

Subversive Mobile Storytelling

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This paper proposes that SMS (Short Message Service) text-messaging on mobile devices can serve as a narrative medium that subverts traditional boundaries for the experience of literature. In a world of increasingly rich media, text has retained its significance on mobile devices through such emerging forms as the SMS novel, yet much of its potential remains untapped. As an interface to a computer system, SMS can serve as a 'literary machine' capable of the same kind of combinatoric language experiments conducted by the Oulipo or as a mechanism for interactive fiction inspired by games such as Zork. Aarseth groups such works under the term 'cybertext', indicating that the process of feedback is essential to the production of text. The first-person perspective and verbal nature intrinsic to SMS make it an intriguing medium for cybertext. However, the nature of a mobile device used in an urban environment also invokes the Situationist International's concern with the subjectivity of place, which has largely been the point of departure for the discussion of locative media. Further, the imperative poetics of text-messaging suggest its use as a contemporary tool in the kind of nontheatrical performance envisioned by Fluxus, a use pioneered with Tim Etchell's Surrender Control. Uniquely positioned to combine these methodologies, SMS allows the transposition of literature into the experiential domain, animating fictional text with everyday life. An original artwork, The Wrench, is presented as an example.

Short Message Service

Technically, the Short Message Service (SMS) is embedded in the signaling mechanism of cellular networks that routes voice calls, and so in some sense is more fundamental to the network than audio.¹ Originally, it was intended for asynchronous communication between technicians and is limited to messages consisting of just 160 characters. Though SMS was not envisioned as a consumer service, in 2007 43 billion messages were sent on New Year's Eve alone,² indicating that text-messaging has become one of the dominant communication technologies of our time. In 2005, China's "Super Girl" competition saw four hundred million people viewers use text-messaging to vote for their favorite contestants.³ With far more participants than in any election in the United States, this was the largest exercise of democracy in history.

Most SMSes make no pretense to literary grandeur. The medium's minimalism can be dramatically suggestive, however; consider, for example, the Leila Texts. Due to a glitch in the network of the mobile operator Verizon, all messages addressed to the handle "Leila" were for a time mistakenly sent to a woman from Brooklyn named Leila Sales, though they may have been intended for other Leilas. Leila runs a blog in which she attempts to interpret the drama behind the messages:

Lst ngt was... weird. im sorry. pls dont tell her.
from a 914 phone number, Tuesday, March 4, 1:47 PM

This text is absolutely rife with possibilities ... I don't think that 914 guy drunkenly made out with Leila, even though he has a girlfriend. While that could explain "Lst ngt was... weird," as well as "pls dont tell her" (i.e. "my girlfriend"), "im sorry" wouldn't really make sense there. Unless he drunkenly made out with Leila AGAINST LEILA'S WILL, in which case my

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short_message_service

² <http://www.vnunet.com/vnunet/news/2206783/sms-messaging-surges-holiday>

³ "Super Girl vs. Democracy," *Xici Hutong*, September 1, 2005.

explanation could work. Alternate explanations, please?⁴

Sales often responds to the messages, offering her unsolicited advice to the unsuspecting sender, despite her inevitable misreadings. It is conceivable that the ambiguity of the fragments suggest more than might be said in a richer medium.

In fact, text-messaging has recently given rise to a new genre, that of the SMS novel. Popular largely in China and Japan, the text is delivered in two daily installments consisting of a message each. The *New York Times* reports that in Japan, “of last year’s 10 best-selling novels, five were originally mobile phone novels, mostly love stories written in the short sentences characteristic of text-messaging”⁵ with averages sales exceeding 400,000. This success, together with the characteristic that the novels are not only read, but are commonly composed, on the phone points to the dominance of the medium more than purposeful inventiveness: “It’s not that they had a desire to write and that the cell phone happened to be there,” said Chiaki Ishihara, an expert in Japanese literature at Waseda University who has studied mobile phone novels. “Instead, in the course of exchanging [messages], this tool called the cell phone instilled in them a desire to write.”⁶

Although it is a fascinating cultural development, the SMS novel simply presents traditional literature, albeit much restrained, in a new format. It is analogous to much of early television programming, in which audio-centric content of the type developed for radio was simply filmed as “talking heads”. There is more potential for text-messaging as an artistic medium thanks to the underlying system for automated delivery. Instead of a dumb mechanism for periodically sending out a message, a system that responds to participants’ input allows for a dynamic, nonlinear narrative structure.

⁴ <http://theleilatexts.blogspot.com/2008/03/1st-ngt-was.html>

⁵ Norimitsu Onishi, “Mobile phone novels ring up big sales, but critics fear for Japanese literature,” *New York Times*, January 23, 2008.

⁶ Justin Norrie, “In Japan, cellular storytelling is all the rage,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, December 3, 2007.

Cybertext

"[In traditional literature] the performance of the reader takes place all in his head, while the user of cybertext also performs in an extranoematic sense."⁷ Espen Aarseth draws the term 'cybertext' from 'cybernetics', Norbert Wiener's study of dynamic systems involving a feedback loop (in this case between the text and its reader). In cybernetic terms, the text adjusts its 'output' according to 'feedback' from the reader. There is creative effort embodied in the physical action of that feedback, whether the effort is made by clicking a link on a computer screen or by responding to a text message. The reader becomes the operator, as with cybertext, and "... the text is seen as a machine—not metaphorically but as a mechanical device for the production and consumption of verbal signs."⁸

The navigation of a cybertext involves the determination of a single textual experience from many possibilities, it "... is an object of verbal communication that is not simply one fixed sequence of letters, words, and sentences but one in which the words or sequence of words differ from reading to reading because of the shape, conventions, or mechanisms of the text."⁹

Cybertext might be constructed by any number of methods, not necessarily with the use of electronic technology. The most ancient and canonical example might be John Cage's favorite muse of indeterminate composition, the *I Ching*, or "Book of Changes". In the classic Chinese text, which may date to the second century BCE, 4096 possible scripts can be produced by tossing three coins and forty-nine yarrow stalks. The unpredictable landing points determine the order for a combination of texts that are read in sequence. These texts have had a deep influence on Chinese political, philosophical,

⁷ Espen Aarseth, *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 1.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁹ Espen Aarseth, "Nonlinearity and Literary Theory", *Hyper/Text/Theory* (1994).

and religious history and have also been a source of artistic inspiration to Western artists in this century.

Arguably the most eloquent and exhaustive study of non-electronic cybertexts in fiction was conducted by the Oulipo, short for "OUvroir de Littérature POtentielle", which translates roughly as "workshop of potential literature". A group of primarily European authors and mathematicians, the Oulipo seeks to "invent (or reinvent) restrictions of a formal nature and propose them to enthusiasts interested in composing literature". Oulipo members also state (more playfully) that "an Oulipian author is a rat who himself builds the maze from which he sets out to escape."¹⁰ The group's primary output is a catalog of techniques for inspiring literary possibilities through the definition of rules; the significance of the texts as literature is that they contain any number of possible readings and are therefore nonlinear.

A favorite example of the work of the Oulipo is Raymond Queneau's *Cent Mille Millions de Poèmes* (1961). The sonnet to end all sonnets, on the surface *Poèmes* consists of ten formally perfect compositions. However, each of the fourteen lines of each poem may be transposed with the corresponding line of any other, potentially generating ten trillion distinct sonnets. Aarseth points out an incredibly poetic feature of *Poèmes* that "... effectively mocks the theoretical notions of writer and reader, while the power of the text is clearly demonstrated."¹¹ That is, statistically, with so many possible combinations, reading an arbitrary sonnet is likely to be a unique experience—no one else has ever read that particular variation.

Perhaps the most canonical form of electronic nonlinear texts is the 'hypertext', pages of electronically displayed text connected by clickable 'links'. The most readily available example of hypertext is the website. The links on each page are navigational rabbit holes through the maze of collectively authored content on the internet. However, the

¹⁰ Harry Mathews and Alastair Brotchie, editors, *Oulipo Compendium* (London: Atlas Press, 1998), 41.

¹¹ Espen Aarseth, "Nonlinearity and Literary Theory", *Hyper/Text/Theory* (1994).

concept of hypertext in literature predates the web, perhaps most eloquently as a metaphor in Jorge Borges' story "The Garden of Forking Paths" (1941), and as an actual navigational device in the beloved "Choose Your Own Adventure" series published by Bantam books in the '80s and '90s (where different story threads are chosen by turning to different pages). An early computer-aided work is Michael Joyce's *Afternoon, a story* (1987). In *Afternoon*, the network of links mimics the psychological associations of a character reflecting on a traumatic event, and the reader may take any one of countless traversals.

The prototypical "chatbot" ELIZA, created in 1966 by Joseph Weizenbaum, readily demonstrates cybertext's ability to connect with human psychology in a way that traditional text does not. Intended as a parody of a Rogerian psychoanalyst, ELIZA asked users questions in a faux-psychological analysis via a text-only teletype. Though obviously artificial, the character is nonetheless easily anthropomorphized. According to legend, Weizenbaum entered his office one day to find his assistant bowed before the teletype, broken down in tears. A transcript of an interaction with ELIZA was on the printout. 'I've just had a breakthrough with my analyst,' the secretary explained. This is what is known as the 'ELIZA effect': "attributing greater intelligence or intentionality to a machine than it possesses."¹² Though not literary per se, ELIZA shows how a user is able, and even subconsciously inclined, to develop a narrative through first-person interaction.

However, perhaps no form demonstrates the concept of cybertext better than interactive fiction, a genre that emerged from the 'text-adventure' games of the early 80s, in which an 'interactor' types out his actions in response to textual descriptions of a fictional world. The introduction to *Zork* (1979), the prototypical interactive-fiction work, has become a part of our cultural heritage: "You are standing in an open field west of a white house with a boarded front door." This author's memory of the scene is absolutely sensual: the peeling whitewash of the weary structure, the soft sound of high grass in

¹² Janet Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997), 224.

the breeze—a mental construction that is at once foreboding and irresistible. *Zork's* blunt prose writ in monochrome on an Apple II; being addressed directly, and in text, transports the reader/player intact into Zork's world. Should "I" go inside the house? What will I find? To reveal one of countless narratives, at each step the reader/player must type commands such as "Go north", "Eat the food on the table", or "Fight the grue". Nelson writes that "in an interactive medium, the beliefs and abilities of the protagonist are more than simply a painted backcloth, because the player participates in them. These special abilities might be called the 'magic' in the game's model world, in the broadest sense."¹³ Calling on the reader to act as protagonist lends poetic power to interactive fiction beyond many other forms of cybertext.

Unlike other forms of cybertext, interactive fiction is explicitly spatial. Navigating a story is a matter of moving between 'rooms' and carrying 'objects' between them, terms which are not purely non-corporeal; a common practice when reading interactive fiction is to draw a map (with pencil and paper) to keep track of the narrative world. Consequently, to consider the mobile device as a cybertextual medium in this vein invites a direct confrontation between narrative space and the real world of the participant.

Psychogeography

In June of 1958, Guy Debord published the first issue of the journal *Internationale Situationniste*, thus inaugurating the group by the same name. Central to the group's practice was the *dérive*, a playful but attentive drifting through urban space, sometimes for days at a time. The Situationists hoped to subvert the de facto modes of experiencing place imposed by the psychological conditions of contemporary society. Their theory of 'psychogeography', by Debord's definition, is "the study of specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organised or not, on the emotions

¹³ Graham Nelson, *The INFORM Designer's Manual* (Dan Sanderson, 2001).

and behaviour of individuals."¹⁴ Addressing the representation of space, it challenges the omnipotent perspective of the map, in which all features are reduced to categorical functions. Instead, psychogeography proposes the creation of alternative maps which represent the unique possibilities and impressions that compose the transient realities of any place.

In 1955, Debord wrote,

A friend recently told me that he had just wandered through the Harz region of Germany while blindly following the directions of a map of London. This sort of game is obviously only a mediocre beginning in comparison to the complete construction of architecture and urbanism that will someday be within the power of everyone. Meanwhile we can distinguish several stages of partial, less difficult realizations, beginning with the mere displacement of elements of decoration from the locations where we are used to seeing them.¹⁵

With such experiments, the Situationists attempt to dissolve the psychological frameworks by which we are wont to experience place. With the emergence of location-based technology, psychogeography has become a general touchpoint for artists working with “locative” media such as Google Maps, wireless networks, and GPS (Global Positioning Service). Algorithmic and game-like in nature, Situationist tactics are well suited for implementation with technology, thus providing mobile media with a methodology that avoids treating place as absolute. Further, the textual description of Situationist practice dovetails with the development of written 'scores' by avant-garde artists seeking to more broadly incorporate the material of everyday life.

Nontheatrical Performance

¹⁴ Guy Debord, “Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography,” *Les Levres Nues* 6, 1955.

¹⁵ Guy Debord, “Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography,” *Les Levres Nues* 6, 1955.

According to Manovich, the new genres that emerged in the 1960s—happenings, installations, performance art—made art explicitly participatory in a way that prefigured the emergence of interactive computer art decades later.¹⁶ In "Nontheatrical Performance" (1976), Allan Kaprow writes,

My hunch about art is that a field that has changed in appearance as fast as it has must also have changed in meaning and function, perhaps to the extent that its role is qualitative (offering a way of perceiving things) rather than quantitative (producing physical objects or specific actions).¹⁷

Many of the pieces by Alan Kaprow and the Fluxus artists were instructions for 'nontheatrical performances'; they subverted traditional conventions by refusing to distinguish between 'performers' and 'audience'. Kaprow's happenings, George Brecht's 'scores', and Yoko Ono's poems are all conceptual exercises that impose non-habitual constraints on the participant.

Arrange to observe a sign indicating direction of travel.
Travel in the indicated direction.
Travel in another direction.¹⁸

George Brecht's score is phrased in imperatives; it is not descriptive. Rather, it offers permission for the reader to perform (or imagine) the actions and draw her own conclusions. The frame of the artwork—as established by his prescription of an activity—makes use of what is available to the participant. Unlike the relative rigidity of cybertexts such as interactive fiction, Kaprow discusses " ... a never-ending play of changing conditions between the relatively fixed or 'scored' parts of my work and the

¹⁶ Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001), 56.

¹⁷ Allan Kaprow, "Nontheatrical Performance," *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

¹⁸ George Brecht, "Direction", 1961.

'unexpected' or undetermined parts."¹⁹ Such investigations by the avant-garde explicitly elicited the emergent possibilities of social and spatial interaction in a way that anticipated the possibilities that emerged with text-messaging.

Surrender Control

In 2001, Tim Etchells created an SMS-based work for the Kirklees Media Center in Huddersfield, England. Mistaken by many people for an advertising campaign, a series of flyers were distributed in London with the message "Do you want to Surrender Control?" with instructions to send the text 'SURRENDER' to a phone number. The participant would then receive a series of text messages over a period of five days. As Etchells explains,

Surrender Control is somewhere between a game and a set of dares. The instructions that people will receive vary enormously—some are orders to think about particular topics, others are invitations to look at the world in a particular way, other instructions are for actions, demands that people behave in particular ways or that they carry out particular tasks.²⁰

As the experience progresses, the messages escalate in intensity, from thought experiments ("Remember last night"), to provocative actions ("Write the word SORRY on your hands. Leave it there until it fades"), to direct social engagement ("Dial a number different from that of a friend. If someone answers, try to keep them talking"). Etchells is primarily interested in the intimacy of the of medium:

. . . messages go direct to the phone of an individual, direct to a 'place' which is normally occupied by that person's friends, family or lovers. To create an art work

¹⁹ Allan Kaprow, "Nontheatrical Performance," *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

²⁰ Matt Locke, "Tim Etchells – Surrender Control" *TEST*, July 14, 2003.

for this context is an invitation, one could say, to whisper in the ears of strangers as they go about their daily business. *Surrender Control* tries to explore and push the boundaries of what is possible or even permissible in this context.²¹

Surrender Control is a seminal example of how powerful the minimal intervention of a text message can be. However, Etchell's framework purposefully does not allow participants to respond to the messages, preferring instead that they choose to act or not act in the reality of their lives. This in no way detracts from the piece, but it does not make full use of text-messaging's potential as cybertext. It is creative experience for the participants, but the frame does not adapt to their actions.

The Wrench

Knifeandfork's *The Wrench* (2008), recasts Primo Levi's 1978 novel, *The Monkey's Wrench*, as a text-message exchange between the participant and the protagonist, Tino Faussonne, an itinerant steelworker. In Levi's original, Tino tells a series of stories that reflect a deeply contingent and physical relationship to the world. These themes, together with a quirky use of language and a first-person narrative, make Levi's character well-suited to the immediacy of text-messaging. In *The Wrench*, a modern-day Tino does not narrate his past experiences, but instead he engages the participant in a series of dialogues intended to convey the same themes as the book. These include everyday interventions where Tino relies on the participant to navigate an unfamiliar city, asks participants to catalogue all the sounds of machines audible at that given moment, or waxes poetic about the nature of the labor that produced our impossibly intricate electronic devices.

As a result, *The Wrench* is not an SMS novel with pre-determined messages. Instead, it employs an open-source software package developed by the artists, TXTML,²² to

²¹ Ibid.

²² For more information, please see <http://TXTML.org>

instantiate Tino as an artificially intelligent agent. Tino's dialogue is constructed in a way that is influenced by chatbots such as ELIZA; however, his progression through the space of potential narratives more closely mirrors the design of interactive fiction. Just as the interactor moves through the dungeons of Zork, charting one of many possible paths, in *The Wrench*, the participant, through responses over SMS, elicits from Tino a particular series of stories. In addition, Tino's messages draw on material dynamically generated from RSS/Atom content feeds. This enables him to comment and respond to events in the real world, such as the weather or the outcome of last night's Yankees game.

Like ELIZA, Tino is not necessarily meant to be convincingly human, but he is intended cultivate a human relationship with the participant. Unlike other SMS systems, the messages of *The Wrench* are in the voice of an identified character, Tino, and are sent from a standard phone number to which participants can send responses just as they would to ordinary friends. Basic natural language processing is employed to interpret the participants' messages. As the narrative happens in real-time over the course of a week, Tino sends updates on events in his life as they occur. A flexible timing system is used so that Tino sends messages appropriate to the time of day, whether he is initiating the exchange or is responding to a spontaneous message from the participant.

By asking participants about their own activities and philosophies, the piece inserts Levi's themes into the participant's everyday reality. For example:

TINO: just dropped off theresa, killing time. do you have much down time in your day?

PAUL: sometimes, depends if im working or not. im a freelancer.

TINO: me too, i like to be my own boss. i decide when to work and when to stop.

PAUL: damn right. that's the only way to go.

After opening a book or starting a movie, the fiction of the experience is contained within the bounds of the media. *The Wrench*, however, disrespects this barrier. In the words of a participant:

Tino forces me to reflect on my life and on life in general. His timing is unexpected, so in order to respond to him in a timely manner I have to interrupt the minutiae of my day and think about the questions he's asking.

Inspired by *Surrender Control*, *The Wrench* is designed to take advantage of the fact that text-messaging as a medium is situated in the lives of its users. What happens beyond the interface of the phone is not extra-diegetic, but the subject of the story itself.

Consider the approach to place in *The Wrench*. As discussed, most mobile systems understand location in terms of absolute coordinates, whether latitude and longitude or simply a street address. With other systems, such as *Yellow Arrow*²³ or those that use semacodes, place is understood in terms of markers in the physical world. By associating content with identifiers placed throughout a city, such systems can respond to a participant relative to a specific, real world location. *The Wrench* takes a third approach inspired by Situationist practice. Though it lacks any technical features to determine location, it too might be considered a 'location-based' system, albeit one that understands place only in terms of the relative conditions of the participants' lives. The narrative might refer to one's home, or work, or the park; in the mind of the participant, these locations are concrete and unambiguous. *The Wrench* depends on their existence to instantiate its poetic intent in reality, appropriating the experience of the participant even while applying the operations common to cybertext.

Approaching the Real

The pleasure of cybertext is a result of executing the logic provided by the author in order to form a unique narrative:

In electronic narrative the procedural author is like a choreographer who supplies the rhythms, the context, and the set of steps that will be performed. The interactor, whether

²³ <http://yellowarrow.org>

as navigator, protagonist, explorer, or builder, makes use of this repertoire of possible steps and rhythms to improvise a particular dance among the many, many possible dances the author has enabled ... [For the author] it means establishing the properties of the objects and potential objects in the virtual world and the formulas for how they will relate to one another. The procedural author creates not just a set of scenes but a world of narrative possibilities.²⁴

Manovich, in opposing the traditional production of narrative work, discovers that

... the database of choices from which narrative is constructed (the paradigm) is implicit; while the actual narrative (the syntagm) is explicit. New media reverse this relationship. Database (the paradigm) is given material existence, while narrative (the syntagm) is dematerialised. Paradigm is privileged, syntagm is downplayed. Paradigm is real; syntagm, virtual.²⁵

Clearly this is the case, both for interactive fiction and the non-electronic means of the Oulipo. Intrinsic to the structure is a totality of potential narratives; the storage of relationships is what matters, as they are the language in which individual narratives are composed; this is Queneau's stanzas listed out on subsequent pages, ready for recombination.

But what does it mean for a cybertext to be experienced via a mobile device? Traditional forms specify the syntagm because the possibilities of the real world are unquantifiable. Text-messaging, however, blurs the boundaries between a hermetic narrative space and the unpredictable logics of the real world. A cybertext on a mobile device is neither specifying a syntagm nor a complete paradigm. Instead, it elicits the specific creativity of the human consciousness interacting with its environment, temporarily organizing how reality, whatever its subjective nature, whatever preexisting simulacra exist, might be experienced.

²⁴ Janet Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997), 152.

²⁵ Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001), 231.

Baudrillard writes,

We are witnessing the end of perspectival and panoptic space ... and thus to the very absolution of the spectacular ... We are no longer in the society of the spectacle, of which the situationists spoke, nor in the specific kinds of alienation and repression that it implied. The medium is no longer identifiable as such and the confusion of the medium and the message is the first great formula of this new era. There is no longer a medium in the literal sense: it is now intangible, diffused, diffracted in the real, and one can no longer say that the medium is altered by it.²⁶

Baudrillard fears that access to the linguistic ground of the real is now impossible, the fixed-currency behind cultural symbols has been lost, and "it is useless to dream of revolution through content, useless to dream of a revelation through form, because the medium and the real are now in a single nebula whose truth is indecipherable."²⁷

But he leaves a gap for something more when he says, "If all the content is wiped out, there is perhaps still a subversive, revolutionary use value of the medium as such." Writing in 1981, Baudrillard was observing television's rise to an all-dominating form of mass media. It may be that Baudrillard would consider text-messaging yet another means of simulating the real, one that is even more insidious for its pervasiveness. Yet it is possible that by specifically framing everyday experience in way that invites the same creative agency exercised by the reader of cybertext, a poetic transformation of the mundane may occur. Murray writes, "Participatory narrative, then, raises several related problems: How can we enter the fictional world without disrupting it? How can we be sure that imaginary actions will not have real results?"²⁸ With a cybertext in the real

²⁶ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994 (1981)), 30.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 83.

²⁸ Janet Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997), 103.

world, we cannot. There is actual physical danger in mobility, there is no guarantee of a hermetic space, and so the syntagm might extend beyond both the prefigured narrative and the participants' habitual experience of the world.

In his essay, "Cybernetics and Ghosts", Italo Calvino writes about literature, saying that the "...poetic result will be the particular effect of one of these permutations on a man endowed with a consciousness and an unconscious, that is, an empirical and historical man. It will be the shock that occurs only if the writing machine is surrounded by the hidden ghosts of the individual and his society."²⁹ With text-messaging, situated as it is in the everyday, these need not be ghosts. As the Situationist Raoul Vaneigm puts it, "the laboratory of individual creativity transmutes the basest metals of daily life into gold through a revolutionary alchemy ... The new artists of the future, constructors of situations to be lived, will undoubtedly have immediacy as their most succinct—though also their most radical—demand."³⁰ The subtle insistence of the text message and its imaginative potential is a step in that subversive direction.

²⁹ Italo Calvino, "Cybernetics and Ghosts", *The Uses of Literature* (Patrick Creagh, trans., 1967).

³⁰ Raoul Vaneigm, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, (London: Rebel Press, 2006 (1967)), 193.