EXPANDED READING: A VISUAL/MOTOR ACTIVITY AND SIGNIFICANT IN TEXTUAL REALITY

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Abstract
This text explores individually and collectively the notion of Expanded reading as an emerging artistic practice. The texts, the sound and the visual not only expand into other disciplines but from an initial element, each can expand in itself. This research is a reflection of the theorization of artistic and educational practice from the experience of ANDAMIO, which collides with universal memory from theoreticians such as Hans Belting, Marshall McLuhan, Didi Huberman, and writers such as Marcel Proust, Jaime Sabines, Gabriel García Márquez, among others.

Keywords

1. INTRODUCTION
What is reading? As a transitive verb, and in the strict action, it is to pass the view by the signs that we recognize from our mother tongue, written in a text to understand them and turn them into sounds. The act of reading goes beyond the interpretation of an inherited code. Reading is cognitive, visual / motor activity that is meaningful of reality. Whatever the reality may be.

When we read a text, our thought manages a set of received information that is gradually organized according to its maturity, experience, cognitive processes, intuition and conceptualization. The order in which it happens does not matter. What is important is the fact that when it is read, the construction and appropriation of both historical and a-historical concepts is happening.

Technology, following the proposal of Marshall McLuhan (1988), is an extension of our own body. For that matter, clothing is an extension of our skin. Shoes are an extension of our feet and written language is an extension of our identity.

One could think of the transitive verb of reading as a natural activity in the human being. Simone de Beauvoir affirms in her novel Una Muerte muy Dulce that "there is no natural death; nothing that happens to man is natural since his mere presence puts the world in question "(de Beauvoir, 2003: 72). The act of reading has implicit the development of a technology of reading. It is an artificial action.

You can not think of reading as a natural act. The expansion of reading happens at the moment in which a common code is constructed that is accepted by a specific society as an element of meaning of identity. Thus, the idea of understanding ourselves as undifferentiated beings of nature is displaced. Code technology makes man more cultured. It subjects him to the understanding of reality. Reading will no longer be the understanding of sound, the use of taste as appropriation and cognition, touch as the experience of unity.

The artificiality that Simone de Beauvoir affirms and the extension proposed by Marshall McLuhan coincide in the code of the written language subject to the truth, to the construction of concepts.

The act of reading is now understood, not as passing the view on a text that contains an artificial and arbitrary code; but as an act of culturalization and appropriation of an identity discourse. Sound and vision, substantial elements of the primitive, are reduced to the subjection of the text that is read and that is true in itself.

2. EXPANDED READING
Expanded Reading is one of the emerging artistic practices that has the characteristic of using technology to build meaningful experiences, not only from the text, but also from the sound and the visual.

An Expanded Reading can be generated from the sound, the visual or the textual. We will call each layer element, because each one is juxtaposed to the other in the sense that the narrative is respected. There is no interest in involving one layer of the other. The idea is to think them arbitrarily so that at some point within the production there is the possibility that they coincide. What happens in

Los Dias Tormentes, performed in Musicales, Colombia as part of the activities of International Image Festival in 2015.
these untimely moments - in space / time - the experience of a phrase, a visual, a sound that connects with the spectator recovering his memory and his memories.

As an emerging practice, it is detached from thinking about the text; which means that the written code is just another layer. It moves towards a narrative construction without a plot, deactivates linearity and does not operate within the discourse. It is thought from the relation between the triad that, insistently, we try to separate: sound, visual and text.

An example of this is the phrase found in the novel by Gabriel García Márquez: One Hundred Years of Solitude (2007). “Things have a life of their own - the gypsy preaches with a harsh accent - it’s all a matter of awakening the soul.” The affirmation is forceful in the harsh and harsh cry of the gypsy who waves it to the wind to spread it between the ears he reaches to penetrate. The enunciation exists in the expansive solitude of the text. It’s known. It’s all a matter of opening the book and wishing to declare the first line of the second paragraph of the colombian writer’s novel.

But opening it raises its genesis in the sound of enunciation. Thus, affirmation does not exist if there is no one for whom it is useful to say it or useless to listen to it. And when you say it and listen to it, both the reader and the listener build the image.

In the particular, in a first instance, the life that is, that I can not deny, that exists in the reality of the senses. In a second instance, in the lightness of the rhythm of the text. While things and rough seem heavy, the life itself, proclaim, awakening, accent and soul are light actions and nouns, which seem to travel the space / time of any street. Not the book, much less that of Macondo. A street that may well be Vancouver, Reading, Berlin, Buenos Aires or Urupan.

The text is nothing without the enunciation and the construction of the image. Because the human being is image. But this is not reduced to the primacy of the vision. It is a personal process that is unleashed by activating the text based on sound as the principle of enunciation and the opening of memory files as the memory to build the image.

The reading expands, then. The first line of the second paragraph of García Márquez’s novel is no longer a frigid phrase, trapped in the loneliness of its one hundred years. It is life that flows. It is useless to recover the sound of rennet, liver, or heart. That admits the construction of an image through a cognitive and historical process where the line of the knowable and the sensitive disappears.

Thus, things such as clepsydra or scaffolding, cornice or hibiscus, caravan or herd, lampost or gutter, lion or dolphin, score or Turkish bath cohabit in the metropolis of sound, which is throat from which emerges a scarecrow as a silencer of the torturing sound of an insect that turns off the reverse image that projects a parallelogram. This makes appear, in the middle of the bonfire, the sound with which arbitrarily has been acquired by experience, common sense and intuition. The declaration of things, the discovery of the multiple senses of each sound contained in the images that one learns to exchange with oneself: «a flaming ribbon», «a dry land», «a happy life», «seed of poppy», «stowage full of avocados», «river that sings>, «dog scabs», «bazaar lovers», «the ingenuity of a masterful wind», «the mikrokosmika reality of an empire», «a pirate of courtyard inside», «a train on lines», «drops against loneliness » that others also trick. Each story of flaming ribbons, dry land, happy lives, poppy seeds, pallets full of avocado, rivers that sing, dog scabs, city lovers, naivetés, maestral winds, mikrokosmikas realities of empires, of pirates in the backyard that were part of the pile of enunciations and declarations that were becoming more and more distant senses of the truth of sound and image, and that, at the same time, brought us closer to a truth of the text and the lie of the image and sound. It appears in the reading, the primacy of the written word as exercise of the truth and the primacy of the eye that builds the truth.

But we do not know about the long journey that happened to unravel this truth - if it is true. When the balance within the ear, which is sound, gentle waters that become turbulent, kinesthetic movement that is now a tremor that moves the uncertain floor that sustains us, is agitated, one begins to activate memory, to evoke memories. By then, the flaming ribbons will have already become a newcomer; the dry land in a jackal howl; the happy lives in the abundance of hunting; the poppy seeds in existential poison; the pallets full of avocado in forced labor; the rivers that sing in monuments to modernity; the scabies of the dog in silent hands that tend to close and to be fixed; the city lovers in permanent, silent and immobile conversations; the ingenuities of maestral winds in barely a whisper of understanding; the mikrokosmikas realities of empires in workshop rings that manufactured clepsydras; the backyard pirates in adventurers that do not go beyond an owl’s cry; the things that have a life of their own in playable dragons from a pirate vase made in china: that roughness is nothing more than a wood sandpaper that softens surfaces; that things are everything and they are nothing; what to preach is a discourse carved in the sand; that awakening causes the disease of uncertainty; that the souls no longer live in purgatory but that they go through the streets digging in garbage containers; and that the accent is just a whisper that does not travel beyond the distance that is allowed.

The reading of the first line, of the second paragraph, of the novel by García Márquez: One Hundred Years of Solitude has been expanded. It has been activated from the moment it is decided to read it with the silent voice of the sound that belongs to us, and an image has been constructed that provokes the echo of its history, of our history.
3. **THE BODY MOVING TOWARDS EXPANDED READING**

Hans Belting (2007) states: the body is the place of images. This is where the images are produced/consumed. Memory is the archive of images and memory is that production of images of the body itself.

Much has been said about the problem of the loss of the body and its importance in the production with the use of current technologies. The truth is that our forms have changed: the way we communicate, produce and consume what surrounds us. We have another relationship with objects and consequently with images.

The images have also changed. Their traditional sense has ceased to exist by changing the relationship between the body and the image. The body continues to exist from the moment when it produces from its memory, generates images, and expands through them. The images then become living organisms that are constantly changing until the moment that another body receives/consumes them.

The body functions as a generator of individual but collective images. Although in the physical body they die with it and have a defined space/time, the collective memory has its own mechanism. It is handled in spaces/times as those organisms that are transformed with them. Marcel Proust understood the mutable value of memory in his book In Search of Lost Time. In volume one, Swann's Way (2006), he describes how a second before awakening those memories of past rooms were called from the memory archive. All spaces/times exist in the same moment, to return to the body at the moment of awakening, a second later.

4. **LOS DÍAS TERRESTRES: AN EXPANDED READING EXPERIENCE**

*Los días terrestres* is a piece produced by ANDAMIO. The main idea was to read three female poets. The motive? None, more than the simple fact of reading them and producing from their texts. The first presentation was in Uruapan, in May 2014. Wislawa Szymborska, Herta Müller and Gabriela Mistral were read. Along with the readings, a second sound layer was added in real time. A visual layer produced by a light table and pre-recorded/edited videos were mixed in real time projected onto a wall. The three layers ran out of phase with each other.

There were visual silences and pauses in the reading when passing from one text to the next, between poetess and poetess.

The expanded reading *Los días terrestres* recovered three elements with which it had been working: sound, visual and textual production. From this perspective, the being of the artistic piece is not static but changes according to the space/time in which it is produced. For example, it has been presented a total of four times, and in all of them it has changed; not only in the elements that were used on stage, but also in their duration –20 or 45 minutes–, in the sound/visual materials, in the way of using the chosen texts.

In the first two presentations -in the city of Uruapan and Zamora, Mexico- a total of thirty poems were read among the three poets. One was differentiated from the other by a change in the visual material or by changing the projection place. The light table was positioned as an important element from the first stage of the project because it provided the material: keys, buttons, threads, paper and old photographs manipulated in real time, where the images generated were translated and mixed through the Resolume video software.

As far as sound is concerned, the texts read are rarely modified and are competing with the second sound layer, made in real time through Max/MSP. At some moments the meaning of the texts is lost to the point where, for the spectator, the sound and the reading become noise. The sound/visual/textual layers become possibilities that co-exist in a space/time, generating the experience of emerging narratives without plot, non-linear, without apparent discourse.

In the second stage of the piece –*Los días terrestres 2.0* – we worked on the basis of a pre-production where we established a score based on time. What do we mean by that? From the experience of the first stage, the piece itself demanded a segregation of time that would have an impact on the presentation. We weren't looking for a script, the idea was to try to make the narratives of each layer have their own chaotic and congruent moments. In this way, the spectator had the possibility of connecting with the text read in untimely chaotic: at the beginning and at the end of the piece. And the same with the other layers.

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1 To see the project online, visit: [http://andamio.in/prod/dias-terrestres](http://andamio.in/prod/dias-terrestres)

2 ANDAMIO is a collaboration platform where producers with different training meet, generating projects at a distance. Andamio works within three lines: production, research and education. All are related not only to the union and breakdown of sound in other disciplines, but also in the use of different technologies to produce experiences. To see more information about this project: [http://andamio.io/](http://andamio.io/)

3 To see the project online, visit: [http://andamio/in/prod/los-dias-terrestres2](http://andamio/in/prod/los-dias-terrestres2)
Beyond the unexpected events that take place between complex and simple moments, the expanded reading is no longer divided by the three writers. The relationship between images is sharpened when they are interrupted, modified and confronted in the space/time of the producer-spectator.

Appropriating the concept of audiovision proposed by Michel Chion (1993), it is understood that visual/sound/textual images do not submit to each other. None of the three layers is the main one, but they coexist to build an experience.

The reading producer was able to choose which texts to read and their order.

The sound producer makes a counterpoint starting from the same recording in real time of the text read, generating the possibility of recovering the individual/collective memory within the space/time.

The visual producer plays with the stage space/time, which is one more element to make the sound/textual layers breathe.

5. CHILDREN LIVE IN IMAGES

When we assert that children live in images, it is because they do not differentiate between reality and fiction. The stage proposed by Piaget (1991) regarding the activity of the children to animate, makes everything possible in it. For example, the idea that a thunderous sound can be a witch, an image of a pencil is subject to the flight of an airplane, the words of a text can be light and soft as feathers or severe and solid as a rock.

The experience of Expanded Reading in children leads us to declare that the differentiation that adults make between the sound/visual/textual triad expressed in it, depends on their own academic history that demands coherence, systematization and a fragmentation of the images that, from experience, they know to be lying.

Images, on the other hand, generate a movement towards the playful/cognitive in children. The images are pedagogical in the historical sense, and at the same time playful in the a-historical sense of the immediacy of the game where everything possible fits into the animation.

A second project, from ANDAMIO, is the work done with the children through the piece *Me encanta Dios*, a poem by the Chiapan poet Jaime Sabines. Although the piece takes the title of the poem, it consists of reading a series of writers of short stories and poems for children.

The piece leads us to think of Expanded Reading as an exercise of the imagination generated through the text, and the animation built from the sound and the visuals.

The Expanded Reading aims to begin with a dynamic presentation where children recognize each other generating empathy among them. Then, some exploration dynamics are used with the voice generating different sounds: loud, soft, continuous or impulsive screams. The body is set in motion and space is explored.

Thanks to a video system reactive to the sound programmed in Resolume, the children use the sounds, fruit of their own exploration, to apply different processes to a video in real time, guided by the person who manages the software.

We continue with a brief activity of reading to bring them closer to the texts dividing the group in teams and we work with poetry read simultaneously in different ways for each one: slow, fast, singing, from back to front. Thus, a plot of sound/visual images is generated with the texts with which the children usually feel familiar by connecting their memories and individual and collective memory with the reading. This allows the activity to take on a playful character, turning words into bodies with weight, volume, tone, measure, meaning.

This Expanded Reading experience with children is technically comparable to the production process described above for the piece *Los días terrestres*. Only it adapted the horizon of possibilities that is wider in children. Poems such as *La Luna* and *Me Encanta Dios* by Jaime Sabines, *Las Palabras* by Pablo Neruda and *Otoño* by Rolando Rodriguez have been used so far, as well as short stories: *Un azul para Marte* by José Saramago, *La luz es como el agua* by Gabriel García Márquez and *Pirata de patio Adentro* by Rolando Rodriguez.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Expanded Reading, as an emerging artistic practice, faces the problem of defining its limits and the content of its forms. The idea of characterizing it, instead of defining it, allows us to recognize the horizon of possibilities it has. But it will be the specific characteristics that correspond to the category that will allow, at the moment of producing it and consuming it as an image, to signify it as such, giving it that sense.

The experience of producing Expanded Reading allows us to recover senses that are minimally used. The fact that the sound is the principle that generates the idea allowing to expand the text towards the visual/textual is a process of exploration that

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4 This can be exemplified by the activity carried out with children in Bogotá, Colombia in 2016. Available online in: [https://vimeo.com/170126970](https://vimeo.com/170126970)
returns us to the primitive, to the playful as an experience of cognitive/significant learning.

Where it goes and what is the current state of such artistic practice is uncertain. The technological changes are so immediate that only speculation remains as to whether or not Expanded Reading will be consolidated as part of the art system. And such speculation is contradictory, liquid and gaseous.

7. MISCELANEOUS
The present investigation was exposed in Electronic Literature Organization ELO Montreal 2018.


8. REFERENCES