

Also by Astrid Ensslin

Language in the Media

CANONIZING HYPERTEXT
Explorations and Constructions

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Chapter 2

Hypertext and the Question of Canonicity

1 Concepts of Literature

I would like to take the position that hypertext is fundamentally traditional and in the mainstream of literature.
(Nelson, 1984: 1/17)

Literary educators make curricular and methodological decisions on the basis of contemporary notions of literariness. Such notions also help to delimit literary studies from related subject areas such as philosophy, the visual arts, history and computer science, which is, in itself, an object of unlimited controversy among critics. Hence, in order to arrive at a widening understanding of literature in the twenty-first century and of its medial innovations, it is necessary, first of all, to take a look at existing concepts and theories of literature.¹ Theorists throughout the centuries have adopted a variety of perspectives, which are outlined in this chapter. As a basis for understanding hypertext literariness, notions of aesthetic procedurality will be of particular interest.

To start with, one of the major concerns seems to be the poststructuralist claim of panfictionalism (Willems, 2000: 217–67), which maintains that virtually everything is fiction: not only written texts of all kinds, but reality in itself (cf. Lyotard's 'grand narrative' or 'master narrative', Barthes' 'myths' or DeMan's fuzzy boundaries between primary and secondary literature [1983: viii]). This has caused an essential need for literary studies to stress its idiosyncratic, legitimate status and define itself in opposition to disciplines dealing with clearly non-fictional in the sense of non-imaginary objects. Be that as it may, there is overall agreement that 'literature' very much depends on contemporary manifestations of what is understood as such, and therefore defies any exhaustive definition. This may be a painful observation, yet has to be seen as constitutive for understanding the very discipline of literary theory and criticism.

In terms of perspectives taken towards literary concepts, the following categories can be identified. First, there are referential approaches, pertaining to ideas of (1) mimesis (e.g. Plato's understanding of the poet as imitator of things as they appear in *Republic*, Aristotle's concept of imitating human action in *Poetics*, Pope's idea of emulating ancient Greek and Roman poets in *Imitations of Horace* [1737], and Wimsatt's [1978] notion of the mirror as a literary metaphor); (2) imaginariness in the sense of non-factuality (e.g. Wellek and Warren,

1956); and (3) semantic content (Lyas, 1969; Beardsley, 1973; Matthews 1978) – this 'school' of critics emphasizes the connotational density of literary and poetic language, as well as the difference between meaning and proposition in literature. Pragmatists (4), on the other hand, look at the way literature is used in context, in other words literature's illocutionary forces and its applicability to Speech Act Theory (Ohmann, 1971; Beardsley, 1973). Referential definition emphasize the object of literature, i.e. its 'symbolical' (Bühler, 1934), extralinguistic meaning. Referentialists look at literature's mimetic function and in what particular ways it depicts, imitates or indeed deviates from 'reality'. The crucial problem with this approach is, of course, the very notion of 'real', which varies from reader to reader and thus cannot be understood as a universal.

Second, the figure of the author has been of major importance ever since the emergence of the individual as experiencing, sensual and empirical subject in the Enlightenment and, at its extreme, the literary genius as *alter deus* in the early Romantic Period. Literature was at that time chiefly associated with its producer. Freudian and Marxist Critical Theory have ventured even further into investigating the personality, psychological disposition, biography and socio-political circumstances of the author, going as far as to ignore the reader and the text altogether.

Third, as a counter-movement to author-centred criticism, literature has been defined in structuralist terms (e.g. Eichenbaum, 1926/1965; Jakobson and Tynyanov, 1928/1971; Jakobson, 1960; Shklovsky, 1988), focusing on language and form. Intending to turn literary studies into a science, structuralist tried to 'amputate' psychological, subjectivist categories such as the author and the reader from the text. Of particular importance here is the notion of literary or poetic, language as *deviation*, or estrangement (Shklovsky, 1988) from every day language, which is functionalized by poets to draw the reader's attention to the poetic message as a purpose in its own right (Jakobson, 1960). Despite the teachability and assessability of structuralist literary criticism, which manifest itself in stylistic text analysis, there has been harsh criticism, especially regarding the fact that such analytical methods do not look beyond the (poetic) text. Therefore, stylistics as a discipline has recently reached out into more reader oriented areas such as cognitive psychology, and also started to look at non poetic/non-literary texts, using methods of (Critical) Discourse Analysis.

Fourth, literature has been seen in functional and pedagogic terms, particularly by teachers and curriculum makers. The Horatian motto *prodesse et delectare* puts literature's moral and ethical function first, as literature's function is 'to be useful and to please'. This concept was particularly predominant in Renaissance humanism and the Enlightenment (see Lessing's moralistic re-evaluation of *catharsis*). Today, the conceptual educational value of literature lies very much in its potential to help readers develop a sense of individual, cultural and – no uncontroversially – national identity. In fact, the underlying conduit metaphor of literature as a vehicle for the transfer of information and values has been and still is exploited for ideological infiltration in various ways, particularly in Imperialist and Totalitarian contexts.

Fifth, and most importantly for this study, literature has been viewed under the pretext of its effect on the reader, in other words, its 'aesthetics'. The term is used here less in its generic sense of *l'art pour l'art* ('art for art's sake') than in terms of the role of the reader as the major element of the reading *process*, in other words the procedurality of literature.

Genealogically, literary aesthetics derives from the Greek *kalokagathon* ideal, epitomized by the Muses, who represent the equation of divinity, goodness and beauty. Since Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* (1750) and particularly Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790), beauty has come to be considered as a subjective matter dependent on sensual perception rather than reasoning. At the same time, the notion of evaluative subjectivity was established as a valid criterion for judging artistry. As a result, 'literature' came to connote appraisal, a notion which it still maintains today (see Lyas, 1969; Davenport, 1978; Lamarque and Olsen, 1994). Critical voices, on the other hand, lament the binding nature of such an understanding and seek a compromise in agnosticism and/or individual judgement (e.g. Beardsley, 1973; Hirsch Jr, 1978).

The procedural aspect of literary reception has been the focus of a variety of critical schools since the late 1970s, and a wide range of phenomenological approaches can be subsumed under this umbrella notion. The emphasis on reading in the sense of experiencing, or exploring, literature was pioneered as early as the 1930s by Louise Rosenblatt (e.g. 1976, 1985), yet did not become the focus of major attention until the Constance School of literary critics was established (e.g. Iser's [1978] reader-response theory, with its emphasis on textual indeterminacy and the semantic gap, and Fish's [1980] assumption that textual meaning develops in the process of textual experience). Drawing on Roman Ingarden's 'schematized views', Iser regards the reader as the decisive element in the process of creating textual meaning. According to him, 'reading causes the literary work to unfold its inherently dynamic character' (Iser, 1974: 275). Similarly, Jauss (1982) argues against traditional historical criticism on the grounds that its methods fail to mediate between history and literature. In his so-called reception theory, he seeks to emphasize the dialogue between reader and text, which creates continuity rather than separation. The literary work is thus re-instantiated and updated with every reading, according to changing historical, social and personal circumstances. Hence, the 'work' as such both depends on and changes readers' 'horizons of expectations' (cf. Gadamer, 1979), i.e. previously known sets of formal, thematic and generic characteristics. Jauss refers to the discrepancy between the first and latest readers' horizons of expectation as 'aesthetic distance', which ultimately determines the work's artistic character.

As will be elaborated below, literary hypertext exceeds the level of indeterminacy displayed by linear media and therefore heightens the procedural, constructive effects of individual reading. Consequently, it categorically defies critical (e.g. Marxist) positions that see literature in contingency with social ideologies as a whole (e.g. Eagleton, 1983). Such collectivist approaches cannot sufficiently account for the subjective nature of the reading process,

because they sacrifice the individual for the sake of a culturally or even nationally all-embracing readership, which, of course, can never be homogeneous.

Finally, aspects of mediality have to be considered, not least because recent literary theory (e.g. Ryan, 2004) sees the concept of *narrative* spreading 'across media', i.e. beyond the book. It now includes still pictures, moving pictures, music and, in particular, the digital media, thus including a wide range of different semiotic modes, whose role changes in alignment with the medium in which they appear. Highlighting the harmonizing effects of digitization, particularly in hypermedia, Bolter (2001) refers to the 'remediation of print', i.e. the remapping of largely sequential writing structures into nonsequentially organized, digital textual networks that incorporate other media through the use of a homogeneous underlying code. A working concept of literature in the Digital Age needs to embrace these tendencies, which suggest a departure from the largely monomedial and/or monomodal views associated with paper-based writing.

Having outlined the implications of a medially extended, procedural, reception-oriented concept of literature, I will, in what follows, examine the phenomenon of the literary canon. It may be seen as the ultimate manifestation of underlying ideologies of literature as well as of its functions in society. As the title of this book suggests, my overarching aim is to provide a theoretical and practical backdrop to a 'canonization' of hypertext. In order to do this, however, I will first need to explain and critically evaluate the very notion of 'canon'. As we shall see in the course of the following sections, the canon concept needs to be modified in order to be applicable to the specific intrinsic qualities of literary hypertext.

2 The Literary Canon – Definitions, Processes, Effects

This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional.
(Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent': 49)

A major concern of this book is to investigate hypertext's potential for canonization, but also to examine at what stage of a possible canonization process hypertext is at the moment. To do so, a workable concept of 'canon' – a polysemic and semantically malleable term – needs to be identified. Such a concept needs to take into account postmodern social structures, literary practices and the dictates of the digital medium. This section therefore discusses the meaning(s) of the term; the social implications of having either one or indeed multiple, competing canons; and, finally, the relationship between canon and curriculum. Reference is made primarily to relevant chapters in Assmann and Assmann (1987), Arnold and Detering (1997) and John Guillory's seminal study, *Cultural Capital* (1993), which takes a Marxist approach to the relationship between canon and power.

The etymology of the word 'canon' suggests a logical connection between definitions of literature as discussed in the previous section and the canonization of literary works. Derived from the Sumeric word for a straight cane or bar used as a measuring rod, 'canon' (Greek) means 'rule', 'standard', 'list' and 'catalogue'. Applied to literature, the term refers to a compilation of literary works which, during a certain period, are considered 'seminal, normative and timeless' (Schweikle and Schweikle, 1990: 232 – my translation). Knowledge of these works is regarded, institutionally, as a requirement for academic progress and, socially, as a sign for a certain level of education as well as, in meritocratic political systems, membership of a higher class.

Viewed socio-critically, canons comprise texts which are considered culturally valuable by a certain group or society, and therefore 'worthy' of being handed on to posterity (Winko, 1997: 585).² They are fixed, self-contained, closed, exemplary and prescriptive in nature. Assmann and Assmann (1987) claim that the term is best defined by ways of institutionalized permanence, presence, propriety and resilience to temporality – 'institutionalized' because canons are *per definitionem* imposed by governmental institutions, with the aim of 'constructing' cultural unity and identity. Guillory explains the driving power of canonization in Marxist terms: 'Judgments with canonical force are institutionally located' (1993: 29), and are most strongly driven by the decisions of educational bodies, which, in turn, are subject to higher organs of power.

Canons are selected by institutional authorities to stabilize a common ground and to highlight certain elements of tradition which, according to an elitist world view, help create and sustain identity within a certain community or peer group. Indeed, canons have a considerable psychological and social (izing) effect in that they enable discourse and a sense of belonging among members of those social groups who are familiar with the works in question. Having said that, imposed, 'top-down' canons can only operate successfully in rather small, totalitarian societies. In large, multi-layered societies, alternative catalogues frequently undermine imposed canons, as was the case with the German 'Klassikersturz' during the 1970s (Grübel, 1997: 618). Alternative canons arise from 'situations of need' (Hahn, 1987: 33), where minority social groups are jeopardized by subjugation, discrimination, marginalization, expulsion or exile. Similarly, the recent empowerment of marginalized social groups across Western societies has subverted mainstream ideological unity, resulting, for instance, in alternative canons of feminist, gay and lesbian, African American and Caribbean writing.

The correlative instrument of the canon is censorship, which is motivated and controlled by the canon. As a matter of fact, canon and censorship stand in dialectic opposition to each other, as their existence and effectiveness are reciprocally conditioned. Underlying both canon and censorship is a catalogue of intra-literary and extra-literary values, pertaining to intrinsic and extrinsic features of a literary text. Not belonging to a canon implies censorship of varying degrees, ranging from being neglected by readers or critics to being banned by law.

From an aesthetic perspective, canons are traditionally considered catalogues of works that are exemplary, admirable, and worth emulating, and thus create patterns of artistic excellence. Implicitly, a canon follows as well as represents an implicit or explicit set of rules, which may be used as restrictive and generative principles of production and reception (Hahn, 1987). Ultimately, therefore, canons are manifestations and concretizations of literary concepts, which reflect the 'tastes' of dominant social groups. The Western Canon (Bloom, 1994), or indeed any other 'traditional canon', therefore connotes normativity as imposed by oligarchic elites of literary criticism, such as I. A. Richards (1929), T. S. Eliot (1932) and F. R. Leavis (1948).

Literary value judgements can occur either implicitly (through tacit acts of exclusion and inclusion) or explicitly (by means of verbal criticism), and pertain to all areas of literary interaction: production, reception, distribution, and application to pedagogy and criticism (Winko, 1997: 586–9). Needless to say, selection always implies the exclusion of the majority, which is not only precarious from a scholarly point of view. It has in fact a fundamental educational disadvantage: students who are given lists of 'must-reads' that are largely unaccounted for are prevented from forming their own, subjective, critical stance in distinguishing good from not-so-good literature.

Contrary to most definitions, canons are by no means as stable as their 'selectors' would wish them to be. They are indeed highly subject to paradigm shifts within a particular society. To give an example, the emergence of the vernacular English primary school curriculum in the eighteenth centuries was closely connected to a new image of literature, which not only included the ancient classics but was extended to English writing and thus began to follow the purpose of bourgeois nationalist education. The subsequent inclusion of the realist and modernist novel in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was as inevitable as that of film since the 1960s, which naturally resulted in a gradual reduction of the number of works from Greek and Roman Antiquity. In other words, due to the dynamic nature of human culture and society, the stability of tradition, which has often been taken for granted by supporters of the traditional canon, is as wrong an assumption as the eternal gospel truth of 'great' works (Assmann and Assmann, 1987).

Canonization processes are evolutionary in nature. This implies, in Darwinian terms, a permanent process of adaptation to changing environmental (i.e. social) parameters, or values. According to Assmann and Assmann (*ibid.*: 16), literary works 'return' to enter a canon after a process of initial 'renunciation', or censorship, which often verges on iconoclasm. Returning to previously censored works is motivated by an emerging historical interest in periods gone by and their artistic and literary output, precisely because they were previously renounced. Günther (1987) elaborates this idea by proposing five stages that make up the process of canonization. First, a preparatory 'protocanon' evolves, in which texts of a certain type accumulate. This is followed by the actual stage of canonization, in which a canon is selected and formulated in opposition to other, existing canons. During the subsequent stage of

The postmodernist paradigm has subjected the canon to the segregation of diverse cultural value systems, each of which sets out to establish their own rule and text catalogues. The 'atrophy of pan-cultural thinking' (Assmann and Assmann, 1987: 24 – my translation) is indicative of a somewhat post-historical situation, which has resulted in canon apathy, yet has not been able to eliminate canonicity altogether. Evidently, it is becoming increasingly difficult to establish a common foundation for literary scholars and lay readers alike, and it would seem as if egalitarian and equally informed scholarly discourse might become an increasingly utopian ideal.

Contrarily, the past few decades have seen new canons emerge, for example in feminism, postcolonialism, multiculturalism and working class writing. The major argument in favour of them is that they represent pluralist, quasi-egalitarian Western values. As such, the canon functions as an instance of 'imaginary politics' (Guillory, 1993: 7), as 'cultural capital' (Pierre Bourdieu's coinage) mirroring stratified societies. At the same time, however, the promotion of alternative canons paradoxically implies an acceptance of the traditional canon. Ironically, alternative canons epitomize exclusion by calling themselves 'non-canonical', and therefore strengthen policies of discrimination and hegemony. On the other hand, discrimination and hegemony are pervasive symptoms of our so-called multicultural Western societies and cannot be denied or 'canonized away'. Hence, alternative canons carry an enormous symbolical weight and are likely to trigger heated classroom discussion.

The connection of the canon to identity and culture raises the question of whether and how *virtual* culture has hitherto been utilized to reflect social strata. Particularly the younger generations are strongly influenced by the expansion of digital media, such as digital television and film, 'Skype' (digital telecommunication), as well as, of course, the World Wide Web, with all its communicative, entertainment, creative and epistemological facilities. The human body itself is increasingly merging with technology. Human-machine hybrids, such as cyborgs (Haraway, 1991), avatars, and androids, which we encounter in science fiction and cyberpunk film (e.g. *Terminator*, *Batman*, *The Matrix Trilogy*), print literature (e.g. by William Gibson, Neal Stephenson, Douglas Coupland, Philip K. Dick), computer games (e.g. *Tomb Raider*, *Civilization*, *Age of Empires*, *Quake*), MUDs and MOOs, is developing in cyberspace as a working alternative to human fleshliness and vulnerability. Virtual communities are arising from internet chatrooms, MUDs, video conferences and other virtual networks. Digital environments offer to many of their users a more flexible, experimental, secure environment than real-life communities, and subjects discover other, potential existences by adopting and exploring various sexual, cultural and historical identities (e.g. Turkle, 1996).

Bloom's (1994) monstrous elegy on the fall of literary studies and the rise of 'Cultural Studies' is in line with Weber's aforementioned pessimistic outlook. I largely disagree with these prognoses, because, although we do indeed listen and watch more than we used to before the age of hypermedia, we also read more than we used to. Reading different media requires different reading

techniques and a flexibility in applying them, according to what medium one is dealing with. Hence, what contemporary educational theory and practice needs to do is embrace the affordances of the New Media, including hypertext, and expand their didactic toolkit accordingly.

This brings me to the last point of my discussion. With respect to the educational function of the canon, we have to differentiate between the concepts of 'canon' and 'curriculum' (or, more narrowly, 'syllabus' in the sense of a 'synecdochic list' [Guillory, 1993: 34] used as part of the English curriculum). 'Curriculum' does not simply equate to 'teaching practice'. It is indeed a fallacy to assume that the curriculum is a manifestation of an imaginary construct called the 'canon'. Contrarily, it is the curriculum, or rather curriculum makers, that produces the canon. Along with reading lists and anthologies, these syllabi are the only way of accessing the imaginary list of literary works which represents, materializes, and, not least, commodifies the English canon.

In logical consequence, a revision of the canon is only possible through a revision of the curriculum, particularly when it comes to including New Media phenomena such as literary hypertext. Taking a closer look at the National Curriculum of England and Wales, the question arises whether a potential for integrating hypertext is indeed in place.

Since the arrival of the National Curriculum of England and Wales in 1989/90, questions of canonicity and curricular selectivity have become central: 'To list or not to list became one of the main questions in the politicisation of English teaching' (Benton, 2000: 273). Eventually, the prescriptivist camp, who supported the Saidian notion of 'self' as being English and therefore distinct from the 'other', outnumbered the anti-prescriptivists, who advocated a culturally more diverse and open curriculum. Consequently, the only allowance made in the 1995 version of the English Curriculum was an apologetic invitation of works from 'other cultures and traditions' (Benton, 2000: 275), but the heritage model was institutionalized all the same.

In 2000, Benton postulated a 'less dictatorial structure' (*ibid.*: 276), which focused on the teaching of 'literature in English' rather than 'English literature', and introduced limitations only in terms of genre and literary history, not in the choice of textual material. Similarly, the 2000 and, to a greater degree, the 2003 Curriculum show a much higher demand for ICT (Information and Communication Technology), as well as what is called 'media and moving image texts'. ICT is propagated mostly as a teaching tool and environment for autonomous learning (Clarke *et al.*, 2004: 353). It includes the use of electronic whiteboards, specialized presentation and layout software (PowerPoint, Clicker, Publisher), and the internet as an information resource, as it contains a vast range of canonized paper-under-glass literature, which pupils can engage with as they learn basic IT skills such as cutting, pasting and drag-and-drop, as well as the reflected combination and presentation of various digitized media (image, text and sound). 'Media and moving image texts', on the other hand, covers mostly film and prevalently expository texts found in newspapers, magazines, on television, and in advertising.

The emphasis of media and ICT education appears to be focused on the development of critical skills in terms of using *informative* multi- and hypermedia sensibly and reflexively. It therefore does not come as a major surprise that *literary* hypertext is not mentioned anywhere in the National Curriculum. That said, the inclusion of other media, which are not perceived as literary media in the conventional sense, in the literary classroom suggests that, in all likelihood, it is only a matter of time until other 'narrative' media such as computer games and hypertext will be integrated. Meanwhile, however, even the leading teacher training manuals fail to interpret the National Curriculum in such a way as to include literary hypertext in their interpretations. Pike (2004) carefully hints that 'writing a poem is different on a computer but one of its advantages is that text can be so easily manipulated' (125), without, however, making any specifications as to what kind of electronic poetry he is referring. Clarke *et al.* (2004: 353) venture a considerable step further by claiming that:

our concept of literacy has altered through the challenge of invisible, unreliable authors and multi-authoring, non-linear text and hotlinks that the computer screen, and especially the web, offer us. Even the way we think may have changed to thinking in whole chunks of movable text rather than discrete words or sentences. The public, collaborative nature of these new texts on the Web, and the centrality of the visual image, graph or icon, has also transformed the way we read, view and write texts.

Evidently, the authors do use expressions that evoke associations with hypertext terminology without, however, spelling out the word itself. One is thus tempted to suspect that hypertext is mentioned neither in commendation nor derogatorily because it simply has not yet been popularized among English teachers and curriculum planners.

In sum, it may be argued that the major steps towards facilitating an inclusion of hypertext have been taken. Despite the facts that hypertext is not explicated in the Curriculum and, as a result, only a marginal number of English teachers are familiar with it, the increasing importance of hypermedia in the Curriculum may reflect the need for alternatives to literature in print.

To conclude this section, a literary, script-based culture, which manifests itself *idealiter* by a shared passion for reading among its members, can only be maintained if the New Media and their specific poetic manifestations are taken on board. After all, learners have to be picked up from where they are, and the technological evolution can be denied by neither literary traditionalists nor teachers of literature, as it is so willingly received by the younger generations. If the contrastive literary use of New Media in the classroom is supported by teaching staff, educational authorities, and students alike, I am convinced that the end of the book as foreseen by Marshall McLuhan (1962) and Jacques Derrida (1976) is not impending after all. However, we are indeed witnessing the end of a unified, exclusive, print-based canon as the gospel truth of literary value.

Under the pretext of the preceding discussion, the title of this book may seem like a contradiction in terms. In fact, we can only use the term 'canonizing' for hypertext given that we abandon the rigidity and normativity it implies. Instead, 'canon' is used in this study in a creative rather than restrictive sense. The catalogue of selection criteria listed at the end of this chapter forms a deliberately flexible and dynamic 'rule canon', which produces a canon of hypertexts which is neither compulsory nor rigid in nature. Rather, it outlines a number of what I consider outstanding works of the genre, which, for educational, academic and aesthetic purposes, are 'worthy' of entering an educational paradigm.

3 Canonizing Hypertext – An 'Apologetic Crusade'?

Literary systems are comprised of canons, and 'novelization' is fundamentally anticanonical. It will not permit generic monologue. Always it will insist on the dialogue between what a given system will admit as literature and those texts that are otherwise excluded from such a definition of literature.
(Holquist in Bakhtin, 1981: xxxi)

Literary hypertexts have been written for over 20 years, yet still cannot be considered 'canonized', either in the sense of representation through individual specimens in anthologies or university readers, or in a generic sense, as an abstract phenomenon in the minds and discourse of the reading public, as Shakespeare, Milton and James Joyce are. In fact, as Gates (1997) cogently argues, whereas the 'traditional English and American canon' has quite readily adapted to the new (digital) medium, works written *in* and specifically *for* the new medium are by no means as easily adopted by the canon. This is hardly surprising, as we are dealing with a form of writing that became materially possible only a few decades ago, through the evolution of personal computing, software applications and, not least, the internet as the primary medium of communication and research in the First World. Stressing the chiefly sociological implications of this development, Becker argues that, before the mid-1980s:

there were no programs to make hypertext fictions, there were no authors, no body of works to constitute the beginning of a 'canon', no publishing companies to manufacture and distribute those works, no readers who had acquired the skills necessary to read them and who had read a number of them and therefore were prepared to be a 'public' for them, no critical writing about that body of work to inform the public about their existence and virtues – in short, no *world* of hypertext fiction. (1995 – emphasis in original)

Nevertheless, unlike many other web-based text types such as portals, discussion and chatrooms, online magazines, wikis and blogs, internet-based creative writing of any kind has not entered media-reported public discourse in the UK. A database search of *LexisNexis*, a leading international digital newspaper

archive, proves the virtual non-existence of the term 'literary hypertext' and other related expressions across the British press media landscape, both broadsheet and tabloid. As a matter of fact, over the period of the past fifteen years (1990–2005), a timespan which approximately corresponds to the existence of internet-based literary hypertext, no instances of 'literary hypertext' and only eight occurrences of 'hyperfiction', two occurrences of 'hyperdrama', and two occurrences of 'hyperpoem' are retrievable.⁴ The distribution of those instances across various British newspapers is demonstrated in Table 1. Perhaps not surprisingly, only 'serious' newspapers are represented, as the database search did not yield any tabloid occurrences. This observation may support the fact that literary hypertext has, from the outset, been associated with academic and scholarly rather than popular interest. A certain 'peak' of discursive engagement – if, in the face of the generally low number of occurrences, one may use such an expression – happened around the mid-1990s, which was the time when the internet was experiencing its first surge in popularity among a wide public sphere.

Thematically, the eight tokens of 'hyperfiction' are used in either marginalizing or even pejorative contexts. They occur in book reviews, for instance in a discussion of the labyrinthine *Shadow of the Wind* by Carlos Ruiz Zafon, where 'the same old self-deconstructionist hyperfiction shuffle' (Jones, 2004: 8) is assigned a derogatory connotation, to highlight that Zafon has managed to avoid the confusion typically associated with reading hypertext structures. Another instance appears in a review of Noah Wardrip Fruin's *Hypermedia Reader* (Mackintosh, 2003: 25), yet only marginally, as part of Fruin's homepage URL. Other occurrences appear in letters or questions to the editor, e.g. in the *Daily Telegraph* section 'over2you' (25 January 2001), without, however, being elaborated or discussed in greater detail. Only three out of the eight instances of 'hyperfiction' present the genre in a more informative, less partial way. Interestingly, it is an article in the *Financial Times* (Griffith, 1996) which gives the most exhaustive 'detail about 'hyperfiction', characterizing it as a 'slowly expanding volume of narratives' (15). Griffith mentions Nelson's (1984) widely acknowledged definition, provides a short historical overview of

Table 1 Distribution of 'literary hypertext', 'hyperfiction', 'hyperdrama' and 'hyperpoem' across British newspapers between January 1990 and September 2005

	'literary hypertext'	'hyperfiction'	'hyperdrama'	'hyperpoem' ⁵
<i>Guardian</i>	none	1 (2003)	1 (1992)	1 (1992)
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	none	2 (2001; 2004)	none	none
<i>Independent</i>	none	1 (1999)	none	none
<i>Observer</i>	none	1 (1997)	1 (2001)	none
<i>THES</i> ⁶	none	1 (1996)	none	none
<i>Financial Times</i>	none	2 (1994; 1996)	none	none

hypertextual phenomena, outlines the major structural and thematic principles of Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl*, and does not fail to draw attention to the perceptive challenges evoked by hypertext structures without, however, condemning the genre for precisely this propensity.

As Table 1 shows, 'hyperdrama' occurs only twice: once in the *Observer*, where it is used in the sense of 'overdimensional American television soap opera', exemplified by *Dallas* and *Dynasty* (Anthony, 2001: 20). Even more deviant from the concepts propagated by Ayckbourn and Deemer is the use of 'hyperdrama' in the second article from the *Guardian*, in which the term refers to 'the hyperdrama of our futures' (Waters, 1992: 23), thus expressing a realistic, socio-political meaning. The sole instance of 'hyperpoem' also comes from the *Guardian*, where it features in an article which is, exceptional though it may appear, dedicated to the Apple-based hypermedia poetry written and displayed by artist and poet John Cayley at the Poetry Library in the London Royal Festival Hall (1992/93). However, the author of the article implicitly denigrates the poetic potential of Cayley's art by quoting the poet's reply to the question of whether he would refer to his poetry as 'art': Cayley refuses to 'make any aesthetic judgments about the value of the work', leaving this 'up to other people' (Moody, 1992: 33). The fact that the statement stands uncommented at the end of the article is indicative of Moody's personal opinion, which is made to remain in his readers' memory beyond the reading event.

To give further evidence of whether and to what extent hypertext – despite or, in fact, in addition to the bleak picture presented by the press – has entered teaching practice in England, I conducted a telephone-based survey among secondary English departments in May and June 2005. The results unambiguously reflect the impression given by the newspaper search. Out of 85 English teachers from secondary schools in and around two representative northern England industrial cities (Leeds and Newcastle upon Tyne),⁷ 70 (82 per cent) had never come across the terms 'hypertext' or 'literary hypertext'. Fifteen (18 per cent) were familiar with the term 'hypertext' as used in 'Hypertext Mark-Up Language'. None had ever heard of Eastgate Systems or any of their products. Forty-two (49 per cent) said they were using the computer and internet to a great extent for student projects, e.g. SmartBoard, interactive whiteboard, and game-type software for analysing set texts such as *Of Mice and Men*, *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Twenty-one (25 per cent) maintained they were using the computer solely for teaching basic word processing and graphic design, which was, according to the respondents, partly due to limited access to computers in some schools. Thirty-four (40 per cent) explained they were using the internet for literary research, e.g. to investigate First World War poetry at A-level, finding materials on Shakespeare for the SAT exams,⁸ or downloading electronic versions of set texts. Eight (9 per cent) replied they were using the internet only for weblogs. Another 15 (18 per cent) stated that they taught computer-based, yet traditionally linear creative writing. Finally, as few as eight respondents (9 per cent) had also experimented with creative writing in hypertext format, using, for instance, the free internet service *think.com*.

The empirical data suggests that hypertext is, to use Günther's (1987) terminology, still in a 'protocanonical' stage. Simanowski (1999b) specifies this stage, which has not moved on considerably since the publication of his article, in terms of a developing 'literary field' (a Bourdieuan term). This development is characterized by competitions, commercialization, as well as the emergence of reviewing platforms and scholarly expertise manifested by specialized academic seminars, research talks, publications and dissertations. The main dilemma of hypertext criticism, however, surfaces particularly in competitions: the lack of evaluative criteria, which would, if they did exist, do justice to the vast range of different aesthetic phenomena and would help scholars, critics and editors to 'sift the wheat from the chaff'.

Conversely, Coover (1999) claims that the Golden Age of hypertext is already over and will be replaced by a 'Silver Age', 'a miniboom', which is determined by the chaotic, unstructured, largely pictorial and reductionist character of the web. To a certain extent, this ties in with Moulthrop's observation (1993: 73) that hypertext:

has been bumped from the limelight by hazier and more glamorous obsessions: cyberspace, virtual reality, and the Information Highway. Such changes of fashion seem a regular hazard of the postmodern territory – taking *post modo* at its most literal, to mean 'after the now' or *the next thing*.

Rather than bidding hypertext farewell, however, Moulthrop concedes that 'a certain circularity seems to be in play' (*ibid.*: 73), in that hypertext appears to be coming in and going out of fashion quasi-cyclically. Coover (1999) adds to this observation that, as a result of such an evolution, literature *per se* will look entirely different from what it used to, and so will the readers of the future.

Coming back to Assmann and Assmann's (1987) concept of renunciation and return (see Chapter 2.2), I would argue that hypertext has by no means passed the first stage of the two, at least not in the UK, where, as previously evidenced, hypertext scepticism and ignorance are only gradually being replaced by curiosity and open-mindedness, at least among literary and linguistic academics.⁹ On the other hand, with respect to hypertext-friendlier nations such as the USA, Germany, Austria and Switzerland, one may tentatively speak of a gradual transition to a 'return', which manifests itself in a considerable number of university syllabi geared towards including hypertextual phenomena and their theoretical underpinnings.

Hypertext *copyright* is of an essentially cathartic kind (see Hahn, 1987), i.e. hypertext is most frequently denounced for its incapability of arousing aesthetic pleasure in the reader. In fact, readers' responses to first hypertext exposures tend to be radically divided and polarized. They are 'either delighted or annoyed' (Schnierer, 2003: 96). At the same time, critiques by first-time readers show a tendency towards premature, overgeneralizing conclusions about hypertext as a genre, rather than towards analysing individual works.

Reader bewilderment and resentment are due to a number of factors. On the one hand, most of them lack theoretical and practical media knowledge,

i.e. the ability and confidence to use particular kinds of media text, as well as an awareness of typical macro- and microstructural features (Flender and Christmann, 2002). Media knowledge normally comes with regular exposure and experience, and these are prerequisites to processing hypertext.

Clearly, hypertext's anti-monolinearity has an alarming effect on many readers, insofar as there seems to be a lack of perceivable author intentionality, and, as Ryan (2000) controversially argues, a 'deficiency, compared to traditional narrative in the area of immersivity ...' I do not subscribe to her point of view, as many hypertexts do enable reader immersion, albeit by different means than traditional narrative. In a nutshell, the most common complaints revolve around structural complexity, semantic opaqueness and logistic impediments. Furthermore, a lack of navigational guidance and macrostructural standards aggravates readers' impression of having lost or being incapable of gaining control of 'their' text.

As a matter of course, hypertext does not set out to encourage culinary hammock-reading.¹⁰ On the contrary, one of the major intricacies, if not pitfalls, of hypertext is its inherent expectation of an 'ideal' hypertext reader, who will readily adapt to an unfamiliar reading situation, which introduces not only a new, bi-dimensional, in most cases even bulky medium, but a level of complexity and arbitrariness in textual organization that defies the conventional *delectare* effect. As a result, readers may be tempted to develop a hypertextual 'zap mentality' (Auer, 2004: 281), which is caused by a shift in attention from the text to the link and its target. Wingert calls this the 'centrifugal powers' (1996: 202) of hypertext reception.

A further reservation relates to the incompatibility of operating systems and the resulting difficulty in accessing a great number of hypertexts. As Glazier (2002: 156) points out, '[t]he most notable controversy here is the PC versus Mac conflict'. In fact, '[e]ven academically mainstream texts, such as *Uncle Buddy's Phantom Fun House* and Michael Joyce's *Twilight, a Symphony*, cannot at this writing be run on Windows' (156). Nor, indeed, can they in summer 2006. It is mostly for this reason that only a comparably low number of Mac-based hypertexts could reasonably be adopted in the hypertext canon featured in Chapter 3.

Further issues of concern are the so-called 'anarchy' of the web and the issues of authenticity and copyright it brings along. Walter Benjamin's (1977) famous tenet of the lost 'aura' of the original artwork in the face of infinite reproducibility, reinstated through digital encoding, almost inevitably springs to mind. As a matter of fact, copy and paste, as well as 'Surf – Sample – Manipulate' (Amerika, quoted in Beiguelman, 2004: 173), are web-inherent activities that categorically undermine authorship in the traditional sense and turn online documents into fair game, into 'second-hand originals' (*ibid.*), which are exposed to any hacker's or internet surfer's free will.

Another inherent problem of hypertext is its resistance to anthologization, especially when it does not come in the format of a handy-sized data carrier such as a CD-ROM or a floppy disk. Hypertexts most frequently appear on

the internet, the anarchic, dynamic nature of which subjects them to ephemerality and evasiveness. Similarly, some attempts have been made to capture the swiftly expanding body of hypertextual writings by means of exhaustive listings online. Nevertheless, an explicit canon, operating on the basis of distinct selection criteria, has never been formulated. Admittedly, Glazier (2002) draws up a catalogue of the most prominent hypertext practitioners, induced from three quasi-anthological web-based lists. However, his results are no longer verifiable, as none of those lists exists any longer. Furthermore, neither Glazier nor the authors of those lists base their selections on any evaluative criteria, but proceed in an uncritically statistical fashion, by giving the names most frequently found on the internet, which are: Ted Nelson, Michael Joyce, Jakob Nielsen, Laurence Sterne, Paul Delany, George Landow, Jay David Bolter, Jane Yellowlees Douglas, Gregory L. Ulmer, Jerome McGann, John Tolva and John Unsworth. This approach, objective as it may appear, implies the inherent fallacy that the mentioned authors venture to publicize their own names as frequently as they can and therefore skew the data found in web searches.

By the same token, the past few years have seen the launch of a number of print compilations focusing on cyber-theory, hypertext criticism and hyperfiction. The process was initiated by the 1997 edition of *The Norton Anthology of Postmodern American Fiction*, which features referenced excerpts from Michael Joyce's *afternoon* and Jane Yellowlees Douglas's *I Have Said Nothing*. Further progress with regard to anthologizing hypertext theory can be seen in the launching of Victor J. Vitanza's *CyberReader* (1996) and Neill Spiller's *Cyber-Reader: Critical Writings for the Digital Era* (2002), the first compilations of theoretical essays about computer aesthetics, cyberculture and digital literature. They do not, however, contain any digital literature. On the other hand, Vitanza supplies a multitude of web addresses at which the keen reader may find related and supporting materials. The essential step towards including creative digital media was accomplished by Wardrip-Fruin and Montfort in their *New Media Reader* (2003), which encloses a CD-ROM with selected hypertexts, most of which are, however, only readable on a Macintosh computer.

As previously discussed, postmodern Western society is characterized by plurality, globality and, perhaps most importantly, rapid change. It is also increasingly dominated by hypermedia, which are currently taking over the world of television, telephone communication, and epistolary writing. Arguably, therefore, the future literary mainstream will at least partly be situated in virtual space, which will retain its fluidity and thus create ever-changing forms of literary art. It will also, in all likelihood, integrate the visual to an increasing extent. For this reason, educationalists have to find ways of meeting the needs and interests of the new generation without, however, allowing the vanishing of the written word to proceed any further.

Therefore, to conflate the ostensibly conflicting concepts of hypertext and 'canon', I contend that the very concept of canon can no longer be understood as it was in the nineteenth and until well into the twentieth centuries. As a matter of fact, the situation experienced by Western society in the Digital

Age curiously resembles that of late eighteenth-century Europe, particularly France, when the Ancient Régime was struggling to regulate an oozing, anarchic mass of Enlightenment writings. Such writings were naturally frowned at, however, not censurable as a whole – which correlates with the usual attitude towards online publishing. Although the political situation is, of course, entirely different now, the dilemma of facing a virtually uncontrollable host of anarchically distributed documents is indeed comparable to that experienced by Louis XVI and his Conseil du Roi.

While departing from the traditional canon, a hypertext canon must inevitably adopt components of radically subversive *avantgarde* canons, which have influenced poetry and art since the 1920s. Among their components are the claim for innovation (a derivate of technological progressivity and the concept of evolution); the concept of style as manifested subjectivity; and the use of (meta-)theory as an instrument of transforming art and literature (Schmidt, 1987). Rather than eliminating the canon idea entirely, we thus have to part with its traditional self-contained, closed, and rigidly exclusive connotations. Instead, an inclusive, open concept has to be adopted, which works in terms of a continuous process of integration, modification and discharge.

Hypertext writers generally adhere to the aforementioned *avantgarde* criteria, which will be recorded in the 'rule canon' listed at the end of this section. Furthermore, translating the dynamic character of hypertext production and reception into a hypertext canon reconfirms the validity of hypertext's inherent properties. Finally, a hypertext canon can be considered a useful instrument for members of distinctly hypermedia-friendly communities to establish a common ground for shared reading experiences.

The crucial problem with 'canonizing' hypertext in the sense of creating a catalogue of outstanding works is the question of how to 'judge, analyze, write about a work that never reads the same way twice' (Coover, 1992: 25). Clearly, the Aristotelian absolutism of beginning, middle and end does not hold true for hypertext, as there are a number of possible middles and ends (even if all readers start from the same *lexia*). In fact, a hypertextual canon can only work if we replace the idea of a unifying experience through reading 'identical' texts by the idea of unity through individual readings (see Bolter, 2001: 11). Paradoxically, as didactic implementation has shown, critical meta-discourse is not only possible but indeed lively and enriching, despite or precisely because readers are made to debate their personal versions of the same hypertext.

Setting up a canon of aesthetically, cognitively, spiritually and morally appealing hypertexts is in fact not an 'apologetic crusade', as Aarseth (1997: 22) calls any such theoretical or practical attempt. I also disagree with Aarseth in that, rather than not searching 'for traditional literary values in texts that are neither intended nor structured as literature' (*ibid.*: 22), I concentrate on texts that are maximally close to 'traditional' print literature and therefore do not require a complete redefinition of 'literature'. 'Good' hypertexts do not require an *apologia* but rather emphatic vindication, which may ultimately direct them towards curricular integration. For this purpose, this chapter is

dedicated to drawing up a concise catalogue of aesthetic, paedagogic and conceptual criteria. This 'rule canon', or 'set of values', forms the basis of my evaluation and selection of hypertexts. In order to do so, however, we must not forget that reading hypertexts has to be learned and practised in order to appreciate their distinctive aesthetic potential. As I pointed out previously, some hypertexts exhibit deliberately intricate navigational systems, which form a constitutive part of their aesthetic programme.

Aesthetic value judgements of any kind are problematic in that they are not only highly subjective, but essentially dependent on the qualitative conceptions of different groups in society. Hence, venturing to suggest a hypertext canon single-handedly may seem hubristic if not downright impossible. Having said that, the digital medium facilitates two aspects of reception which, in print media, are, for pragmatic reasons, less feasible: direct, often even textually interventionist interaction with the product on the one hand, and direct communication with the author on the other. To put it differently, the reading subject is autonomous in terms of being able to respond immediately to the individual reading experience – without even changing the medium of interaction. The author's email address is normally given on the website in question or, if not, it can be 'Googled'. In my experience, hypertext authors tend to be interested in and swift to reply to readers' questions. Notably, this sense of reader autonomy does not imply an approval of the convergence theory as discussed in Chapter 1. Rather, it supports the notion of personalized hypertext and, along with it, the plausibility of a single-handed canon.

Strictly speaking, my hypertext canon is only single-handed with regard to its selector anyhow. The actual selection process operates by means of (electronically) networked reading and scholarly discourse. In other words, the text catalogue reflects an individual opinion derived critically from many other opinions. This renders the selector a subjective reflector and catalyst of scholarly opinion. To emphasize this aspect, Chapter 3 provides not only an alternative canon, but discusses existing reviews and critical essays focusing on the selected hypertexts.

Another pervasive argument in support of (alternative) canons is the mundane fact that reading time is short for the average member of the First World, and selections have to be made, considering the sheer host of reading matter on offer. Therefore, I agree with Winko, who argues in favour of retaining canons, mainly because they facilitate selection. Her only reservation is that, in order to compensate for subjectivity, relativity and changeability, any underlying 'axiological' value judgements have to be well-founded and explicated (Winko, 2002: 2).

With this in mind, I suggest a hypertext canon (see Chapter 3) that is based on a set of such 'axiological values'. These values have to be exclusive enough to bring forth a 'manageable' choice of hypertexts. Simultaneously, they need to be sufficiently open to allow future additions, modifications and reductions. I propose four overarching categories, which are in alignment with the classical semiotic triangle as suggested by Bühler and echoed in a range of approaches to

literary value judgements (e.g. Grübel, 1997; Winko, 1997). The categories are: (1) production (relating to circumstances of authorship); (2) object (relating to the subject matter); (3) form (linguistic and other structural devices, including navigational strategies); and (4) reception (relating to the reader in the widest sense, which includes lay readers, critics, editors and pedagogues alike).

Considering the productive element, innovation and originality, which Winko categorizes as 'relational' values (Winko, 1997: 594), play an important part. An aesthetics of innovation implies, according to Fricke (1981: 209), a deviation from quasi-norms dictated by literary history and generic conventions. The innovation claim is, as mentioned previously, a central constituent of *avantgarde* canons and adhered to by most hypertext authors.

Another feature to consider with regard to production is the extent to which technology is used to reflect the subject matter. Clearly, technological expertise is perceived to be of less significance than poetic and narrative skill when it comes to assessing an author's potential for (literary) canonization. Evidently, the mere ability to use sophisticated hypermedia software and mark-up languages does not necessarily result in a literary or multimodal masterpiece. Instead, a central formal concern will be transmedialization, i.e. the meaningful combination of hypermedia (in the case of second- and third-generation hypertext mainly), and, more generally, the implementation of intertextuality in the sense of textual and semiotic interplay.

Thematically, the focus will be on the text's 'ability' to make readers reflect, to influence their world picture, or expand their horizon of expectation. This includes not only topicality of subject matter and reference to theories of philosophy, sociology, politics, psychology, ethics and religion (Winko, 1997: 549): hypertext's characteristic self-referentiality necessitates that meta-fictional, meta-hypertextual, meta-medial and meta-critical issues are intelligible as well (Löser, 1999: 1; see also Block *et al.*, 2004). Such self-reflexive aspects entail a high degree of implicit and explicit intertextuality, thus signalling the thematic, inter- and transcanonical network a hypertext may allude to and evoke in the reader's memory.¹¹

Formally (pertaining to the sign-element of the semiotic triangle), I will look at microstructural and macrostructural features as discussed in Chapter 1.5. Formal-aesthetic values are traditionally associated with the beauty of sound, connotational density and ambiguity, completeness, coherence and 'magnitude', as Aristotle puts it in his theory of tragedy. That said, formal excellence depends largely on the theory of literature applied to a text and the degree to which the text meets the requirements of such a theory. Hypertext theory specifically believes in the effects of narrative antilinearity and the resulting increase in reader responsibility; the *lexia* as the smallest and decisive textual unit; the absence of closure; and rhizomatic infinity, as well as the tripartite structural interplay between link, node and network. As linking patterns and navigational strategies are among hypertext's most characteristic and unique formal features, particular attention will be paid to how authors use them to achieve distinct aesthetic effects.

In terms of reception, I will examine cognitive, emotive and existentialist effects on the reader in general, insofar as they can be examined from published documents. These include, on the one hand, responses written by professional critics by means of reviews and critical articles, which have been published in (online) journals, books, and other electronic or print media resources. Of further interest are awards won in hypertext competitions, as well as the publishing situation in general. In terms of distribution, we need to ask, for instance, whether the copyright of a particular hypertext is owned by a registered publisher, such as Eastgate Systems, as this implies peer review and professional editing. Contrarily, a text may have simply been put on the internet, without there being any instance of peer review. The role of the reviewer is particularly important in the case of collaborative writing projects, as here the act of reviewing often completes the otherwise never-ending hypertext (see Wirth, 2001: 60). In other words, editorial power often surfaces in the 'right' of the reviewer to finalize an open-ended hypertext sometimes to the relief of the co-authors.

Another question with regard to hypertext dissemination is the degree to which it has been anthologized, i.e. integrated into readers (books or CD-ROMs). Such compilations are among the most suitable pedagogic tools as they may be set as prescribed reading for courses in Media Studies or contemporary literature.

Perhaps most importantly, but also most subjectively, the rule canon highlights aesthetic qualities that are likely to have a motivating effect on readers. Ways of making readers 'read on' are manifold, even though they are reading from a screen and cannot expect any sense of closure or completeness from the text in question. Aesthetic effects include suspense, surprise, playfulness and 'intellectual exercise' (Schnierer, 2000: 544), i.e. the challenge of exploring and making sense – or well-grounded non-sense – of a text that may defy cognitive comprehensibility, both structurally and thematically. Aesthetic features are necessarily dependent on other, mostly formal, properties of a literary work, and will thus be discussed in relation to these properties. Table 2 summarizes the axiological criteria explained in this section, which will serve as a catalogue of criteria, i.e. a 'rule canon' in note form, for the hypertext canon compiled in Chapter 3.

It is important to note that such a norm catalogue is creative rather than restrictive in nature. It legitimizes and produces a canon which, on the one hand, excludes works that do not sufficiently fulfil the criteria in question. In other words, it adds an element of 'scholarly control' to the anarchy of the web, as well as to commercially biased reviewers and editors as represented by Eastgate Systems. Moreover, the norm catalogue allows for dynamics in the sense of facilitating the adoption of new works. The criteria are formulated so as to yield to value-related paradigm shifts. Hence, rather than mapping out a limited number of 'exemplary' role models, the catalogue invites modifications of the works it brings forth, depending on individual opinion.

In a field as fluid as digital literature, new, groundbreaking technology as well as writerly creativity proliferate new works, most of which, sadly, do not

Table 2 'Rule canon'

Production	Innovativeness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● deviation from literary/hypertextual traditions ● interrelation between technology and subject matter
Object	Thematic depth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● topicality ● thematic message ● self-reflexivity ● metatheoretical concept ● intertextuality
Form	Aesthetic overstructuring (microstructurally/ macrostructurally)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● rhetorical devices ● linking patterns ● navigation ● hypertext structure
	Semiotic interplay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● transmedialization ● implemented intertextuality
Reception	Criticism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● critical acclaim ● awards
	Anthologization/degree of canonization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● readers (print/CD-ROM) ● university reading lists ● curricular presence
	Motivation/effect on reader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● suspense ● surprise ● playfulness ● 'intellectual exercise'

meet the standards of a literary scholar. Some exceptions, however, give evidence not only of technological expertise, but, more significantly, of an overwhelming combination of poetic and artistic aestheticism. Such works should be invited into a hypermedia canon, which, as its underlying medium, is inherently open-ended, yet, at the same time, internally well-structured and thought-out.