Reading Digital Poetry:

The cases of *Between Page and Screen* and *slippingglimpse*[1]

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Abstract: This essay focuses on two case studies – Amaranth Borsuk and Brad Bouse's *Between Page and Screen* and Stephanie Strickland, Cynthia Lawson Jaramillo, and Paul Ryan's *slippingglimpse* – in an effort to comment on the multi-dimensional and multi-layered experience they convey to readers/viewers/users. The effectiveness of these works lies in the ongoing interaction they trigger between readers, machines, and codes as well as in the feedback loops they generate that engage humans and machines, spatial effects, and verbal/visual texts into a synthesizing reading process. With both texts constituting examples of digital poetic practice, this essay will, by focusing on the analysis of particular examples, attempt to show how the malleability and dynamic quality of such poetry projects can pave interesting paths towards the development of human and machine reading synergies in addition to the exploration of diversified channels of literary creativity and perception.

Keywords: Digital poetry; chreods; loops; 3D space; materials; code; cognition; perception; *slippingglimpse*; *Between Page and Screen*.

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The overpowering presence of digital technologies draws our attention to the status of the human reading subject in a media-dominated world. The intriguing textual manifestations that have been produced within the context of electronic literature have led to the creation of digitally-generated texts that involve both the reading subject and the reading machine in concurrent embodied and computer-programmable actions. These kinds of electronic texts combine an array of material and digital elements for the activation of loop-based textual and reading effects. What this observation brings to our attention, which the current paper will attempt to explore with attention paid to two case studies – Amaranth Borsuk and Brad Bouse's *Between Page and Screen* and Stephanie Strickland, Paul Ryan, and Cynthia Jaramillo's *slippingglimpse* – is the intertwining relationship that exists today between print and digital media, and the challenges and creative possibilities that open up when poetry-making becomes a shareable experience between reading subjects and machines.

Before going ahead with our exploration, it is worth considering what makes poetry such a prolific terrain for innovative applications, especially nowadays, within the digital realm. Loss Pequeño Glazier says that "[i]nnovative writing in electronic media has for its charge the *processes* of meaning-making […] exploring the procedures, loops, the processes of digital writing. Such a focus on making's relation to the machine has been a preoccupation of poetry […] in numerous engagements."[2] With this comment he locates the innovative character of poetic practice in the process of writing, the way language works, and the mechanisms of writing. In the analysis he provides about the innovative nature of poetry, he refers, among other examples, to the use of mimeography machines (known as the Mimeo Revolution) and their "intrinsic relation between text and its means of transmission"[3] as well as to Charles Olson's projective verse[4] that "adjust[ed] the scale of the poem's activity to new contexts […] into larger scenes of activity."[5] What Glazier highlights here is the interest poets have had in the malleability of poetic language and its transmission potential that connects writing on the material space of the page with the material space of the online screen. Characteristically, he adds that "poetry is the line where the impact of technology is explored.

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[2] Loss Pequeño Glazier, *Digital Poetics: The Making of E-Poetries* (Tuscaloosa: The U of Alabama P, 2001)*,* 32.
[3] Ibid, 32.
[4] "Charles Olson's influential manifesto, 'Projective Verse,' was first published as a pamphlet, and then was quoted extensively in William Carlos Williams' *Autobiography* (1951). The essay introduces his ideas of 'composition by field' through projective or open verse, which is a continuation of the ideas of poets Ezra Pound, who asked poets to 'compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome,' and William Carlos Williams, who proposed in 1948 that a poem be approached as a 'field of action.' Olson's projective verse focuses on "certain laws and possibilities of the breath, of the breathing of the man who writes as well as of his listenings" ("Essay on Poetic Theory: Projective Verse," *Poetry Foundation*, accessed February 16, 2020, www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69406/projective-verse).
[5] Ibid, 33.

[…] [It is] within the twisted barbs of any language, [that] lie the strands, roots, and metaphors of language matter that make the field of poetry such a fertile one to plow."[6] What this statement highlights is that poetry has always been concerned with language and the technologies of its production, since "with any development in technology, writing does not stay the same, but the writing technology becomes an expanded way to *perceive* under the aegis of the writing activity."[7] Hence, in the case of contemporary digital poetry, writing constitutes a multi-dimensional process because the writing that is visible on the screen is often the outcome of the collaborative effort of different artists using various tools of inscription alongside machine-coded actions.

Specifically, Strickland, Ryan, and Jaramillo's digital poem *slippingglimpse*, published in 2007, constitutes a collaborative multimodal effort between the poet Stephanie Strickland, videographer Paul Ryan, and programmer Cynthia Lawson Jaramillo in an attempt to construct not a homogeneous text, but three different textual versions that feed into one another for the creation of a multilayered online effect. What is challenging about this particular endeavor is the way in which *slippingglimpse* constitutes a composite poetic structure[8] that interacts with and is regulated by imaging technologies and programming languages that simulate print-bound textual patterns and natural visual effects that emulate the repeated but dynamic movement of sea waves also known as chreods.[9] In contrast, Borsuk and Bouse's *Between Page and Screen*, "a hand-bound and letterpress-printed book of poems"[10] published in 2012, contains no text but 16 black-and-white markers as well as a URL address that leads to a synonymous to its title website. In addition, as the title also suggests, the computer-activated texts function as personalized responses that Page and Screen, appearing as P and S, send to one another. As for the book itself, it exists both as a material print object and as a 3D-animated textual experience activated via a web camera that also serves as a sensor for the actions and movements of the reading subject. The two case studies introduced here constitute examples of poetic narratives that are not fixed but that are

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[6] Glazier, *Digital Poetics*, 38.

[7] Ibid, 33.

[8] "[T]he poem text reads image/capture technologies (scroll-text mode) by sampling and recombining words of visual artists who describe their use of digital techniques – it then explores older capture technologies, such as harvesting plants for food and flax for paper" (Stephanie Strickland and Cynthia Lawson Jaramillo, "Introduction," *slippingglimpse*, accessed April 5, 2019, www.cynthialawson.com/sg/pages/introduction.html).

[9] "Chreods are a certain kind of loop in the physical world. Some dynamical systems return, not to their same state, but to their 'same flow,' reestablishing their pattern, manifesting stability within change" (Stephanie Strickland and Cynthia Lawson Jaramillo, "Dovetailing Details Fly Apart – All Over, Again, In Code, In Poetry, In Chreods," accessed June 1, 2019, http://www.slippingglimpse.org/pocode).

[10] Amaranth Borsuk and Brad Bouse, "Letterpress Edition," accessed June 1, 2019, https://www.betweenpageand screen.com/letterpress_edition.

subjected to the real-time input provided by the readers/viewers/users and the kind of interactive communication this enacts between human subjects and code-run machines.

As regards the 3D-poem projections in *Between Page and Screen*, they are built upon past writing, transmission, and formatting practices, as is for instance the case with the use of the epistolary form, or the use of shaped and image-like texts in the fashion of concrete and visual poetic techniques in the presentation, organization, and typographical arrangement of the words on the 3D space. In the examples that follow, emphasis is placed on the correspondence and dialogue between page (P) and screen (S) and the multiple loops this kind of interaction generates on a semantic, aural, and algorithmic level:

> *Dear S*
> *I foot, I fasten to become compact,*
> *but listen, that's only part your*
> *impact – I always wanted to fit a*
> *need.*
>
> *Dear P*
> *I take your point – I didn't mean to cut,*
> *but it's my stripe, my type, I'd*
> *rather shear than share.*[11]

The personification proposed here as regards the role of P and S has a dual function: it facilitates the familiarization of the readers with the 3D textual experience while endowing P and S with physical rather than merely machine-like characteristics. As for the aural playfulness that characterizes the language used here due to the alliterative and assonant sound effects triggered, as for example with the words "fit"/ "need" and "stripe"/ "type," it turns the readers'/viewers' attention to the auditory quality of the writing and its visual effects through its identification with 3D-spatial practices. These two elements are presented not in opposition but in a circuit-like relationship. The various coding and decoding mechanisms at work that hint at the co-synergy and co-development of both human subjects and machines on the level of the skills each agent can energize in his or her attempt to view, write, access, and read the texts activated in the work's 3D environment.

In the case of *slippingglimpse*, as N. Katherine Hayles observes, another kind of co-synergy takes place with "the concatenation of the poem text, video [water] images and algorithimically generated words […] [that create] a recursive system of three interacting

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[11] Amaranth Borsuk and Brad Bouse,, *Between Page and Screen*, 2012, accessed April 5, 2019 https://www.betweenpageandscreen.com /book

feedback cycles."[12] Strickland and Lawson Jaramillo characteristically describe this process in their "Introduction" to their work as "a round robin of reading, [where] the water 'reads' the poem text (full-screen), the poem text 'reads' image/capture technologies (scroll-text), and the image-capture video 'reads' the water (hi-rez)."[13] The different patterned motions suggested here combined with the readers'/users' navigational responses to the chreod video artwork appearing on the screen open *slippingglimpse* up to combinatory machine and human-subject readings, which highlights the multilayeredness of the work on a visual/verbal, algorithmic, and cognitive level. Chris T. Funkhouser argues that "language and other pertinent content presented in multiple visual layers and sublayers within the interface [of an online work], often as fragments of a textual whole, increase the cognitive demands on its audience."[14] For instance, in one of the chreods of *slippingglimpse*, which in its scroll-text mode is split into two columns, is written: "I learn my form my (subtractive) form/ from computed information/ like learning a piece of/ music by heart or a choreographic/ sequence" (left column) and "treading a wave" (right column).[15] This is the exact feel *slippingglimpse* creates as it invites readers to respond visually to an iterative and intersecting reading experience, if one takes into consideration the looping actions taking place as the text and the images move on the screen on the basis of certain machine-executable coded sequences, in addition to the various layers the verbal text itself creates with phrases such as "(subtractive) form," "computed information," "music," "choreographic sequence," and "treading wave." As for the use of the personal pronoun "I," it is vague as to whether it refers to a human or machine agent. What the examples from *Between Page and Screen* and *slippingglimpse* suggest is that these works call for the use of different reading strategies and skills in addition to the cultivation of different cultural attitudes and perceptions when it comes to reading, appreciating, and interpreting texts that derive from the interaction of human-subjects and machines.

The development of a reading strategy when it comes to such texts calls for the consideration of various points of view and theoretical observations. In particular, Hayles, in her 2010 article "How We Read: Close, Hyper, Machine," states that "it is time to rethink what reading is and how it works in the rich mixtures of words and images, sounds and animations, graphics and letters that constitute the environments of twenty-first-century

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[12] N. Katherine Hayles, "Strickland and Lawson Jaramillo: *slippingglimpse*: Distributed Cognition at/in Work," in *Literary Art in Digital Performance: Case Studies in New Media Art and Criticism*, ed. Francisco J. Ricardo (New York and London: Continuum, 2009), 40.
[13] Strickland and Lawson Jaramillo, "Introduction."
[14] C.T. Funkhouser, *New Directions in Digital Poetry* (New York and London: Continuum, 2012), 24.
[15] Stephanie Strickland, Cynthia Lawson Jaramillo, and Paul Ryan, "Green," *slippingglimpse*, 2007, accessed June 17, 2019, http://collection.eliterature.org /2/works/strickland_ slippingglimpse/ slippingglimpse/ pages/ large_3_ green.html.

literacies."[16] While Johanna Drucker, in her 2011 article "Humanities Approaches to Interface Theory," claims that "[o]nce we accept the idea that we move through a discourse field, a web of interpretative activities that assumes spatial dimensions on the screen, rather than being flattened into the space of pages in the freeze-frame mode of manuscript and print, the navigational task can be redefined as way-finding."[17] These two comments, appearing in close chronological proximity to one another, invite readers to "rethink" or "redefine" their reading strategies both culturally and cognitively due to their ongoing engagement with digital texts as part of the rapid technological developments taking place nowadays. This is further elaborated on in Hayles's book from 2012, *How We Think*, where emphasis is placed on the "evolution [that] can now happen much faster [...] As digital media [...] become more pervasive they push us in the direction of faster communication, more intense and varied information streams, more integration of humans and intelligent machines [...]. These environmental changes have significant neurological consequences [...] in almost everyone who interacts with digital media on a regular basis."[18] Therefore, the reader's ongoing engagement with digitally-generated texts signals a massive shift as to how reading has been and how it needs to be carried out.

It is interesting that the two case studies under consideration in the current essay draw on a mixture of print and digitally-driven processes and skills, which brings to light the synergies that can emerge between human subjects and the tools or media they use at a time of swift cultural and technological change. With these arguments in mind, experimentation with print and digital visualization and writing techniques does certainly challenge readers, since digitally-generated texts, due to their semantic, visual, and kinetic elements, function as regenerative computer mechanisms or feedback loops that are activated by the readers' motions, choices, and actions when they interact with the medium itself, this being the web camera in the case of *Between Page and Screen* and the videoed chreod patterns activated on the computer screen alongside the full-screen, scroll-text, and hi-resolution viewing options offered in the case of *slippingglimpse*. This is exactly where reading and writing practice transforms into a perceptually as well as procedurally immersive experience, with readers now extracting meaning not from what the words mean independently from the medium within which they are activated, but by the way letters, words, and texts move in the online space while intersecting with one another on the basis of how their coded patterns have been

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[16] N. Katherine Hayles, "How We Read: Close, Hyper, Machine," *ADEBulletin* 150 (2010): 78.

[17] Johanna Drucker, "Humanities Approaches to Interface Theory," *Culturemachine.net* Vol. 12 (2011): 18.

[18] N. Katherine Hayles, *How we Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis* (Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 2012), 10-11.

synchronized. This explains Glazier's argument about "the electronic page *cross[ing] media by definition,* such extensions are shorthand for the media to which they refer […] a field of activity, with its own particular characteristics, instrumentalities, conventions, and practices."[19] What this statement highlights has to do with the combinatorial and extensive processes at work that occur from the multilayering of diverse data and code as well as from the multiple interconnections that grow between various media and modes of perception – visual, verbal, coded, and cognitive – both human and machine. The kind of synergy proposed here, facilitated by artistic and writing experimentations within the digital poetry realm, reveals a different way of looking at human and machine interaction that breaches any binary relations between them for the benefit of the development of co-transmission, co-cognitive, and co-transformative loop actions.

Specifically, the texts in *Between Page and Screen* that are activated by the web camera may appear to be similar to what texts usually look like in a print-bound textual experience, but what these texts actually do, by virtue of the familiarity of their visual form, is facilitate the readers' transition to a different kind of seeing and reading that is now enacted in a 3D-augmented environment. Considering this function in relation to the black and white shapes that are printed in the book-bound version of *Between Page and Screen*, one could argue that because of the encrypted texts they contain, they are not mere visual representations but iconic systems of communication that ask for a variable kind of reading mechanism to be activated. In this way, the innovative character of *Between Page and Screen* lies not in what the readers see printed on the material pages of the book but in the kinetic possibilities the electronic text appearing on the screen has been coded to perform. For example, one of the black and white markers printed on the pages of *Between Page and Screen* activates, when held in front of the web camera, a capitalized word ("SHEER") that quickly changes into four other alliterative and assonant-bound words in various sound and semantic combinations ("SHEARS." "SHE," "HEARS," "EARS").[20] The speed with which the words alternate in the 3D space has very much to do with the coordination of the way the human subject holds the book in front of the web camera and the algorithmically-timed loop that is set into motion to bring all these actions together. The text that emerges here is indeed the outcome of the users' embodied actions that also lead to the activation of a series of coded commands visualized on the screen in the form of recognizable alphabetic characters and word alternations. So the reading that is executed resembles what is familiar to us, due to our

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[19] Glazier, *Digital Poetics*, 79-80.
[20] Borsuk and Bouse, *Between Page and Screen*.

codex experience, reading action but only superficially. The kinetic nature of the emerging 3D text destabilizes reading as we know it and asks for distinct movements, both perceptual and gestural, to be executed by the human subject in an effort to stabilize the print book in front of the web camera in order to be able to view, read, or catch a glimpse of the flickering text in addition to searching for any semantic, contextual, or aural connections that may exist between the words that appear on the screen.

In *slippingglimpse*, a different reading experience is activated, with the viewer being invited to look at different unfolding surfaces in a full-screen, scroll-text, and high-resolution video format that contains various elements in motion, that is, the water flow or chreod videos, the words moving on the surface of the water-flow videos, and the scrolling text that can move forward or backward at a low or high speed depending on the reader/viewer/user clicks on the existing pointer. One should also consider the array of light and dark color shadings used in the featuring water videos, which, combined with the floating and curvy font types, further accentuate the fluid and semantically ambivalent nature of the words appearing on the screen. This kind of colorations and word movement is reminiscent of Janez Strehovec's comments on reading digital poetry where he points to the fact that "linear reading gives way to an instable, let us say jumpy perception demanded by the textscape […] that challenges the user to approach it with novel, as a rule hybrid, perceptual acts."[21] This observation helps readers notice that in the context of *slippingglimpse*, words change from mere verbal into visual and kinetic signs whose movements are regulated and synchronized by the machine as well as by the readers' choices regarding the videos played and the order of their selection or viewing resolution. This leads to multiple kinds of intersecting reading patterns such as algorithmic, perceptual, and cognitive. As for the text that unscrolls at the bottom of the online page, it can also be read by the human subject on the basis of its visual arrangement on the screen, which almost emulates a wave pattern, juxtaposed with the grayish, almost upward-moving water video displayed on the upper part of the screen. This becomes evident in the lines below:

[left column]
each stone   I carve…   [I]convolve
with mathematical ideas…   the form

that no one
has ever felt

or

[21] Janez Strehovec, "Alphabet on the move: Digital Poetry and the Realm of Language" in *Reading Moving Letters: Digital Literature in Research and Teaching, A Handbook*, ed. Roberto Simanowski, Jorgen Schafer, and Peter Gendolla (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag, 2010), 218.

[right column]
through a development
of consciousness I detached myself from
spontaneous
expression ...turned to...more

systematic[22]

The flowing line pattern used here, together with the self-referential quality of the writing, as suggested by the use of a first personal pronoun, is juxtaposed with the regulatory words used in the text such as "detached," "systematic," "convolve," and "mathematical ideas." A similar kind of juxtaposition is also created between the grayish but upward-moving water video and the red but curvy, almost indiscernible, words floating on its surface. However, everything that appears on the screen is mathematically-generated, while the juxtaposing effects mentioned allow readers to perceive the loopings that are in action in order for the work to sustain the effects of both immediacy and playfulness it has on the readers/viewers/users.

The actions described in the two works under examination echo Manuel Portela's analysis of similar experimental visual works, which he comments on by saying that "[t]he process of visual search is primed as readers have to match an alphabetic order of writing, which they already master, with visual codes that have to be inferred, deciphered, or constructed during the act of reading. […] The automatic movement of reading a familiar form of writing becomes denaturalized through an instance-specific spatialization of characters and words."[23] This process of familiarization and defamiliarization that the human subject both activates and is confronted with by the computer's algorithmic combinations highlights a visual and a cognitive subversion at work. This marks a transition in the context of experimental poetic practice from reading what seems to be known—as it happens with the visible alphabetically inscribed and rotating or fluid words on the computer screen we see in *Between Page and Screen* and *slippingglimpse* respectively—to actually reading, even though unconsciously and indirectly, the computer code that actually activates all action that is visible to us on the screen. The dynamic but, at the same time, subtle co-evolving and co-affecting actions that take place between reading machines and human readers lead us to an unavoidable admittance of a change that is already taking place and of a different reading subjectivity emerging.

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[22] Strickland, Lawson Jaramillo, Ryan, "Upward," *slippingglimpse*.
[23] Manuel Portela, *Reading Scripting Motions: The Codex and the Computer as Self-Reflective Machines* (MA, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2013), 25.

Strehovec writes about "enter[ing] the novel ontological condition of the present reality determined by the hybridization and merging of in-between spaces and times, which challenge our ways of perception in terms of linking and amalgamating different perception acts and procedures."[24] This connects with Hayles' previously mentioned arguments on the altered cognition that emerges from our intense interaction with machines, which in turn leads us to the "multilevel, multiagent interactions occurring [when] […] human and machine cognitions intermesh," with attention paid to the "feedback and feedforward loops connecting different levels with each other and cross-connecting machine processes with human responses."[25] For example, in the case of *Between Page and Screen*, the co-engineering of human readers and machines starts the moment the user opens the book and is confronted with the information encrypted in the black and white markers on each page, while in *slippingglimpse*, readers move between the full-screen, scroll-text, and hi-resolution visualization and reading patterns the work generates. It is in these interweaving, constantly alternating, and intersecting loop actions that a transformation in the human subject's reading habits and engagement with the machine takes place, an act that blurs and also effaces not simply the dividing line between the two agents but between the reading possibilities computer coded-language can develop when it attempts to respond to a human reader's unpredictable actions. This reminds of Strickland and Lawson Jaramillo's remark in their online essay where they write that "the role of the artistic coder [is] to question the coding languages, both through self-reflection and by using them for unintended purposes. […] introduce[ing] multiplicity where none existed and challeng[ing] definitions of *intent* for the entire environment of programming language, machine and system."[26] As a result, the more the interaction between the coded cycles that sustain the feedback loops in a computing system with the human subjects, the more responsive and creative these coded languages can become in confronting the reading subject with diverse, often unexpected, onscreen perceptual combinations of images and words.

Viewing these challenges alongside the augmented reality technologies employed in *Between Page and Screen* as well as the programming and videographing technologies *slippingglimpse* resorts to, one realizes that although they appear to be reader/viewer/user generated by the movements and actions that set them into motion, they are actually part of a different set of operations. Portela characteristically writes about processes of this kind that "the semiautomatic nature of text generation, although subject to decisions that affect its

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[24] Strehovec, "Alphabet on the Move," 222.
[25] Hayles, *How We Think*, 13.
[26] Strickland and Lawson Jaramillo, "Dovetailing Details Fly Apart."

enfolding, appears to offer the text as a kinetic spectacle, disconnected from its interpretive remediation by a reader."[27] Both *Between Page and Screen* and *slippingglimpse* offer an alternative narrative experience that allows us to reflect on the multiple roles language and readers/viewers/users can play or on the multiple communication or language/code systems that can co-exist if we decide to move beyond the visual, often mesmerizing, effect these works have on the readers/viewers/users and focus on their interaction with them.

Funkhouser interprets this emerging tendency as a form of "transcreation" that is "[a]n inventive process of passing between two languages, […] occur[ing] within the multimodalities enabled by machine and network processes."[28] What this brings to our attention is the co-developmental processes at work between reading machines, coded languages and materials – for example video or visual or sound files – all needing to be synthesized together as part of a series of complex transcreations of dense mechanical and coded actions. As a result, the poetic potential in *Between Page and Screen* and *slippingglimpse* actually relates to the malleability and multiple combinations of computer processed coded languages that are responsible for the visual patterns and kinetic possibilities the programmed coded material can generate. So this makes us realize that poetry, when examined in conjunction with the media of its production, can lead to different configurations and ways of perceiving the creative potential of the poetically- and digitally-joined actions often translating on the screen space in cognitively alternative and usual patterns. This links to Glazier's observation that "the most important aspect of electronic space is that it is a space of poeisis."[29] As a result, the poetic experience *Between Page and Screen* and *slippingglimpse* activate derives from the coded permutations stored in the machine and the human actions that allow for such permutations to be visualized in forms and verbal structures on the screen that are seemingly recognizable without having been previously encountered. Obviously, what we see on the screen in these kinds of processes is just a simulation of verbal forms recognizable to us because substance and depth have now transferred from the words themselves to the actual code in addition to the reader/viewer/user actions that activate them. So code and bodily movement may be invisible and unnoticed but not unreadable.

Returning to Borsuk and Bouse's *Between Page and Screen,* this process becomes apparent in the following example where the screen (S) says to page (P):

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[27] Portela, *Scripting Reading* Motions, 158.
[28] Funkhouser, *New Directions*, 242.
[29] Glazier, *Digital Poetics*, 3.

Dear S
A screen is a shield, but also a veil—
it's a sheer and can be shorn.
There's a neat gap between these covers, a gate
agape, through which you've slipped
your tang. Paper cuts too,
Swordsmith, let's name this pagan
pageant, these rows of lines or vines
that link us together.

—P[30]

Although this playful dialogue looks familiar in its written letter form, it is semantically fuzzy not because of the meaning of each of the words but as a result of the multiple combinations or juxtapositions that can emerge. Even though P refers to its own divided and unstable relationship with S in a self-referential and metaphorical manner, with words such as "screen," "shield," "veil" and "covers," the text the readers encounter here seems to be mostly displaying its semantic playfulness and flickering status due to how quickly it can easily disappear with a sudden move or gesture of the reader/viewer/user in front of the webcamera. In this case, it is the readers'/viewer's/users' own intervention that may intensify the flickering nature of the textual experience by re-positioning its creative poetic energy not in the text and the lyric quality of the language it uses or the feelings it elicits for the lyric subject but in the interaction between the human subject and its body movements in conjunction with the camera's and computer's digitally-coded commands. Turning now to Strickland, Ryan, and Jaramillo's *slippingglimpse*, a similar kind of textual instability is generated, as it becomes evident in the following example from one of the scroll-down poetic texts that is juxtaposed to a blue and white translucent water effect:

[left column]
flattened into visibility:
A 2-d sign of great spatial ambiguity

animation

hangs onscreen

[right column]
Seeing is forgetting the name
of what you see

very slow-motion
flicker[31]

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[30] Borsuk and Bouse, *Between Page and Screen.*.
[31] Strickland, Lawson Jaramillo, Ryan, "Blue Feather," *slippingglimpse*.

In particular, the constant but algorithmically coordinated change of the water color and shading, combined with the dimly seen words floating on its surface, should be considered in tandem with the text cited above. Certain of the words and phrases used, such as "spatial ambiguity," "animation," "hangs onscreen," "slow-motion," and "flicker" enhance the feel of visibility and invisibility alongside the kinetics the water-flow pattern and the words floating on its surface create. In the hi-resolution and full-screen option of the work, some of the words densely clustering together while floating on the almost transparent water surface construct an elusive effect that the phrase "forgetting the name of what you see" from the text cited may be referring to. The activation and intersection of visual, verbal, algorithmically-animated but code-driven effects lead the reader/viewer/user to a multileveled reading experience that demands a different cognitive and narrative engagement. Hayles, in her discussion of *slippingglimpse*, talks about the enactment of a "three-fold recursive cycle between human and nonhuman cognizers."[32] What this observation suggests is that it is the human subject's intervention that sets all these visualizations in motion and it is the human subject who can find meaningful connections between them in an effort to read what is revealed on the screen.

The examination of these kind of experiments paves the path for the consideration of the creative opportunities and literary appropriations that open up when embodied actions, perception, and cognition are examined alongside digitally-activated processes and actions. Both case studies examined here with particular examples discussed reveal that readers/viewers/users, when caught up in this process of digitally-generated visual and textual interactions, cannot avoid being affected by the visual and reading practices the two works invite them to engage with. Capturing a major transitional moment in time and our in-betweenness with regard to writing and reading habits, in addition to how we perceive literary texts and conventions, *Between Page and Screen* and *slippingglimpse* make us aware of the combinations of materials, media, verbal/visual/kinetic/coded languages, and body actions. All these certainly extend the terrain of creative and cognitive human and non-human practice, while bringing to our attention diverse means of verbal and visual manifestations of data communication. Hayles mentions that "language inhibits and enables; seeing is essential and inadequate,"[33] a remark that highlights that no system of communication is steady and infallible. What matters here is not what we immediately see and understand, but the synergies that emerge between seeing and reading, as well as the gaps such synergies leave

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[32] Hayles, "Strickland and Lawson Jaramillo's *slippingglimpse*," 39.
[33] Ibid, 45.

for further cognitive, creative, and aesthetic exploration and development to occur. Considering the works explored here within the context of digital poetry production, one is encouraged to re-think what this kind of poetry can do, how flexible it is, how it refashions our understanding of verbal and visual language, how it challenges, subverts, and extends conventional poetic forms and patterns, and how much it tells us about the subject—either human or machine—that tells the story and the medium of its telling. *Between Page and Screen* and *slippingglimpse* bring together tools and materials, artists and readers, writing and reading skills that push readers/users/viewers to delve much deeper into the allegiances that are created when poetic craftsmanship and digital technologies come together. Certainly one should not overlook the challenges and even risks that occur in the impact all these processes have on how we think, perceive, and understand the reality that envelops us. All these kinds of allegiances still need to be explored, but what they invite us to do at this stage, in Funkhouser's words, is to "[r]emain open to any possibility [which] is the best way to proceed in the process of perceiving digital poems."[34] This is exactly where the dynamism of such digital works lies: in their "active, energetic (if ephemeral) form of expression produced as a result of acts by authors and viewers" as well as intelligent machines.[35]

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[34] Funkhouser, *New Directions*, 35.
[35] Ibid, 25.

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