ABSTRACT

BETHANY ANNE BRADSHAW

The [Im]materiality of Memory:
A Comparative Media-Specific Analysis of Scott McCarney’s Memory Loss,
Anne Carson’s Nox, and Reiner Strasser’s In The White Darkness

(Under the direction of Dr. Jon Thompson)

This project is a website that performs a comparative media-specific analysis of three multimodal texts. Specifically, this project provides analyses of Memory Loss, an artist’s book by Scott McCarney; Nox, a commercially produced work of multimodal literature by Anne Carson; and In the White Darkness, a work of electronic literature by Reiner Strasser. This project’s claims are made not only through these written analyses and an articulation of the theoretical framework informing them, but also through its conscious and reflexive use of images, layout, and its own material form. Its attention to materiality, both in its subject and its production, extends the work of Johanna Drucker and N. Katherine Hayles, who both explore and demonstrate how materiality communicates meaning. It expands their work by focusing on the common theme of memory in each of these works and examining how their material features, including their production and dissemination, uniquely materialize this concept. Placing comparative media-specific analyses of the three texts side-by-side, this project itself materializes connections between the works’ material portrayals of memory’s loss, inauthenticity, and fragmentation. In doing so, it responds to the increased production of and critical attention to multimodal works of experimental and digital literature. Simultaneously, it demonstrates how this burgeoning critical attention should not only address the materiality of the literature being studied but should also make significant use of its own materiality in doing so.