

THE FUTURE OF BOOKS: TURNING THE PAGE ON THE SUPERSESSION NARRATIVE

By Miles O'Paper

In 2006, the world's largest web-search company, Google, began creating the world's largest online library. Electronically scanning and uploading over ten million titles a year, Google Book aims, according to Product Marketing Manager Jen Grant, to help readers "find ... books they have a personal connection to, regardless of whether they have the opportunity to visit the local bookstore in "Dot" or anywhere else".¹ Some commentators, interpret Google's project, alongside competitors such as Yahoo's Project Gutenberg, as foreshadowing the end of print, where computers entirely supersede books, "pushing us rapidly toward that Eden of everything, and away from the paradigm of the physical paper tome".²

This essay scrutinizes the focus on "supersession" within the debate on the future of books. Examining developments in technology over the past two decades, it challenges commentators who claim that digital technology will kill books. This claim is so ubiquitous that even book partisans implicitly accept it, thus obliged to not only passionately defend the book, but also disparage any technology supposed to replace it. Describing digital technology as superseding books denies opportunities for books and digital technologies to interact in ways that expand the entire "mediasphere". Instead, this essay argues we should "turn the page" on supersession and find ways to highlight and celebrate the unique roles that these technologies can play.

In contrast with many commentaries on the future of books, this essay resists predicting the future or emphasizing books' and/or digital technology's practical advantages. Instead, it explores three reasons why the "supersession" narrative does not adequately capture digital technology's impact on books. First, we are not at an "epochal moment" where computers can replace books' social and cultural functions, which academics such as Nicholas Negroponte and George P. Landow, among others, use to announce digital technology's triumph. Second, the content within books is not neutral and able to transfer between genres without change, as John Perry Barlow suggests. All text is interdependent on the material embedding it, and some books' materiality cannot easily shift to digital technology's virtuality. Third, far from being antithetical, the important synergies between digital technology and books mean each advances the other. This essay concludes that although digital technology has altered, and will continue altering, how we conceive book printing and culture, the supersession narrative denies complex cross-fertilizing between these technologies. Instead, we need a narrative that focuses on the enabling aspects of each, to understand more specifically how books and digital technologies are changed and charged through interacting with the other.

Digital technology's champions, such as Negroponte and Landow, proclaim we are at an "epochal moment" where everything is new. For Negroponte, a leading multimedia expert, digital technology has produced a "radically new culture" propelled from "atoms to bits", making books vastly outdated.³ Landow argues that the new digital technologies have enabled "this paradigm shift, which marks a revolution in human thought" and "we must abandon" the book to go through it.⁴ In "epochal" moments, the future appears as a *tabula rasa* that only visionaries can write upon, as Paul Duguid argues, by selling the new on the heels of the old,

¹ Jen Grant. (2006) 'Publish Locally, Connect Globally.' *Inside Google Books 2009*, Retrieved 29 July 2009, from <http://booksearch.blogspot.com/2006/05/publish-locally-connect-globally.html>

² Kevin Kelly. (2006). 'Scan This Book!'. *New York Times Magazine*. New York

³ Nicholas Negroponte. (1996). *Being Digital*. Rydalmere, N.S.W., Hodder & Stoughton.: 4

⁴ George P. Landow. (1992). 'Hypertext in Hypertext'. Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press; cited in Paul Duguid. (1996). 'Material Matters: The Past an Futurology of the Book'. *The Future of the Book*. Geoffrey Nunberg. Berkeley, Calif., University of California Press: 67

despite the old's durability. "Sales departments", Duguid writes, "no longer offer just a new car, but a new type of car". In such a climate, "to fall behind technological race is to fall behind in the human race".⁵

Proclamations of the death of the book are not new. Similar debates arose with the advent of radio, cinema, and television, all of which were equally proclaimed in epochal terms.⁶ James J. O'Donnell traces how monks and scholars even predicted the book's death at the advent of the printing press, because it would make collating and correcting versions impossible. However, the book is still here.⁷ The sources of endurance are more complex than the supersession narrative allows.

In the supersession narrative, human progress depends upon and occurs through technology. Negroponte and Landow prophesize an undefined temporal "future" where everything, including communication, production, travel and relationships, will have changed irrevocably. This supersession narrative means that in any "future of books" the book disappears, at least in its current form. As books evoke philosophical and aesthetic questions on human lives, values and relationships, on modes of production, on power and control, and on the interaction between people and their environments, to name a few, the debate about books is a battle over the control of the cultural moment and the material resources it demands. The supersession narrative focuses on survival, leaving commentators the choice to leap with the new or drown with the old.⁸

There are several flaws to the claim of an epochal moment where computers supersede books. Firstly, this claim presupposes that technology and culture evolve simultaneously and equally. Negroponte and Landow underestimate the social material complex of which digital technologies comprise only a part. Duguid insightfully compares the debate on the future of the book to the pencil and the door. In 1938, the New York Times predicted that the typewriter would supersede the pencil. Similarly, in the 1950s, pictures of the future always involved sliding doors, superseding the hinge. However, both pencils and hinges survive, even transforming into electronic writing utensils and hinges on computers, while retaining "unrivaled signifying matter". Both these "artifacts", as Duguid labels them, communicate "polysemiously": a door fulfils a specific material function, but can also be expressively slammed, left ajar or slipped through.⁹ They survive because they combine technology and social process. Similarly, books exist as part of a social system that includes authors, readers, publishers, booksellers, libraries, and so forth: they constitute crucial agents in the cycle of production, distribution, and consumption.¹⁰ Social practice has turned books' physical properties – their bulk, their palpable inscription in space, their materially discrete pagination, and their covers – into both interpretive and social resources. Curling up in bed with a computer or soaking in a bath with a kindle is not the same as doing it with a favourite book.

Of course, digital technology has wrought significant and indelible changes to what we know of as "book culture". Some "books" have already disappeared or will disappear, including catalogues, technical manuals, directories, and legal records. However, as Geoffrey Nunberg argues, "the majority of these are the sorts of records whose existence in codex has no particular cultural significance".¹¹ Similarly, most encyclopedias sell in digital form, whereas dictionary sales have remained largely unchanged, suggesting deeper cultural

⁵ Duguid. 'Material Matters' 67-8

⁶ See, for example Sherman Young. (2007). *The Book Is Dead, Long Live the Book*. Sydney, New South.: 3

⁷ James J. O'Donnell. (1996). 'The Pragmatics of the New: Trithemius, McLuhan, Cassiodorus'. *The Future of the Book*. Geoffrey Nunberg. Berkeley, Calif., University of California Press: 45

⁸ Duguid. 'Material Matters' 63; see also Nichols Fox for an account of the resistance to technology, or 'Luddism', particularly within literature and art, Nicols Fox. (2002). *Against the Machine : The Hidden Luddite Tradition in Literature, Art, and Individual Lives*. Washington, DC, Island Press/Shearwater Books.

⁹ Duguid. 'Material Matters': 64

¹⁰ Ibid.: 79

¹¹ Geoffrey Nunberg. (1996). 'Introduction'. *The Future of the Book*. Geoffrey Nunberg. Berkeley, Calif., University of California Press: 19

connections to the dictionary in book form.¹² This may change in the future, as technology evolves. However, recognizing how socio-cultural practices interrelate with changes in technology destabilizes the supersession narrative, reminding us that the book “is itself a result of a fortuitous concourse of institutions, genres and technologies”.¹³ Commentators must be more specific about what is actually “new”, rather than just categorically sweeping aside the “old”.

The second flaw in the claim of an “epochal moment” is that assertions of newness evoke the old. Negroponte and Landow’s revolutionary rhetoric demands that digital technology’s material advantages sound attractive: they must appeal to values and behaviours we recognize.¹⁴ For example, Landow highlights everyone’s opportunity on the Internet to write for millions of readers, thus deploying a notion of authorship and a model of access more appropriate to traditional print media than to digital technology.¹⁵ After all, there is little advantage to being a writer if you have to compete with millions of other writers to get a readership base. Even multi-media and hypertext, which Landow claims will take us “beyond the book” by creating new reading modes and “new forms of intellectual and cultural interchange” still appeals to traditional conceptions of reading and writing.¹⁶ Indeed, the crux of his argument depends on the changes that occurred when he transformed his book, *Hypertext*, to hypertext. Landow describes extraordinary and exciting chances for new voices to interact with his text, but depends upon social constructions of particular reading modes, in particular in linking other (non-hypertext) texts.¹⁷ Disavowing these new possibilities of digital technology, the majority of users upload conventional whole documents, with highly visible clues to their authority and their material origins.¹⁸ Digital technology imposes, rather than decomposes, divisions between author, reader, producer and consumer. Representing the present as an “epochal moment”, denies important links between technology and society, as well as the potential for technology to develop in unique ways.

Technology as bound with social practices leads to this essay’s second theme: we cannot remove the content of a book from its material base without change. Proponents of the new media argue that digital technology can supersede books because it can present information to the same effect. John Perry Barlow, the *Electronic Frontier Foundation’s* co-founder and executive chair, likens books to a bottle of wine: “while information enters cyberspace ... these bottles are vanishing... It is now possible to replace all information storage forms with one meta-bottle: complex – and highly liquid – patterns of ones and zeros”.¹⁹ Barlow contends that content is different from its container, in the same way that liquid wine is very different from the solid glass bottle.

In distinguishing form from content, proponents of the book’s demise such as Barlow use emancipatory rhetoric. Not only will technology evolve, it will “free” information to a more natural state: for example, Barlow describes cyberspace as “the native home of the mind”.²⁰ In a similar vein, science-fiction writer and self-appointed “cyberpunk”, Bruce Sterling declares that information “wants to change... but for a long time, our static media, whether carvings in stone, ink on paper or dye on celluloid, have strongly resisted the evolutionary impulse”. He advocates removing material encumbrances from the “true” information assumed

¹² Ibid.: 19

¹³ Ibid.: 19

¹⁴ Geoffrey Nunberg. (1996). 'Farewell to the Information Age'. *The Future of the Book*. Geoffrey Nunberg. Berkeley, Calif., University of California Press: 105

¹⁵ George P. Landow. (1996). 'Twenty Minutes into the Future, or How Are We Moving Beyond the Book'. *The Future of the Book*. Geoffrey Nunberg. Berkeley, Calif., University of California Press: 232

¹⁶ Ibid.: 209; cited in Nunberg. 'Introduction':18

¹⁷ Landow. 'Twenty Minutes into the Future': 225-227

¹⁸ Duguid. 'Material Matters': 88

¹⁹ John Perry Barlow. (1994) 'The Economy of Ideas.' *Wired* 2.03, Retrieved July 29 2009, from <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/2.03/economy.ideas.html>

²⁰ Ibid. ; For an examination of the way in which computers actually undermine “information”, see Nunberg. 'Farewell to the Information Age'

to lie beneath them.²¹ Within a book, these scholars argue, a text is closed. Readers may read the text and interpret it at great liberty, but cannot touch the text's physical body: it is trapped.²²

Yet, paradoxically, emancipatory rhetoric undercuts the supersession narrative. While Barlow and Sterling claim that digitalism liberates information from technology, it liberates it *through* technology.²³ They do not account for the complete social circuit of either books or digital technology, including the role of these artifacts at different "cardinal" points, such as idea-generation, production, interpretation and so forth. They emphasize the book's demise by portraying books as authorial products, while portraying digital forms through focusing on readers interpreting and participating in the text.²⁴ Duguid contends that this makes it easy to idealize information technology and demonize the book as if the two were not, indeed, both machines.²⁵ To take one and ignore the other inevitably misrepresents the system as a whole and the artifacts' roles within it.

Furthermore, the argument that text can be removed from its container ignores that books comprise not just text and cover, but also other visual markers such as a name, title, preface, illustrations, content page, index and afterword that do not belong to a text, but surround and extend it. Gerard Genette labels these features "paratexts" that both present the text, but also make it present, regulating how the audience receives and consumes it. The nature of these paratexts may change according to period, culture, genre, work and edition, but Genette argues, their presence involves a pragmatic strategy to ensure a more pertinent reading in the eyes of the author.²⁶ Indeed, this may account somewhat for the flourishing number of titles in print now: we publish a book every thirty seconds.²⁷ In an internet age where so many people write and self-publish, books, with their covers and paratexts distinguish writers from others. The burgeoning number of titles can be more easily portrayed as an act of socialization than incarceration. The book's form remains, at least to this point, an important cultural marker, bestowing authority and rendering information recognizable for readers. Digital technologies have not yet superseded this.

Within the supersession narrative, digital technologies and books appear to be antithetical, as Kelly evokes; "In the clash between the conventions of the book and the protocols of the screen, the screen will prevail".²⁸ However, the third theme of this essay is that digital technology presents an opportunity to create a system of reading that transcends individual texts with their fixed boundaries, places and roles; we have, in Geoffrey Nunberg's words, "the chance to reinvent together, in the context of relativism and virtuality, the public space of knowledge".²⁹

The supersession narrative is so ubiquitous that even book partisans accept it, arguing against it rather than changing the terms of the debate. Many of these partisans have focused on the physical aspects of the book, citing the look, feel, smell, even the practicality of books to sit or stand upon when you want to be taller, while denigrating new technologies. Pulitzer Prize winning novelist, E. Annie Proulx claimed, "Books are forever...

²¹ Bruce Sterling. (1992). *Free as Air, Free as Water, Free as Knowledge*. Speech to the Library Information Technology Association.; cited in Duguid. 'Material Matters': 74

²² Raffaele Simone. (1996). 'The Body of the Text'. *The Future of the Book*. Geoffrey Nunberg. Berkeley, Calif., University of California Press: 240

²³ Duguid in particular notices how the supersession narrative is post-modern, while the emancipatory rhetoric (or liberation narrative as he calls it) is anti-post-modern. See Duguid. 'Material Matters': 65

²⁴ *Ibid.*: 79

²⁵ *Ibid.*: 79

²⁶ Gerard Genette. (1997). *Paratexts : Thresholds of Interpretation*. Cambridge ; New York, NY, USA, Cambridge University Press.: 2-3

²⁷ The *Unesco Statistical Yearbook 1999* suggested that the number of titles published is growing faster than the world population, since 1950, it has increased yearly by a rate of roughly 2.8 percent, whereas the population has increased yearly by roughly 1.8 percent: cited in Gabriel Zaid. (2003). *So Many Books : Reading and Publishing in an Age of Abundance*. Philadelphia, Paul Dry Books.: 21-2

²⁸ Kelly. 'Scan This Book!'

²⁹ Nunberg. 'Introduction': 17

Nobody is going to sit down and read a novel of a twitchy little screen. Ever".³⁰ However, digital proponents make similar claims about the book. For example, William J. Mitchell, Dean of Architecture at MIT, claimed that the book would exist only as a sort of methadone treatment, irrelevant except to those "addicted to the look and feel of tree flakes encased in dead cow (and prepared to pay for it)".³¹ In a narrative of supersession, this debate is one of survival, so commentators express differences in aesthetic and even moral terms, pushed to extremes rather than finding common ground.

However, ultimately the future prophesized by different commentators is little more than conjecture. Changes in technology happen so rapidly, that painting a picture of the future based on the technology of today is impossible beyond a few given changes. E-book readers, kindle, e-ink and other future tablets designed to emulate the experience of reading printed material may emerge and improve. However, some of these forms are going to evolve in ways we cannot imagine and may not merely try to replicate books. To date, the most exciting innovations have occurred when writers push the boundaries of their technologies without attempting to take over the other, expanding the mediasphere, not reducing it.³² This essay will consider three such works in examining how digital technology and books can reinforce and extend each other, rather than being antithetical.

Firstly, proponents of digital technology argue that the accessibility of information on the internet will mean that people will not use books. We have seen already how social factors will ensure people continue to use books for some time. In addition, digital technology makes books more accessible by enabling publishers to promote and publish them more widely. "If a book is not online," says Tim Barton, president of Oxford University Press in the United States of America "it is invisible".³³ People who have given away print copies have ended up selling more books, because more people discover their books.³⁴ In addition, new costing and financing methods, (Google's advertisers pay fees based on hits rather than licenses) suggests a way to decrease books' costs.³⁵ Similarly, digital technology can allow more titles to be in circulation as it enables smaller print runs, reducing wastage and preserving copies at risk.³⁶

More people than ever are publishing books. However, some like Mark Danielewski are publishing books that "can't exist online". In his novel *Only Revolutions*, the narratives of two teenagers, Hailey and Sam, intertwine

³⁰ Cited in O'Donnell. 'The Pragmatics of the New': 37

³¹ Cited in Duguid. 'Material Matters': 66

³² Zaid captures this expansion in the form of conversations: "Imagine an agora, a marketplace, a cocktail party, where multiple conversations are underway. The microphone appears. The many circles become one circle, different conversations become the same conversation", Zaid. *So Many Books*: 33

³³ Barton asserts Google Book Search's importance, avowing that books published within the last ten years are even more accessible than before, as University libraries provide students and scholars with access to many of those works via services purchased directly from publishers and aggregators, through online versions and e-books. Tom Barton. (2009). 'Saving Texts from Oblivion: Oxford University Press on the Google Book Settlement.' *The Chronicle Review of Higher Education* (June 29)

³⁴ For example, Lance Eaton traces how novels such as Thomas Friedman's *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*, and Stephen King's *Just After Sunset*, sold more hard copy versions by pre-releasing audio and downloadable versions: Lance Eaton. (2009). 'Books Born Digital.' *Library Journal* May 15: 26-7; see also Clive Thompson. (2009) 'Clive Thompson on the Future of Reading in a Digital World.' *Wired* 22.05.2009, Retrieved 29 July 2009, from http://www.wired.com/techbiz/people/magazine/17-06/st_thompson;

³⁵ Currently readers have to cover books' cost (unlike a magazine where advertisers supplement revenue) the opportunities for cross advertising may make books even cheaper. Zaid. *So Many Books*: 123, 65; Peter L. Shillingsburg. (2006). *From Gutenberg to Google: Electronic Representations of Literary Texts*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.: 2

³⁶ Digital technology preserves books, protecting titles from erosion of acidic paper or disaster. The University of Michigan President, Mary Sue Coleman observed Hurricane Katrina devastation of ninety percent of the contents of Tulane University's library. She argued that the Google Book Search Library project is the "most extensive preservation projects in world history... [through which] we are protecting the written word for all time". Cited in Laura DeBonis. (2006) 'Defending the Future of Books.' *The official Google Blog* 2009, Retrieved 29 July 2009, from <http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2006/02/defending-future-of-books.html>

from different directions, and upside down to each other.³⁷ Readers can only comprehend the story by reading both narratives simultaneously, turning the book upside down every eight pages. The experience of reading *Only Revolutions* cannot be replicated on a computer screen. However, Danielewski has used online technologies to both enhance his book, and its sales. Firstly, the novel itself is visually stunning, for example in Hailey's story, all occurrences of the letter O or the numeral 0 are gold while in Sam's they are printed in green, using complex digital printing techniques. Secondly, these visual clues are extended on an associated website where readers can respond to the story, download an audio version, share their own stories, and upload photos, even reading parts online. For Danielewski, the internet provides a complex interplay that both extends what is possible for a book, charging it through a networked process, while simultaneously "further emphasis[ing] what is different and exceptional about books".³⁸ Far from just defending the book, Danielewski points to the important ways that by working together, digital technology and books enhance the reading experience.

The dislocation of books occasioned by digital technology relates not just to how we access books, but also their inherent form. In particular, the emergence of the "hypertext", a complex way of organizing knowledge and information demands new rhetorical systems that the book cannot replicate, as Luca Toshi contends:

By means of the language of hypertext, it is finally possible to make manifest what has always been done in practice, to create systems where the connections that paper can only suggest to the mind ... are physically realizable and accessible to manipulation.³⁹

Commentators such as Toshi argue that digital technologies enable people more easily to collaborate, creating shared work with diverse points of view. As users become more used to this way of interacting, books, with their enforced linearity, will become obsolete.

However, Ben Greenman's book, *Correspondences*, challenges this claim: although it has a physical presence, it experiments in ways that replicate some of the experiences of online.⁴⁰ This "book" takes the form of a box, containing three pamphlets folded accordion-style and a postcard. Each pamphlet has two stories that share themes of letter writing. The first story, "What He's Poised To Do", has nine places where someone writes a postcard, but the text of the postcards are absent. Greenman invites readers to write on the (blank) postcard in the box to fit one of those spots and send it to Hotel St. George Press, possibly to publish it in future online and paperback editions of the book. This experiment, titled "The Postcard Project," aims to create "an ever-shifting, community-created story".⁴¹ Greenman's book and "The Postcard Project" evoke the collaboration between author and readers of online texts. However, it has a heftiness that cannot be produced online, the paper must be unfolded and the postcard handwritten upon. Greenman reinforces this presence by signing every copy of the book and having a limited run, although excerpts are available online. While finding ways to find some of the features of hypertext to print, Greenman means for his book to be indelibly present.

Finally, Jay David Bolter, among others, argues that digital technology is antithetical to books as it focuses on visual images rather than words, arguing, "Digital graphics call into question the future of the alphabet itself".⁴² Bolter examines the "breakout of the visual" already present in newspapers, to the point that it might

³⁷ Mark Danielewski. (2006). *Only Revolutions*. New York, Pantheon.

³⁸ The website can be found at, Mark Danielewski. (2006). 'Only Revolutions.' Retrieved 29 July, 2009, from <http://www.onlyrevolutions.com/>.; Cited in Motoko Rich. (2006). 'Digital Publishing Is Scrambling the Industry's Rules'. *The New York Times*. New York

³⁹ Cited in Nunberg. 'Introduction': 17

⁴⁰ Ben Greenman. (2008). *Correspondences*. New York, Hotel St. George Press.

⁴¹ Ben Greenman. 'The Post-Card Project.' Retrieved July 29, 2009, from <http://www.hotelstgeorgepress.com/mail/>.

⁴² Jay David Bolter. (1996). 'Ekphrasis, Virtual Reality, and the Future of Writing'. *The Future of the Book*. Geoffrey Nunberg. Berkeley, Calif., University of California Press: 256; Sven Birkets is particularly fearful that the computer was changing

signal the end of prose (although he recognizes that words themselves may not disappear entirely).⁴³ However, digital technologies also offer an ideal tool for manipulating information in its alphabetic form. For example, *Patchwork Girl*, a hypertext by Shelley Jackson uses words to hypothesize what would happen if Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* were true, Mary Shelley herself made the monster, the monster was a woman, fell in love with Mary Shelley, and travelled to America.⁴⁴ It is a multi-paged, multilayered story that dismantles the boundaries between text and body, creator and created.⁴⁵ Jackson could not have written *Patchwork Girl* in a book format, as it involves too much user-involvement and is non-linear. Although it is a visual piece (bodies, journeys and relationships are graphically represented) the stories emerge largely through words. Landow cites *Patchwork Girl* as an example of the potential of hypertext. Rather than pointing to the way that digital technology should supersede the book, in *Patchwork Girl*, the material presence of Mary Shelley's book *Frankenstein* is fundamental. Jackson has innovated with ways to engage with digital technology, while reaffirming books.

Instead of thinking that digital technology supersedes the book, we should focus on the cross-fertilizing potential of these technologies for expanding the entire "mediasphere": the collective ecology of newspapers, journals, books, blogs, radio broadcasts, films, advertisements and so forth. The supersession narrative too easily suggests that there will be no space left empty, no gaps or breaches to worry about, and that all technological change is progress.⁴⁶ However, Danielewski, Greenman and Jackson's works all demonstrate that books and digital technology do not have to be antithetical, claiming territory owned by the other. Instead, they can produce new ways for people to encounter the written word, information and ideas in highly innovative ways.

The supersession narrative does not successfully represent the impact of digital technology on books. Digital technology has changed what we know as 'the book' in numerous ways. However, rather than claiming we are at an epochal moment where everything is new, we must assess the significance of these changes and build the resources to negotiate them. Books play important socio-cultural roles in how we live our lives that, as yet, digital technology has not replaced. Books are not just "containers" of information that can be replaced by an amorphous networked digital sphere, but form an integral part of the authority and use of a text. Furthermore, digital technology and books are not antithetical, but can together expand the mediasphere and the public field of knowledge. Digital technology will continue to evolve, but for now, it is not the willing executioner of the book. To prepare for these evolutions, we need to "turn the page" on the succession narrative, focusing instead on innovations that explore their collaborative potential.

writing and thinking in ways that had not been carefully considered and which would damage important ways of viewing reality. Sven Birkerts. (1994). *The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age*. Boston, Mass., Faber and Faber.

⁴³ Bolter. 'Ekphrasis, Virtual Reality, and the Future of Writing': 258; cited Nunberg. 'Introduction': 19. For an account of how digital technologies will bring together different genres see Ali Yakhlef. (2009). 'We Have Always Been Virtual: Writing, Institutions and Technology.' *Space and Culture* 12. 1: 83

⁴⁴ Shelley Jackson. (1995). 'Patchwork Girl'. *Eastgate Systems*. Cambridge

⁴⁵ For example, in the "Graveyard" storyline, the monster has been broken into her different parts, and readers put her back together, learning at the same time not just about her body, but the lives of women at the start of the nineteenth century. It draws attention to the way in which all bodies, even those of the readers, are socially constructed.

⁴⁶ Duguid. 'Material Matters': 73

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