by the limits the medium entails for me. For instance by the fact that, as noted above, the work does change upon almost every reading/viewing depending on the venue, the surfer's platform, monitor settings, speakers or lack there of, etc. The artist has NO control over this, and that's rather frightening in my opinion. One's works are one's 'children,' and one is allowing levels of exposure that almost invite misinterpretation, or loss, by unleashing their work on the web. And of course I miss getting my hands dirty, the sensual element of creation. Yes of course vision is a sense, and hearing, but web-work is much more cerebrally centered, with a little less gut involved - in my experience anyway. The conflict is rather constant for me, unless I'm intensely involved in the throes of creation which [thank god!] blot everything else out ... And then there's the conflict of content.

The artist and writer acquaintances of my former life are, chiefly, computer illiterate, and happy to be that way. I find I rarely have much in common with those I encounter in my new life - that is, rarely do I encounter an avid reader in my cyber travels, or people who really care about and/or live for art. Recently I took part in a list that counted amongst its members some of the best known designers on the web - they generally knew little to nothing about art, did not read and talked naught but coding. Don't get me wrong, coding is an art I believe, or possibly a craft, but I find it hard to see it as an end in itself artistically [a personal right-brain bias indeed]. It's simply a matter of the parameters of content exploration that don't often pique this particular lass's interests. And yet: then

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there's this marvelous space between - it has to do with connection. The awareness that there's always someone out there, on the other side you know not where. I almost feel the presence whether actively engaging it or not [email, posting, chatting, whatever]. There's something so alive in this machine because there is so great a human touch in it, or so infinitely many different human touches.

Much to my pleasure, I find that I am much more aware of the human element of the net than I am of the machine - the machine is simply the intermediary device. That's where the element of seduction comes in chiefly for me I suppose, in so many different voices haunting my awareness - they're all here with me, all the time. In the past the creative process was almost an act performed in a vacuum, part of the very process being the isolation itself. The web seems to negate an element of solipsism [however tiny ...][note: laugh here] in the artist, one which has generally been a necessary contingency of the creative act [in modern, Western times anyway]. That is the dazzle for me, or, at least, one very significant facet of it - one which keeps me returning to this wondrous media/um regardless of the relentless questions.

Appendix C. Bill Dorris Interview

Questions re The Burning (Bill Dorris) & Janet Kuypers (Online)

<http://homepage.eircom.net/~wdorris/theburning.html>

From bill.dorris@dcu.ie to jeneen.naji@nuim.ie on 12/04/2011 00:34

1. Overall what do you like most about the final piece?

I like that you can play and replay it over and over and never get exactly the same visual experience, and hence always have your emotional reaction to the audio nuanced slightly in one way or another. I like the way in which the combo of audio and visuals almost immerses you in the narrators experience both emotionally and perceptually.. in fact almost physically. I like that the poem is in not changed from the original analog poem, except that the intensity of the experience is increased and nuanced with each play. I like that I always want to replay it after I play it the first time.. but then I also like rereading some of my own poems.. enuff said...

2. How did you and the poet Janet Kuypers work together on this?

Janet sent me an audio of her poem which had two tracks, one of her reading the poem, and a second track which looped under the first throughout. this second track was her reading of one line in the poem being looped over and over again – “how these were the hands that should have pushed you away from me”. Janet also made available to me a massive online gallery of her own photos, any of which I could use, however I wanted in constructing an ePoem in Flash. (I could of course use other materials if wanted, but these photos were more than adequate for what I needed).

early on (3 Nov 2005) I sent Janet an outline of my general ideas re how to proceed (below). She thought these were fine, and said “However you go with it is splendid”. My sense about this, which I emailed her was “that whatever comes out of this has to work for both of us”. In line with this I later send her my first rough Flash version as asked for her comments. She suggested a few changes in colours which were helpful in finalising it.

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my initial ideas re what the flash poem should achieve were as follows, and these general ideas did not change, although the enactment of them in Flash certainly did evolve.

here's excerpts from my email to Janet 11/3/05:

general idea that came to me was triggered by the voice in the poem and the photo of you with glass in hand and empty bottles (photo was in Janet's online collection, she sent it to me as perhaps being of use.. it sure was)

flash movie as I hear and see it is slowish.. with no text, just J's voice and visuals being a mix of 1) what might be seen .. hazily or broken as in eg blinking of eyes or some such.. and 2) internal mix of colours and distorted images tied to what is going on in narrator's (Janet) head/heart.. and in both cases.. what is seen and what is going on in narrator's head/heart.. all is more hinted that realistic.. so viewer/listener puts together for self into own version of what it might be... everything shown visually and heard in audio is to be consistent and hopefully very evocative of the feelings/thots in the poem.. but none of this will be specifically located anywhere.. so viewer/listener makes own decisions as to where the actual person is situated.. or whether in fact the voice is coming from the person seen.. in any case the whatever the viewer/listener imagines should be consistent with the emotions/thots evoked in the poem.

3. What did each of you bring to the project?

see 2 above

4. What were your working arrangements? How did they contribute to the development of the final piece?

see 2 above

5. What sort of production challenges did this piece raise for you?

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the overall fla movie raised huge production challenges. the final version (well near final.. the one I have open at the moment) has 18 layers, all stretched over ~1350 frames. the library has 102 items, including 15 jpegs, the originals of which were often reworked in photoshop to have exactly the beginning and endpoints for images to use in motion tweens in mclips to evoke moving memories in the narrators mind while swf movie is playing.

in addition to the audio layer (with both poem and looped line in same audio), there are numerous movieclips with color gradients that alpha up and down over a number of frames. some of these contain simply one colour gradient motion tweeing. others contain 2 or more of the simple colour gradients stacked within a new movieclip. some of these also contain math.random scripts as discussed below to vary the perceptual and hence emotional experience.

use of Math.random scripts to nuance the viewers experience:

eg.: the script below was used in fr1 of 80 fr yellowwhite colour gradient movieclip in which the intensity and patterning of colours gradually changes. this particular clip is used 13 times in the ~1350 frames of the overall movie, both on its own and in combination with other colour gradient clips stacked on different levels in the Fla movie, with the result that anytime the swf movie is played it is virtually guaranteed that the experience of these colour gradients will be different than previous times.. and hence the emotional nuances triggered by such in relation to the ongoing audio will be slightly or perhaps sizably different.. without the listerer/viewer being aware of the cause of these differences.. and perhaps without even being aware of them occuring perceptually. Thus there is no exact repetition of the viewer's experience, but the viewer is never pulled out of the poem by the process of making interactive choices while viewing the swf movie. something that would have been virtually impossible anyhow with the entire fla movie constructed around a complete linear reading of the poem.

```
a=Math.random()*9+1;  
if(a<=4){
```

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```
        this.gotoAndPlay(2);  
    }  
    else{  
        this.gotoAndPlay(54);  
    }
```

a similar construction was used in an 80 fr mclip motionweening and alphaing a photo of the narrator with a bottle. this was used 14 times in the overall fla movie.

there are one or two more such movieclips.. I just haven't time to find them in the Fla at the moment.

so the final range and intensity of variation in the actual perceptual experience over the course of the swf movie was quite significant, although never explicitly brought to the awareness of the viewer.

6. How many major revisions i.e: reworkings of your approach would you say there were overall?

it took me a while on paper in terms of thinking and rough sketching to come up with the ideas which were the core of the final production – ie the use of color gradients, and motion tweens of images, as the key to varying the internal and external state of the narrator.. and hence the viewer's access to these states. after this was in hand.. ie the awareness that this could be done and would achieve the sort of effects I was looking for – always in relation to the double track audio which was there from the beginning.. ie that was what Janet gave me to work with.. from this point there were no major revisions of the poem.. but gawd were there minors.. and minors..

there were numerous minor revisions of the poem.. both in various attempts to construct initial eg color gradients, then combo colour gradiaents, then sizing them to fit the

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necessary length on the overall timeline to accompany the approp aspects of the audio track..

ditto with the images, first selecting and trying out various images from Janet's online collection. then gradually tweating those to be used both in photoshop and in combo in the various movieclips with multilayered clips alphaing up and down in relation to each other to create the overall desired effect re the memory involved (eg the man attacking the woman).. these of coruse had to be worked in length in relation to the audio track as with the color gradient clips.. this is a horrendous amount of work, which I suspect would only be appreciated by someone experienced (and stupid enough) to undertake such in flash.. (I loved it)

7. Did you work line by line, or in some other manner?

I literally worked word by word.. this was due to the fact that the poem was recorded and I was working with an existing audio reading (including the looped line under the whole poem). in all versions except the final production the top layer of the fla has indices marking the point at which various words start in audio. the trick was to construct the motionween movieclips - which all contained both movement as well as alphaing whether of color gradients or of images – so that I sensed in watching it that both the external appearance of the poet narrating (woman hunched over bottle), and various images presumably in her mind (eg the woman 'pushing' the man away from her); and simultaneously the inner sense both in relation to the images in her mind and the numerous colour gradient alphas conveyed what I got myself from reading the poem and listening to the audio. conveyed is the sense of made it immensely jore powerful sensually and hopefully thus also as a poetic experience for the swf viewer/listener

8. How and why did you decide on what visuals to use?

after Janet sent me a copy of what turned out to be the central image of the entire ePoem – ie her bent over a booze bottle – I simply went through her online collection of photos to find those that might work alone or in combination to evoke the sorts of memories I wanted to go with the poem.. eg the woman 'pushing' the man away from her. I used

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Janet's existing photos for the obvious reason that she was the person in many of them so the image would work perfectly with the woman over bottle image. I had also of course to decide how I might tweek various images becos there were none which actually were shot with this poem in mind.. and they needed in each case to be edited (sometime photoshopped) to work as motion tweens in flash mclips.

the color gradients were something I had used in various forms in previous work, and I knew that they could be constructed both in terms of colour combos, movement and alphaing to evoke powerful emotional nuances without in the process providing any explicit images that might overly constrict the viewers perceptipons.

9. The user in *The Burning* proceeds in a linear fashion. Was it intentional not to allow the user to click back and forth wherever they like? If so why?

see 5 above

10. How did you decide which lines to group together for each scene?

entire fla movie is done in one scene (albeit 1350frames). see discussions above

11. Whose meaning/interpretation/experience were you trying to get across, your own or the poet's, or both?

both.. this was to me essential condition, even though virtually all of the decisions re how the flash movie was created were my own (the poet was not conversant with flash, but did give me feedback on an early version and suggested some colour modifications)

12. To what extent do you think the poem is still linked or bears resemblance to the original? In what ways does it differ to the original poem?

closely linked, differs by virtue of the audio double track and the multiple visuals (which vary with each replay) serve to .. in my view .. hugely intensify the emotional experience of the viewer/listener .. see discussions above re this also , eg 1 and 2

13. What do you think are the main themes of the piece?

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this is about betrayal.. by another and then by self.. and in the process it evokes powerful feelings associated with both self and other.. pretty much the same feelings in both cases – anger, disgust, shame... - but more powerfully towards the narrator herself who is the midst of yet another abusive relationship as she narrates the poem.. this one with herself and alcohol.

14. Poetically, what do you think are the main strengths of the final piece?

I think the original poem is very powerful and evocative of unspoken experience of many in intimate relationships.. and I think the combination of the double track audio, and more particularly the multileveled and varied graphics on top of it even further enhances the poetic experience. (this is discussed in various places above)

15. Any weaknesses, aspects that could be improved, poetically or in production?

in terms of production I think the ePoem could be improved if photos had been shot specifically to accompany the lines in the poem to which they are applied.. esp for eg the photos used with reference to the lines in the main narrative re should have pushed you away from me..

16. In general, how do you proceed when translating a traditional poem into a new media version?

Is there, eg, a rough sequence / pattern of how your work generally proceeds, or eg, key issues that always have to be considered, etc.?

Why are these important?

not sure how to answer this in that 'the burning' is the only poem I've translated into Flash.

in this case the existing double track audio which was to be central to the ePoem, clearly limited the possibilities for interpretation (ie it would have been virtually impossible to have any interactivity in which the viewer/user made decisions re the timing or sequence of poetic experience within a poetic narrative such as this one). on the other hand the use of the audio track meant that the intonation and verbal nuancing of the poem would be powerful, and virtually required (not that I minded) that I work literally word by word

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or phrase by phrase (ie work with the shortest meaningful narrative bits both in terms of visual display, eg image of narrator pushing man away, and in terms of emotions evoked. for me the feelings evoked by any poem are always the most powerful aspects.. even when for example there are superb visual images (eg in Lowells' 'for the union dead') or rhyme/rhymic aspects (eg in many of Hardy's poems). so I would tend to work in the same sort of sequencing.. ie by poetic evocation of feeling.. as I did here.

Appendix D. Monica Ong Interview

Questions re Fallow by Monica Ong & Rebecca Givens (Online)

<http://www.bornmagazine.org/projects/fallow/>

From monica.ong@yale.edu to jeneen.naji@hct.ac.ae on 10/04/2009 15:14

1. Overall what do you like most about the final piece?

I like creating a poetic space online that is just as engaging or transformative as a book or museum. The common activities online can tend to be commercial transactions or "junk" activities. I believe that online space can be so much more than a wasteland, rather it has the potential to be a destination for artistic experience.

2. How did you and the poet Rebecca Givens work together on this?

The online publication Born Magazine sometimes matches artists with writers - so we were essentially "matched" - I had no idea what I would be designing but I like surprises.

3. What did each of you bring to the project?

I think I brought a visual space to the words, a sort of setting in terms of landscape - not a literal one but perhaps one that taps into the reader's landscape of memory.

4. What were your working arrangements?

How did they contribute to the development of the final piece? Really, we kept the process simple. The poet sent me the poem. I read it carefully, out loud, repeatedly. Then I send her a mock-up, kind of a sketch, so that she could see the aesthetic I was creating. After receiving positive feedback, I proceeded in completing the building and programming.

5. What sort of production challenges did this piece raise for you?

I think it was the interactive interface that was most challenging. I didn't want big buttons that said "click here" because I wanted to get away from the "commercial" interface as much as possible. So I really had to look for ways to signal the viewer to explore the

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space w/ their mouse without being too vague and without being too ambiguous.

6. How many major revisions i.e: reworkings of your approach would you say there were overall?

Many of them - I don't remember exactly, but editing is going to have happened whether it's with code, or making the interface more clear, or reworking images.

7. Did you work line by line, or in some other manner?

When I read a poem, I see what scenes come into mind. Then I group the words into a set number of "scenes" and then build the movie based on the scenes that the text naturally inspires.

8. You use very atmospheric audio effects, why did you decide to use those particular effects and no voice for example?

When the artist works with a poet, they are playing 2 roles. It is important that we complement each other, rather than echo one another. If the intent of the magazine is to show the text for their audience to "read", then I think a voice reading the text is not just redundant, it doesn't permit space for the reader's internal voice. I don't think they would want to be "read to." If the intent is to take words and transform them into an audio-driven work, that is different. Visually, the words would not appear at all and I would focus more on how to deliver the words sonically. To me, it's either one or the other, but never both. In the case of Fallow, the function of the sound was to help reinforce the space by implying the natural landscape, the sense of distance (i.e. the dogs barking), and open space. It's really important to give the audience room to participate. It's not about the artist or the poet, but about creating a space for the viewer/user to be transported to.

9. The interactivity is quite exploratory and so the user experience is not necessarily linear, why did you decide to take this route with the piece?

I enjoy non-linear narrative because it mirrors the way we experience our memories. We make visceral or emotional connections between things, traveling from one place to the

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next in a more instinctual way. I think there is a kind of freedom in that, not only for the artist, but in terms of a sense of possibility the audience is experiencing.

10. How and why did you decide on what visuals to use?

When I read Fallow, I sense a voice of longing, lingering in a time passed. I ended up visiting many antique shops in the rural part of the Hudson Valley where I collected vintage postcards. I think there is something about old correspondences, letters and belongings that evoke that same longing.

11. Whose meaning/interpretation/experience were you trying to get across, your own or the poet's, or both?

Really, when I read the words to the poem, I was just imagining the "character" speaking in the poem. What is the emotional space, what is the voice longing for? That question depends on the reader, so I just incorporated images that would make the question more compelling, rather than trying to answer it.

12. To what extent do you think the poem is still linked or bears resemblance to the original? In what ways does it differ to the original poem?

It's probably something the poet can answer best. My hope is that I was able to "unpack" the poem in some way, and "open" it up in a way that is not only engaging but universal.

13. What do you think are the main themes of the piece?

Longing, memory, seeding.

14. Poetically, what do you think are the main strengths of the final piece?

It's simplicity. With new media, it is so easy to get too complicated: particularly with Flash, and with interfaces. I wanted it to be simple so that the reader would be able to enjoy the poem, first and foremost, rather than get too caught up with interface "bells and whistles."

15. Any weaknesses, aspects that could be improved, poetically or in production?

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Well, of course for every designer, there's always room to improve programming, but I think that's just part of being in new media.

16. In general, how do you proceed when translating a traditional poem into a new media version?

Is there, eg, a rough sequence / pattern of how your work generally proceeds, or eg, key issues that always have to be considered, etc.?

Why are these important?

1) I think the important thing is to internalize the poem first. You have to love the poem, enjoy it, read it inside out, and let yourself go into its world first before you can bring others into it. It's like doing your research as a tour guide of a foreign country before you can adequately point out to your guests the places of discovery.

2) The designer is not a literal translation-robot. Creating new media poem is not a direct illustration of words, like a slide show with captions - that's boring. The designer needs to bring something to the experience that will complement and partner with the voice of the poem. For me, I'm thinking about adding space, opening dimension, identifying details in the environment to give audiences an "entry point."

3) Be invisible. Even though what I bring is "visual," it is important to be invisible. What I mean is, don't get in the way of the words. There are many examples of new media art where people use text in the interface. What happens is that the text becomes a "prop" for the interface: Perhaps the audience is playing with the letters that react to their movement, or dragging text around the screen with the cursor. In this case, they are not "reading" the poem anymore, they are just playing with shapes. At that point, the poetic experience is dead.

4) I think finally, the most fundamental thing to consider is: just because you can do it, doesn't mean you have to. Again, it's easy to get caught up w/ animations and fancy tricks in new media. But that is not the reason the audience is reading the work. If the poem has

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a theme about silences, how does that affect the audio choices? If the poem's theme is stillness, then how does that affect the movement in the visual interpretation? So the media art needs come from the poetic content and be carefully considered. Artist Ben Shahn always emphasized that "form is the shape of content."

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Appendix E. Mateo Parilla Interview

Questions re In praise of an elevator by handplant studio (Mateo Parrilla) & Heather Lee Schroeder (Online)

<http://www.bornmagazine.org/projects/praise/>

From info@handplantstudio.com to jeneen.naji@hct.ac.ae on 27/04/2009 23:17

1. Overall what do you like most about the final piece?

I think the greatest challenge was to transmit the same feelings of the Heather's poem. Its claustrophobic atmosphere, its semidarkness, its repetitive intranquility. I didn't want to distort the original message.

2. How did you and the poet Heather Lee Schroeder work together on this?

Scott Benish, curator of Born Magazine, got in touch. He explained us his project and both were excited to take part in it.

In practice, today is very easy to work side by side with persons that could be in the other side of the planet.

3. What did each of you bring to the project?

Heather Lee Shroeder brought her poem. My work was to give it a visual content.

4. What were your working arrangements? How did they contribute to the development of the final piece?

From the first sketches, Heather was in love with my ideas. She gave me total creative freedom. There were a couple of text corrections, that was all.

5. What sort of production challenges did this piece raise for you?

Giving life to a poem needs to consider many aspects that you don't provide other types of work. Such as driving the user way to read the poem in a correct way.

6. How many major revisions i.e: reworkings of your approach would you say there

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were overall?

There were not any major revision. We connected very quicly.

7. Did you work line by line, or in some other manner?

During the process we keep in touch via e-mail.

8. You use very striking audio effects such as the repetitive beat of the elevator, why did you decide to do that and not add music or voice for example?

The poem is about a janitor. I decided to use a repetitive and mechanic beat because I wanted the user could feel the same as the main character.

I recorded this audio from a XIX century elevator.

9. The user in elevator must click to proceed but still must proceed in a linear fashion. Was it intentional not to allow the user to click back and forth wherever they like? If so why?

It was completely intentional. I had to make sure that users read the poem in the right order. If not, the meaning of the poem was altered.

10. How did you decide which lines to group together for each scene?

I respect the original groups of lines.

11. Whose meaning/interpretation/experience were you trying to get across, your own or the poet's, or both?

My objective was to communicate the poet's meaning. Althought I think it is impossible to do this because when you read a novel or a poem, you will always get a mental visualization of what you are reading. And this mental visualization of each one is different.

12. To what extent do you think the poem is still linked or bears resemblance to the original? In what ways does it differ to the original poem?

The essence of the poem is the same. Of course, there are new nuances anf others have

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been diluted. But this was inevitable.

My consolation was that Heather was delighted with the final piece and this was the biggest reward.

13. What do you think are the main themes of the piece?

Loneliness, death and monotony.

14. Poetically, what do you think are the main strengths of the final piece?

I think the final piece as the original poe, set out to you a very specific scenario but an open scene to interpretation.

15. Any weaknesses, aspects that could be improved, poetically or in production?

I'm very happy with the final piece. Of course, there are some aspects that could be resolved in another way, but then we would be talking about another result.

16. In general, how do you proceed when translating a traditional poem into a new media version?

Is there, eg, a rough sequence / pattern of how your work generally proceeds, or eg, key issues that always have to be considered, etc.?

Why are these important?

When you face a new communication project, in advertising or the literary field, you must to carry out a deeper study of the object, the poem. It's very important to know how is author's interpretation. This is the basis. Then you can begin to develop your application. Others aspects that must be respect are the reading order, the rhythm and of course, the legibility.

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Appendix F. Nick Robinson Interview

Questions and Responses re A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House. by Nick Robinson & Lucy Anderton (Online)

<http://www.bornmagazine.org/projects/servant/born.html>

Received in e-mail from pixelumbrella@gmail.com to jeneen.naji@hct.ac.ae on 24/03/09 07:50

1. Overall what do you like most about the final piece?

I am really pleased with the overall feeling of the piece. I feel like the poem has very strong and dark undertones and I was able to highlight them in a visually-stimulating way. I had never done anything remotely like this so I participated in the project knowing that it would stretch me artistically... and I like that most about the piece.

2. How did you and the poet Lucy Anderton work together on this?

Because we were not in the same city, we communicated via email which made things a little more difficult. She was pretty responsive to my questions about the poem. We agreed that having me work in whatever direction I. I asked her to loosely interpret the major themes in the poem to ensure that I wasn't totally off in my reading and I began working on the overall design. I sent her a few screens of the work-in-progress but I didn't hear back from her until I had already built and coded the majority of the project. Luckily she loved the result and it was right on track with her wishes :)

3. What did each of you bring to the project?

Well, she wrote the poem and provided some insight into what was behind her words personally. I believe Lucy has been writing poetry for a long time and is quite accomplished in the field. I have a background in web design and development so this project was a welcomed change of pace for me. It really proved to be a much larger undertaking than I had originally thought, as well.

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4. What were your working arrangements? How did they contribute to the development of the final piece?

She didn't actually add much to the development of the final piece aside from very limited periodic feedback. At the time I was a little panicked about our lack of communication and close collaboration but now I think that it was probably better that way. It really allowed me to take the piece into any direction I wanted without being placed onto a course that someone else had already decided.

5. What sort of production challenges did this piece raise for you?

I definitely underestimated the amount of time animating each frame would take. I started from the beginning and chipped off the lines as they came but the deadline seemed to get closer and closer with far too much left. I could have come up with a more effective approach than animating each line by hand but I really wanted the piece to have a "handmade" quality to it since the words were so personal and human.

6. How many major revisions i.e: reworkings of your approach would you say there were overall?

Lucy was the dream "client" in this regard -- not only was she interested in letting me take the reigns but once presented with my chosen artistic direction she was in total agreement. The only thing that she asked me to do was to emphasize her favorite line in the poem from the rest. I still think it is likely more subtle than she would have liked but there was very little time for back-and-forth with the deadline looming.

7. Did you work line by line, or in some other manner?

The first thing I did was read the poem that was emailed to me and reflect on the overall themes and my own personal interpretations. Then I isolated each two-line segment and read it several times while writing down any imagery that came to mind. This really helped when I was working on the art because it gave me descriptors of the mood that I could refer to as it is easy to lose direction on a lengthy project like this one. For the

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actual art I treated each line as a "frame" that I wanted to stand on its own as an appealing visual.

8. Why did you decide to include music in your piece and why that particular song 'In The Gloaming'?

After completing all of the art and animations I still felt like the piece needed something else to fill it out and I immediately leaned toward sound since Flash supports it so well. I embarked on a search for the "perfect" piece to accompany the poem and, to be honest, this is the first piece that I was able to locate that had no legal attachments (it is old enough to be public domain). I feel like it fits perfectly with the poem and began to grow more and more fond of it. I also compressed and lowered the sound quality considerably to both help with loading considerations and reaching that "gritty" or "scratchy" sound.

9. The piece is primarily in black and white but every now and then a splash of red appears, particularly in the line at the end 'and could you please return to me' – was this for visual design reasons or for poetic imagery reasons?

I decided pretty early on that I wanted to keep the art more subdued and let the words speak for themselves but for some of the frames I felt they needed a little accent. It was this device that I also used when the poet asked me to emphasize a specific line in the poem as well. So overall I guess they are intended to enhance both the visuals and poem.

10. Why did you decide to keep the words 'my tongue' for the very last screen?

These words really stuck out to me when I read the poem because they are the only ones that appear alone. They present themselves in a very "final" tone and I wanted to have them linger and give the viewer something to think about. I'm not really sure how well that worked out but I'm pretty happy with it!

11. Whose meaning/interpretation/experience were you trying to get across, your own or the poet's, or both?

After asking the poet about her interpretations I tried to stay as close to the tones that she described as possible. I really wanted to do her wonderful piece some justice so I figured

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trying to align the visuals with the poetic meaning was the best that I could do. It is undeniable that I brought a lot of my personal style and experiences to the final piece but my goal, at least, was to stay in the background and simply enhance her poem subtly.

12. To what extent do you think the poem is still linked or bears resemblance to the original? In what ways does it differ to the original poem?

The biggest difference that I can see is the addition of a user-controlled mechanism. When reading the poem on paper you can read from line to line as quickly as you'd like. Another thing that really excited me about this format was that a sense of suspense could be created by adding this button and not allowing someone to simply "flip through" the piece. Possibly to a fault, however, I feel like the format injects visuals to an already highly visual poem and it could potentially pigeon-hole the reader's interpretation or overall enjoyment of the piece.

13. What do you think are the main themes of the piece?

To me the poem is about languish... I feel a lot of pain in the poem but it isn't necessarily direct. When I asked Lucy about the meaning of the poem she told me it was "about grief in some ways, and grief has something of a stutter step to it, for me, and in this way the 'meaning' of the poem is reflected in the shape of the poem."

14. Poetically, what do you think are the main strengths of the final piece?

I like that it is so visual and memorable. I remember reading it for the first time and just sitting and thinking about how lucky I was to have been given a poem so full of imagery and mood in its own right. I think that the poem does a great job of pulling you into this world that Lucy has crafted but leaves you ultimately craving more like it. It doesn't spell anything out specifically for you and every reader could have a completely different interpretation.

15. Any weaknesses, aspects that could be improved, poetically or in production?

I would have liked more time to give the piece more "polish" but I often find myself saying the same about client work... It's the nature of deadlines I suppose -- always

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wanting to tinker with things before anyone sees the final product. In terms of the poem I feel like it is really solid and complete as-is.

16. In general, how do you proceed when translating a traditional poem into a new media version? Is there, e.g., a rough sequence / pattern of how your work generally proceeds, or e.g., key issues that always have to be considered, etc.? Why are these important? *Since I've only done this once I can only say how I would approach it a second time... I suppose I would still read the poem a few dozen times and a couple times aloud. I think it important to not just rush into it but to carry it with you, so to speak, throughout your day for a length of time to fully immerse yourself. I think it is also important to know what options are available in terms of technology and to pick carefully when trying to find a match. I think it would also help to approach it much like a movie -- by drawing storyboards so to not lose tack of the scope and deadline.*

Follow up e-mail

“On Sun, Apr 5, 2009 at 10:56 PM, Jeneen Naji <jeneen.naji@hct.ac.ae> wrote:

Dear Nick,

I hope all is well with you.

Thank you so much for taking the time to send me your responses. They were very helpful.

I have had time go over them in detail and at this point just like to clarify one or two points with you.

The following are extracts from responses you gave to questions 2, 6, 7 & 11. Basically what I'm looking for is just a little more detail regarding how exactly you interpreted what the poet was trying to communicate. It would be very helpful if you could give me a bit more elaboration on each of your answers below.

Re Question 2) You wrote: “I asked her to loosely interpret the major themes in the poem to ensure that I wasn't totally off in my reading and I began working on the overall design.”

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(For example) How exactly did Lucy interpret the major themes? Do you remember?

Did this differ from what you had thought of as the major themes before you consulted with her on this?

RE Question 6) You wrote: “The only thing that she asked me to do was the emphasize her favourite line in the poem from the rest.”

What was her favourite line and how did you emphasize it?

RE Question 7) You wrote: “The first thing I did was read the poem that was emailed to me and reflect on the overall themes and my own personal interpretations.”

What was your personal interpretation at that point? Overall theme?

RE Question 11) You wrote: “After asking the poet about her interpretations I tried to stay as close to the tones that she described as possible.”

What were the tones? How exactly did you try to stay close to them?

Again, Nick, anything you can offer me in way of response on the above would be really helpful. I am just trying to get some concrete examples of exactly how the poem was translated in flash.

I really appreciate your time and effort on this. Basically I’m trying to be as accurate as possible with reference to your work, both for the upcoming conference paper, and the dissertation itself.

Response 14/04/2009 21:19 from pixelumbrella@gmail.com

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“The questions about themes are pretty abstract for me and I'm having a hard time describing exactly how I interpreted it but what she said to me was "the main feelings I have with this poem would be grief, loss, despair." Another thing she said, more specifically about the way it is written: "This poem is about grief in some ways, and grief has something of a stutter step to it, for me, and in this way the "meaning" of the poem is reflected in the shape of the poem." And I think overall, for me, the grief was something that I felt... a sense of mourning and anguish. And, really, that was what I latched onto. Sorry if this isn't more helpful. I really just got a "feeling" after reading the piece and ran with that. I guess the "tones" that I tried to stick close to were feelings of pain and just tried to keep that mood throughout the work...

Also, I dug this up from an email from the poet....not sure if it is helpful at all but she said, "Each image is a definite image, for me. And I think the lack of multisyllabic words lends itself to that (in my mind, the shorter the word, the stronger the picture). However, the images, hopefully, enfold the reader in a world of feeling and atmosphere that is not literal. This is not a "literal" poem, it is a poem that opens doors within, and I cannot control what doors it opens for each reader (I am a big believer in not trying to write for other peoples interpretations)."

Her favorite line was:

*of a glittering scream
hangs an egg. Icy*

And I tried to add some emphasis so it is the only frame that has a word as an object and this is the first frame that you notice any flashes of red which build to the end so it offers something pretty different to what the reader has seen up to this point. Ultimately she just wanted it to stick out a little more as you progressed through the poem and I think these additions achieved that.”

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Appendix G. SamuelChristopher Interview

Questions re Hunger by SamuelChristopher (Sam Tootal & Chris Turner) & Billy Collins (Online)

http://www.samuelchristopher.com/Sundance_Channel_.Billy_Collins_.Hunger.html

From sam.tootal@gmail.com to jeneen.naji@hct.ac.ae on 16/04/2009 18:23

1. Overall what do you like most about the final piece?

Please see answer to Q 13.

2. Did you work with the poet Billy Collins on it and if so how did you do this?

No we were commissioned by ad agency JWT, New York. So they supplied us with the audio readings by Billy Collins and we just worked from London to this audio.

3. What did each of you bring to the project?

We basically both did everything – Art Direction, Photography, Animation, Editing. We took the stills, graded the shots, animated them and the text within the scenes, edited the final film in two halves and ‘stuck’ them together!

4. What were your working arrangements? How did they contribute to the development of the final piece?

We work very closely on all projects – whether it be in the same room or on opposite sides of London. Firstly we bounce ideas back and forth, so we usually spend at least half a day discussing the creative/narrative approach to a project and then begin to create elements that inform the next stage of the process and that might change the outcome of the final piece as we discover things along the way. With this project we had the additional geographic hurdle of The Atlantic Ocean with New York. But hey, time difference, FTP and “yousendit” all help things flow!

5. What sort of production challenges did any of these pieces raise for you?

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The fact that there was no budget, at least not by the time it got to us! So we had no money to make this, in reality we paid for the privilege of making the piece. What it forced us to do was think well how do we best create a successful film for as little money as possible, hence using stills we took and creating it all on our laptops in our own time.

6. How many major revisions i.e: reworkings of your approach would you say there were overall?

This is the luxury that no money gives you – they get what they're given. It really means that we have complete control over the film from start to finish with no revisions beyond our own quite specific, detailed judgement of it. So no money 'jobs' have their benefits if you can slot them in and around paying work. The biggest benefit being the sense of artistic and creative freedom which is invaluable in a commercial industry.

7. Did you work line by line, or in some other manner?

Line by line, yes.

8. You use very atmospheric background audio effects such as flickering light and creaking, why did you decide to do that?

We're very interested in creating depth and texture to our work and when it is moving image you suddenly have the world of audio to delve into. Sound is so important to us, to any moving image creators and film makers. Work can live or die on the audio content and for us with Hunger it needed that added depth, a sense of mystery. Audio is the character of the environment you're seeing in Hunger it brings the scenes and environments to life, albeit in a dark, brooding way.

9. How and why did you decide on what visuals to use?

The stills we used are urban compositions we're interested in in general, the kind of thing you glance at whilst travelling around a town or city but that at first glance is just derelict and messy or no man's land – spaces in between what is deemed functional, communal, pretty habitat.

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10. Whose meaning/interpretation/experience were you trying to get across, your own or the poet's, or both?

It is entirely our interpretation of the poem.

11. To what extent do you think the poem is still linked or bears resemblance to the original? In what ways does it differ to the original poem?

The words and structure are unaltered from the reading that we received by Billy Collins.

We've obviously given it other levels of subjective meaning by virtue of the fact we set it to sound design and images.

12. What do you think are the main themes of the piece?

Well for us there are themes of immortality, death, fragility and impermanence of physical human existence. We've added a slightly melancholy maybe even apocalyptic interpretation in our film.

13. Poetically, what do you think are the main strengths of the final piece?

That it communicates the themes we've mentioned above in a subtle way that doesn't overpower or diminish from the poetry of the words themselves.

14. Any weaknesses, aspects that could be improved, poetically or in production?

A bit more money = more time & the possibility of shooting it on film. The other aspect that would have been fantastic to entertain is taking the production to varied locations around the world. Although we really like the quiet, subtle, low key feel to the film that was essentially born out of the restrictions that time and money placed on us in the first place!

In general, how do you proceed when translating a traditional poem into a new media version?

The only way we know how, which is to find a way of communicating our own subjective interpretation of the poem, what we deem to be its overarching themes.

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Is there, eg, a rough sequence / pattern of how your work generally proceeds,
or eg, key issues that always have to be considered, etc.?

Why are these important?

Brainstorm / document these ideas into a cohesive narrative structure / decide the appropriate medium with which to tell the story / collate image references found and self created. These then further inform the focus of the narrative and the creation of the aesthetic; the production design of the film. Figure out where is best to produce the film (different countries can be more financially beneficial than others and location is obviously of the utmost importance depending on the subject matter). Schedule the timeline for pre-production, shoot and post-production (including edit/animation/audio). Then start making it happen! This is all within the parameters of what the budget for the job will allow of course.

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Appendix H. Dylan Sheehan Interview

Questions re *Ten Doors Closing* by Dylan Sheehan (Online)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIy540QP0N0>

From dyl1010 on youtube messaging to jnaji00 on Apr 17, 2009

1. Overall what do you like most about the final piece?

1. I like the overall "look" of the film, the girls voice (it took me ages to find the "right" person), the sound design and the mouse at 2.11.

2. Did you write the poem? And if so did you write it specifically for this or did you have it already?

2. Yes I wrote the poem, it was one i had written already but I added some lines to make it fit with the journey a bit better.

3. What sort of production challenges did this piece raise for you?

3. Many. Perhaps the biggest coup was getting permission to film on the Underground for free, without the location we were going nowhere. Also just organising everyone for the shoot. Everyone worked for free so I had to work around their schedules. We shot on Super 16mm film and managed to get a 50% discount on filmstock from Kodak. Kodak and Fuji have departments to help budding filmmakers and you can blag a fairly hefty discount over the phone. Dan Clarke at Kodak gets a credit for doing just that.. Generally there is just so much to organise not only for the actual shoot but then all the post production, sound track, special effects(for the clock time changing, and the time on CCTV footage)etc it just feels endless.

4. How many major revisions i.e: reworkings of your approach would you say there were overall?

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4. *The process was quite linear. We did the shoot. I took home a VHS with all the footage and timecode on. I did a paper edit using the timecode and then we cut in a video editing suite. Time was limited there so we weren't messing about. Of course the piece evolved but there was no "major" reworking as such.. We cut the visuals first and then added the poem and soundtrack.*

5. Why did you decide on visual metaphor of the underground and the last train?

5. *As I am born and bred in London I am used to taking the Underground. It has often occurred to me that London underground have their own time zone which doesn't correspond with the rest of the world. 2 minutes to wait displayed on their train time indicators rarely corresponds to 2 minutes on my watch.. The Underground is an instantly recognisable and everyday place to most londoners I wanted to inject an element of "myth" to something so taken for granted. When you think about it it is a rather strange way to travel, to burrow down in to the earth and wiggle our way from one place to another. Also I have often missed my last train home and to see your hopes disappear down that tunnel is a bummer. So I guess Underground= Alternative reality and Last train= Hopes and dreams*

6. You use very atmospheric audio effects, why did you decide to use those particular effects?

6. *I was very fortunate to have a friend who works in the music industry and we worked on the soundtrack together. Many of the sounds are the normal workings of the Underground, we block them out in our day to day travels. The screeching of metal wheels on metal tracks and the mechanical rhythm of the escalators and the announcements over the public address system.*

7. How and why did you decide on what visuals to use?

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7. *First i went out with my stills camera and took pictures of locations and specific shots i wanted to use. I also recorded some sounds, trains, escalators, buskers, announcements, running feet etc. then constructed a story board and had a meeting with the DOP. I think its important to remember that whilst I had the vision there are a host of people who made this film what it is and the skill of a director it to get a good crew around you and listen to their ideas with an open mind and if they are good ideas then use them. Give people the chance to have an input and you will get their best. I cannot operate a film camera but i can explain what i want to see. I was not familiar with sound design but had a n idea of what should be heard. Different people bring different skills/ outlook to the table and by listening to what they have to say I think you end up with something greater than the sum of its parts.. (hopefully).*

8. To what extent do you think the final piece is still linked or bears resemblance to the original poem? In what ways does it differ to the original poem?

8. I think the finished product fairly represents the original idea. The poem its self is essentially unchanged. the odd line here or there, and to be honest i think the changes improved it. Of course some visual things have changed along the way but I think of it as an evolution and sometimes you only have the footage youve got and you have to work with that.. There are things i would change looking back but there has to come a point where you move on to the next project.

9. What do you think are the main themes of the piece?

9. Essentially, Death and Love. The parting = death, seperation, entering the underworld, that could be death of a relationship or whatever. And Love, the power of love to stay with someone no matter what/ where they go. Even in to the arms of Death it's self.. Essentially the poem is saying I will be here for you, always, come what may.

10. Poetically, what do you think are the main strengths of the final piece?

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10. Hmmmm. Dunno. I'm not a trained poet, i don't know what a pentameter is or any of those technical words for deconstructing sentences. I go on rhythm and feeling.

11. Any weaknesses, aspects that could be improved, poetically or in production?

11. I am sure there would be ways to improve the poem though i'm reasonably happy with it as is. I think I would not use professional Models were i to shot the thing again but I had my reasons for doing so at the time..

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Appendix I. Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries Interview

*Questions re The Last Day of Betty Nkomo by Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries
(Online)*

<http://www.poemsthatgo.com/gallery/winter2004/YHCHI/index.htm>

From tfa@chollian.net to jeneen.naji@hct.ac.ae on 18/04/2009 19:04

1. Overall what do you like most about the final piece?

- We like its poetry. For us it's more of a poem than a lot of our longer, more narrative work.

2. Did you write the piece? And if so did you write it specifically for this or did you have it already? If not where did you get the piece i.e: was it a poem or a song and why did you select it?

- Yes, we wrote it for International AIDS day some years back.

3. What did each of you bring to the project?

- It's hard to say. We have a messy way of working together that seems to work for us, so we make it a point of avoiding how it all comes about. It's pure superstition on our part not to think about it, but then again, we're not critics.

4. What were your working arrangements? How did they contribute to the development of the final piece?

- We'd like to say mutual respect for one another's input, but, well, that would be a lie. As for getting to the end of the piece, that's basically the moment when we throw up our hands and abandon the work.

5. What sort of production challenges did this piece raise for you?

- Maybe the only challenge – again, this was several years ago – was to do a piece that was exactly one-minute long. But even that's no big deal. We enjoy our work and don't

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see it as a challenge. The technology can be frustrating, but everyone's in the same boat there.

6. How many major revisions i.e: reworkings of your approach would you say there were overall?

- To BETY NKOMO? When it comes to our digital work, reworkings are many, possibly, but they get lost in the process, because they're digitally fluid. There's no distinct first, second, third . . . drafts. We're not into documenting how many times we rewrite a piece – even if the software is capable of documenting it. Not to mention that every time we present the work in a new context we tweak things.

7. Did you work word by word or line by line, or in some other manner?

- Keyframe by keyframe. That's what Flash, the program we use, is all about.

8. How and why did you decide on what visuals to use?

- Well, if you follow our work a bit, you know that we always use the Monaco font. That's our visual.

9. Whose meaning/interpretation/experience were you trying to get across, your own or the original piece's or both?

- Ours.

10. To what extent do you think the poem is still linked or bears resemblance to the original, i.e.: the original poem or song? In what ways does it differ from the original?

- THE LAST DAY OF BETTY NKOMO, that is, http://www.yhchang.com/BETTY_NKOMOMO.html, is the real McCoy. There is no other.

11. What do you think are the main themes of the piece?

- It's the story of the last day in the life of a South-African mother who is dying of AIDS.

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12. Poetically, what do you think are the main strengths of the final piece?

- *Gosh, we don't really know. We'd certainly enjoy hearing someone such as yourself answer that question for us.*

13. Any weaknesses, aspects that could be improved, poetically or in production?

- *Nope – O.K., if we had it to do over, we'd make the music ourselves. In fact, maybe that's what we should do. We'll make a note of it.*

14. In general, how do you proceed when translating a traditional poem into a new media version?

Is there, eg, a rough sequence / pattern of how your work generally proceeds,
or eg, key issues that always have to be considered, etc.?

Why are these important?

- *We don't move from traditional poetry to new media poetry. We start off right in the middle of new media poetry. At least we think we do. Many people in the poetry world don't think we're even close to being in the middle. Thanks for inviting us to respond to your insightful questions.*

Appendix J. A Taxonomy of ePoetry

As Vallias (2007: 85) states with reference to digital poetry, the “general picture is one of instability, of vertigo, and it is at one and the same time a source of stimulation and frustration”. While this is true nonetheless through this research I found it was possible to arrive at specific types of ePoetry, which allowed me to categorise the ePoems and so produce a taxonomy.

Tallon Memmott (2006: 293) believes that, the “actualities of poetic practice in the digital environment are too diverse to permit a comprehensive or coherent taxonomy”. This Memmott argues, is due to the wide variety of technologies available and used in the development of ePoetry, not only this but the very application of these technologies may vary widely from one practitioner to the next. Memmott suggests using the term taxonomadism, as he believes that the idea of taxonomy itself is “contrary to the realities of digital practice” (2006: 304). He believes the entire field of ePoetry is dynamic and so suggests the term taxonomadism, “the field is open; the practice, form, and categories - the taxa - are nomadic” (2006: 304). This is an opinion that is understandably held at the emergence of new technologies however once these technologies mature so too does the corresponding practice (as ePoetry has) and we begin to recognise patterns and characteristics and so the the field becomes less nomadic.

While it is clear that the range ePoetry currently in existence is vast and varied and the task of creating such a taxonomy is challenging, nonetheless the creative practice of ePoetry has clearly matured over time. As ePoetry works become more common and accessible and our mastery of the eTechnologies similarly develops, it is possible to begin to recognise certain characteristics and similarities. Creating a taxonomy of ePoetry needs to be approached on at least two levels. One is the vast question of what constitutes ePoetry, such as what are its defining characteristics and how are these similar or different to those of existing analogue poetry? This is of course the overall focus of the present research. On another level is the question of categories, such as within ePoetry are there clusters of poems which share characteristics that distinguish them from other

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such clusters? In this regard I have identified three main categories of ePoetry. These are: ***Generative ePoetry***, ***Video/Animation Linear ePoetry*** and ***Interactive ePoetry***. The terms used by academics in relation to ePoetry varies widely but some similarities can be found. For example Weight (2006) also uses the term *Generative* to classify her poetic work, Melo e Castro (2007) refers to *Videopoems* and Kruglanski (2007) discusses *Interactive Poems*. The representational examples I selected for each of these categories are indicative of a broad range of the kinds of ePoems available online during the six year period of my research (2007 – 2011).

1. **Generative ePoetry:**

- geniwaite, *Concatenation*.
- geniwaite & Stefans, B.K. *When you reach Kyoto*

2. **Video/Animation Linear ePoetry**

- Collins, B. & Delcan, J., *The Dead*.
- Collins, B. & SamuelChristopher, *Hunger*.
- Collins, B. & Vaio, D., *The Best Cigarette*.
- Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries, *The Last day of Betty Nkomo*.

3. **Interactive ePoetry**

- Dorris, B. & Kuypers, J., *The Burning*.
- Bergvall, C., *Ambient Fish*.
- Anderton, L. & Robinson, N., *A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House*.
- Andrews, J., *Arteroids*.
- Strickland, S. & Lawson, C., *Vniverse*.
- Schroeder, H., Lee & Handplant Studio, *In praise of an elevator*.

In advance of explicating these categories in greater detail I must first clarify a few ground rules in relation to the terminology and referencing system used in this thesis. With reference to the ePoetry examples I discuss in this research, the term *viewer*, *player*, *reader*, or *user* no longer adequately encompasses the active role that will need to be played. Though some of the ePoems provide minimal interactivity such as simply a click to play, others allow the freedom to explore the poetic environment to such an extent that the result is an experiential literary experience. In these instances the *viewer*, *player*, *reader*, or *user* explores the poetic environment towards the end goal of constructing their own unique meaning. This could involve reading, playing, viewing, listening or linking. So we are left searching for a term for an active individual who might perform any one or all of these activities. Also another factor in affirming the inappropriateness of using the

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term *reader* for ePoetry is that in computer terminology ‘to read’ means to copy data from one storage medium or device to another. This is different to print terminology when ‘to read’ means to decipher and interpret the letters and signs of a document (Morris, 2006: 15).

Furthermore an ePoem might have visual elements (animation, video, still imagery) audio elements (music, voice) and interactivity (hypertext, lexia that are buttons, games). Morris (2006: 7) states that new media poems are electronic documents that can be traversed, navigated, and/or reconfigured by their ‘users’, ‘operators’ or ‘interactors’. Nick Montfort (2003) in his study of Interactive Fictions uses the term ‘interactor’. Sloane (2000: 108) quotes Guyer and Petry, writers of hypertext fictions when describing the difference between reading hypertext fiction and reading printed fiction as “the difference between sailing the island and standing on the dock watching the sea”. The ePoems can fall into the category of what Aarseth (1997: 1) terms ergodic literature, that is, literature that requires nontrivial effort to read the text. The term recipient is too passive a term for the reception/navigation of this content which may require user interaction – interaction which often allows the user to direct the type and flow of poetic experience, such as to create. “The receiver of a new media poem cannot be, in any familiar sense, its ‘reader’” (Morris, 2006: 15). So for the purposes of this research rather than interpose constantly the terms *viewer*, *reader*, *user*, I will use the term *creader*. This is a combination of the words *creator* and *reader* to refer to the what Barthes (1970) termed the *active reader*. Therefore for this research when appropriate I will replace the terms *user*, *viewer*, and *reader* with the single term *creader*.

It is also necessary to point out that during the course of my research I found the Harvard referencing system (in fact this criticism applies to nearly all of the available referencing systems) inadequate in terms of referencing online sources. Use of it in relation to online sources has proven to be inconsistent and due to the nature of this study online sources compile a large porportion of my research. Currently it is recommended that when using an online source you put the year you accessed it, this however proves inadequate as it gives a false impression of the date of creation. So consideration then should be given to

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the date of publication online. The problem with this however is that this information is not always accessible and also even when it is, quite often the content will have been added to and updated after this date. Furthermore due to the mutable nature of the medium it is necessary for researchers to approach online sources with a certain amount of caution as publishing something online can require far less investment than in print. This is why it is essential to be aware of which sources have come from the Internet. Consequently in order to avoid these problems when referencing an online source, I state simply that it is online. I do not however put the date I accessed it in the in-text citation, but this information is available in the references list. Also I treat the nomenclature 'Online' as if it were a page number. If however the source is an online version of a paper or book that has a definite publication date then of course I do include this information in the in-text citation and references list.

So for example when referencing an ePoem such as *Luz* (Glazier: Online), I include the author and treat the information that it is online as I would a page number in the Harvard referencing system. In this case for example I cannot provide a year as definite information regarding that is not available to me but I do provide information regarding the date it was accessed in the bibliography. In order to provide context I have listed years for the creation of the ePoems in the ePoetry timeline. However as there often appear many different versions of the ePoems online at different times I have not included this information in the referencing system.

On the other hand for example, the essay *Electronic Literature: What is it?* (Hayles, 2007: Online) has a clear date of publication as it is an academic essay online so I provide the author, the year, and the information that it was accessed online. It is important to note however that this is different to the pdf of a published paper being available online as in this instance, it is referenced as a paper from a print journal as all of the same information such as page number, journal name, and date of publication is available and applicable. Now to return to the explication of the categories of ePoetry that I arrived at through the course of my research. Please note that while analysis of these ePoems takes place throughout this body of work, an in-depth analysis of individual

ePoems is provided later on in this thesis most specifically in Chapter 6 *Meaning Making in ePoetry*.

1. Generative ePoetry

Generative ePoetry is often (but not exclusively) made with Adobe Director, which offers greater scope for interactivity than Adobe Flash though it is considered to require greater technical and programming skills. Both Flash and Director are interactive authoring softwares. Flash is used to produce content primarily for online delivery (with a lower file size to enable a faster download), and Director for offline pieces (and so can be used for larger interactive products such as more complex games with larger file sizes as the programs will run directly from the local hard drive or CD-ROM). Adobe Director uses the programming language Lingo and can also offer an online generative poetry experience but often these examples, unlike Flash ePoetry, require installation on a hard drive. As the name implies, generative poetry *generates* the poem, each experience is unique based on a series of variables at each instance of play. These variables might be for example user interaction such as movement of the mouse, timings of clicks or even input of text, depending on these the ePoem then generates different images/text/sound.

The examples I discuss in my research that fall into this genre are:

1. *Concatenation* (geniwaite: 2006).
2. *Arteroids* (Andrews: 2003).
3. *Luz* (Glazier: Online).
4. *When you reach Kyoto* (geniwaite & Stefans: Online).

2. Video/Animation Linear ePoetry

This is the genre of ePoetry most influenced by traditional film and animation and least influenced by (and which takes on the least of the characteristics of) the electronic technologies. *Linear ePoetry* takes the form of Flash animation or video pieces and incorporates no interactivity at all. The reader in this case is a passive viewer as in traditional media consumption. Though some of these are made in Flash what puts them into this genre as opposed to the next (*Interactive*) is that they do not even necessitate a

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click to play from the creader. A play button may exist but this is outside of the piece itself such as on a DVD player and this is the minimum requirement I have necessitated in order to place the piece in the *Interactive ePoetry* genre. With a click to play or proceed in the piece the author has incorporated a requirement for action on the part of the creader. Whereas when the play button or link is outside of the piece then it is quite possible that the piece will play automatically and this shows a complete lack of consideration or expectation of activity or action for the creader by the author. In this category the click does not vary the poetic experience for the creader.

The examples I discuss in my research that fall into this genre are:

1. *The Dead* (Collins & Delcan: Online).
2. *Hunger* (Collins & SamuelChristopher: Online).
3. *Ten Doors Closing* (Sheehan: Online).
4. *Backbeat* (ARCantú: Online).
5. *The Last Day of Betty Nkomo* (Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries: Online).

3. *Interactive ePoetry*

Interactive ePoetry is the category on which this research is primarily focused. It was this type of ePoetry that initially piqued my interest in the field. *Interactive ePoetry* refers to those pieces that require interaction from the side of the creader to execute the piece. In this category though the interaction required maybe minimal (such as for example a single mouse click), it does vary the poetic experience for the creader. This may be at a minimum, a click to play or proceed in the piece itself or at the maximum, a complex requirement of a series of clicks or rollovers or even a drag and drop. However in interactive ePoetry there is no generation of new poetry involved in the experience but due to the extensive possibilities for creader interaction it is possible for one creader to have a different experience to another. This is due to the order in which the creader might click on interactive access points and which pathways they choose to proceed through the piece. It is also theoretically possible, unlike the generative poetry pieces, for two readers to have the same experience although this is unlikely. Also due to the large scope for differences in poetry interpretation each creader will in fact have a different

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experience even if they click on the same options due to each individual's unique catalogue of experiences, memories and personality. Most interactive ePoems are made primarily with the authoring software Adobe Flash.

The examples I discuss in my research that fall into this genre are:

1. *I didn't know infants in arms until* (Petrosino & Weychert: Online).
2. *Vniverse* (Strickland & Lawson: 2004), this is the only example in this genre made with Director not Flash.
3. *Fallow* (Givens & Ong: Online).
4. *A Servant. A Hanging. A Paper House.* (Anderton & Robinson: Online).
5. *In praise of an elevator* (Schroeder & Handplant Studio: Online).
6. *Ambient Fish* (Bergvall: Online).
7. *The Burning* (Dorris & Kuypers: Online).

Many of the examples I discuss in this research are from *Born Magazine* (Online), and in fact it was through browsing this web site that my interest in ePoetry was first sparked. Similar to the French web-based literary journal *Alire*, as mentioned earlier, which was a main instigator and driving force behind ePoetry in the 1980s, today *Born Magazine* (Online) is a great resource for ePoetry examples. *Born Magazine* (Online) was founded in 1996 as a volunteer led collaborative creative venture. Based in Seattle in the U.S.A. the magazine launched online in 1997 and since then has focused on creative collaboration between writers and artists. Its mandate is to produce media-rich interpretations of poetry, short fiction and creative non-fiction. *Born* teams up willing poets and digital media creatives to create original ePoetry every three months, which is then made available online (*Born Magazine*: Online).

As Glazier (2002: 3) posits, "central to the success of electronic poetry is the notion of a *subject village* a site for the access, collection and dissemination of poetry and related writing". Thanks to the existence of subject villages such as *Alire*, *Born Magazine* (Online), *Poems That Go* (Online), and the *Electronic Literature Collection* (E.L.O.:

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Online) the field of ePoetry has developed and matured into a discipline that merits academic analysis. Out of these examples of subject villages, *Born Magazine* (Online) is unique in that it teams up a poet and eMedia producer to collaborate on the creation of an ePoem.

In this sense we can see online ePoetry magazines operating as media gatekeepers of sorts as outlined by Poor (2006). Poor (2006: 42) describes media gatekeeping as having two important functions, identity verification and access control. EPoetry magazines however rarely fulfill either of these functions as seldom do they require logins or registration. Nonetheless they are central resources for the archiving, collation, and creation of ePoetic content, thereby providing access to selected examples of the web editor's own choosing. Therefore in a sense they do function as gatekeepers of some sort albeit with a far less controlling influence than is found within traditional media. This concurs with what Poor (2006: 41) outlines in that, though the decentralising capabilities of the Internet have challenged traditional media gatekeepers, despite this "gatekeepers still have a role to play in the current media environment" (Poor, 2006: 52).