

BOOKS!!

ECL 596: Professor Jessica Pressman
Fall 2025

Day 13: Methods— Darnton and Media
Archaeology... and Modernism too!



October 29

Arts & Letters

Department of English and Comparative Literature

Q&A + OPEN HOUSE

Join ECL faculty & learn strategies for grad student success. Get your questions answered! Room AL-266.

12:00-1:00 PM

Meet + mix with ECL faculty, students, and organizations. Learn about 2026 courses. Get free candy! A&L Floor 2.

1:00-2:00 PM

Interested in tabling? Contact rporath@sdsu.edu.

ADMIN

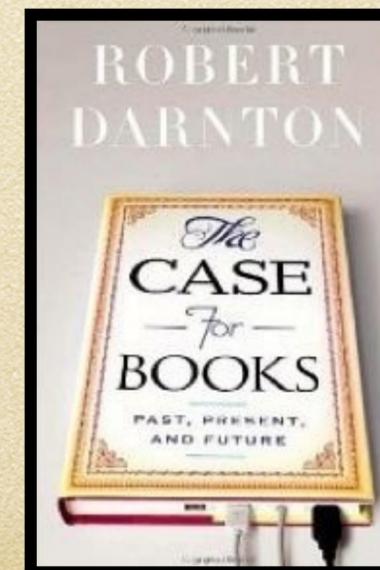
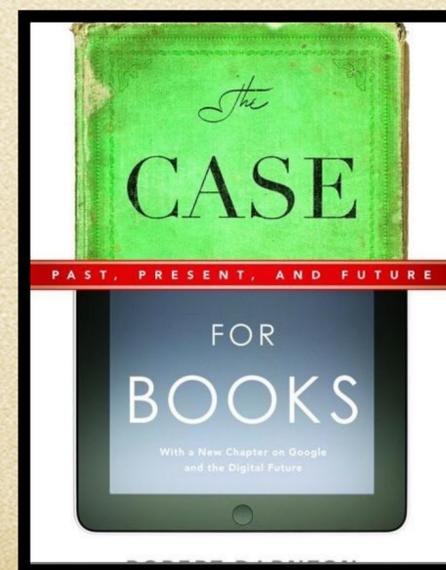
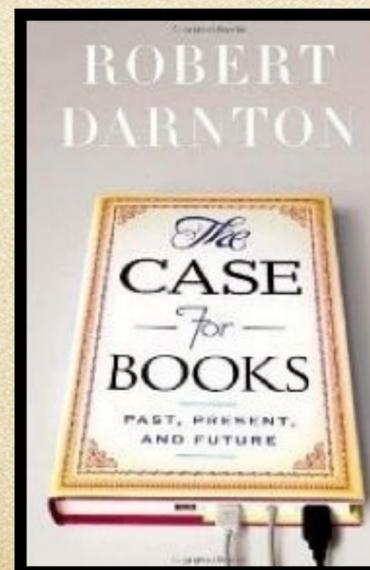
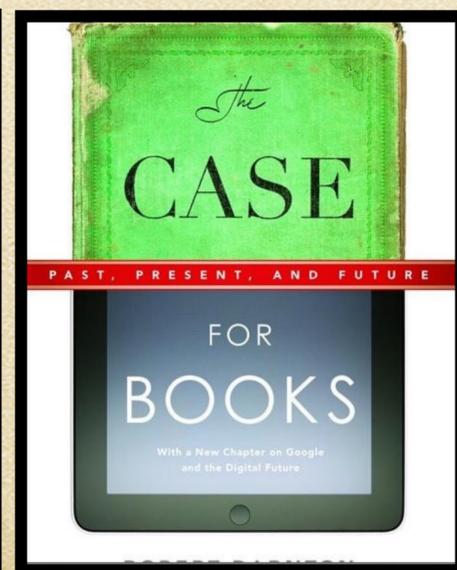
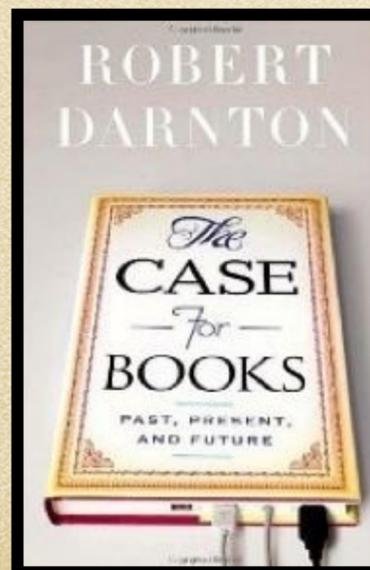
- Halloween extra credit— - see Extra Credit page
- **Tuesday in DH Center!**
- Reading/watching ELit- how to
- -Questions about HOW to GET and READ *Between Page and Screen?*

Discussion

- Questions/take-aways from Special Collections lab?
- Topics to discuss today??

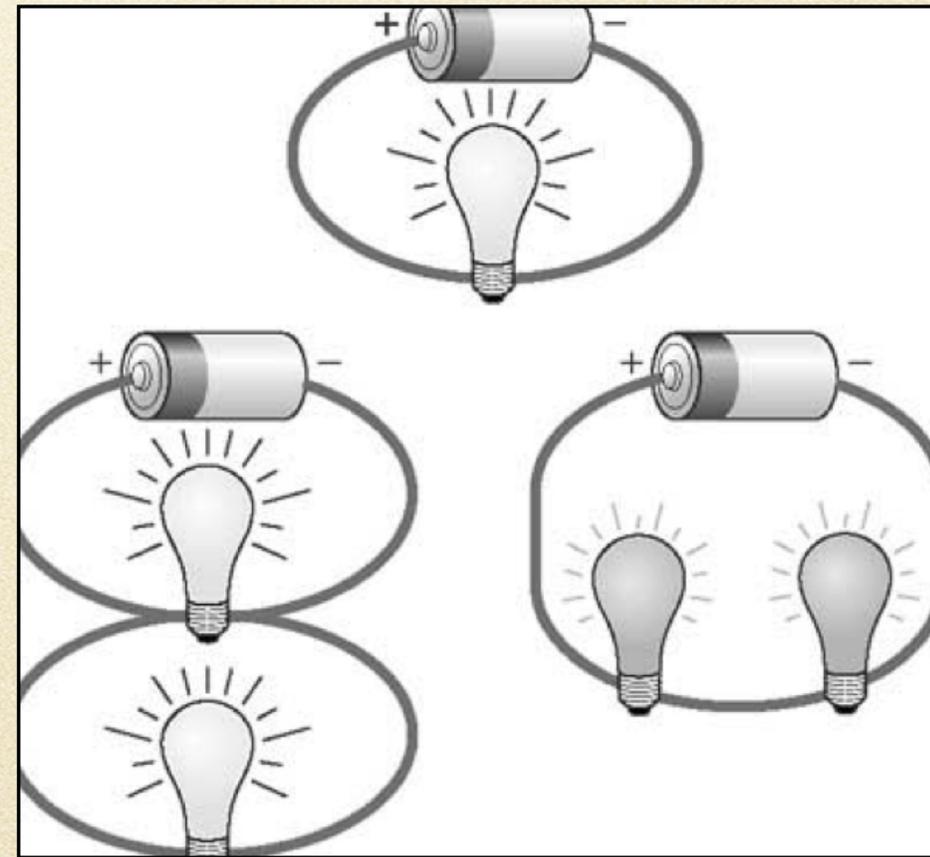
Robert Darnton, “What is Book History?” (1982)

- Provides a history of the field “the history of books,” which emerges from:
- Study of 19th C bibliography in England (8)
- 1960s France “Annales school” (9)



Robert Darnton (1985)

- Book history is a “communication circuit” (11)



Robert Darnton, “What is the History of Books” (1982)

“Models have a way of freezing human beings out of history. To put some flesh and blood on this one, and to show how it can make sense of an actual case, I will be applying it to the publishing history of Voltaire’s...” (11)

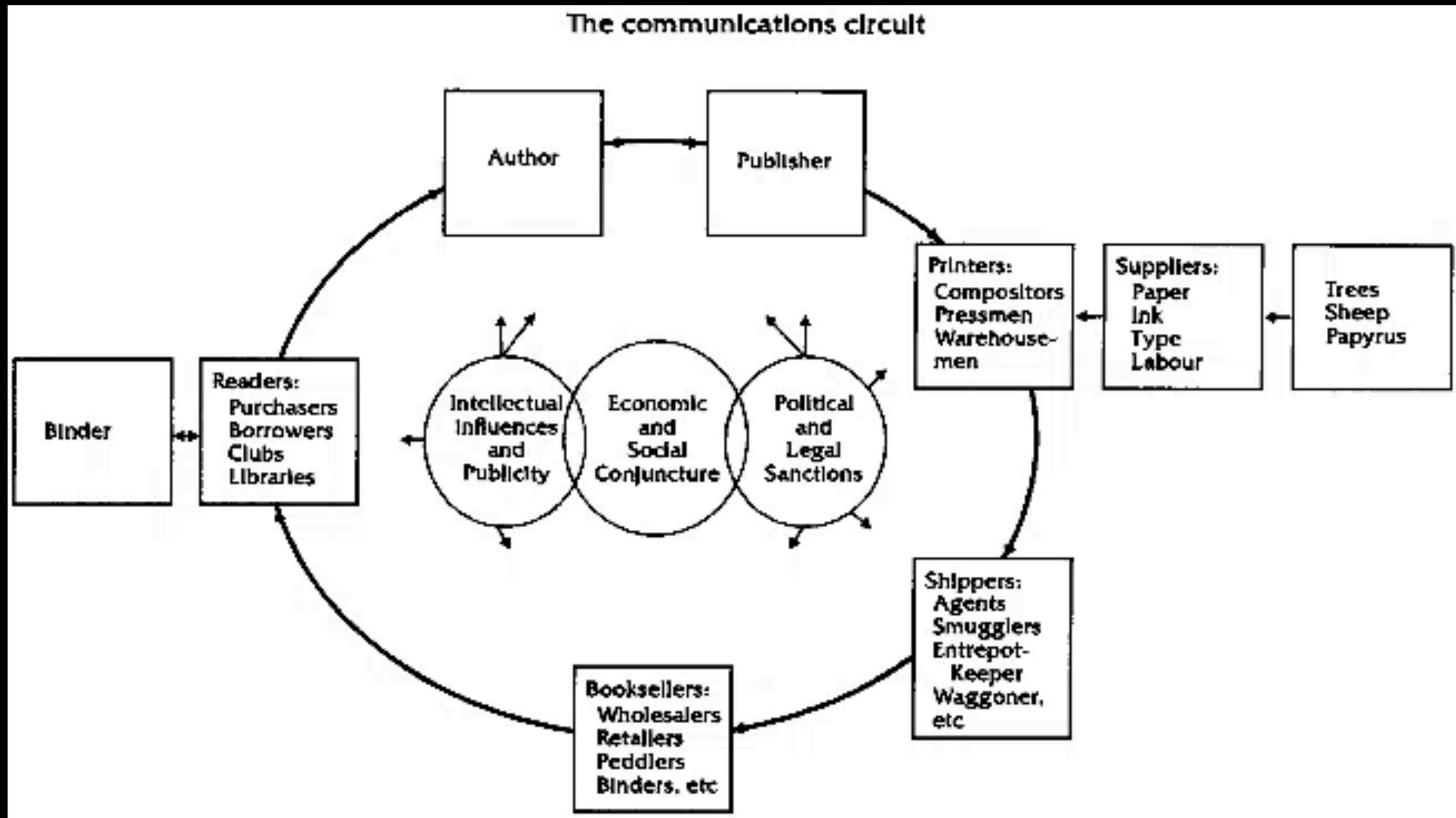
-book seller’s order: “just enough copies of them to make up a crate of fifty pounds, the minimum weight for shipment at the cheaper rate charged by the wagoneers” (13)

Robert Darnton, “What is the History of Books” (1982)= Feedback Loop

“But printed books generally pass through the same life cycle. It could be described as a communication circuit that runs from the author to the publisher... the printer, the shipper, the bookseller, and the reader. The reader completes the circuit because he influences the author both before and after the act of composition. Authors are reader themselves” (10-11)

-Comparative and international (22): “the history of books must be international in scale and interdisciplinary in a method” (22)

Robert Darnton, "What is the History of Books" (1982)



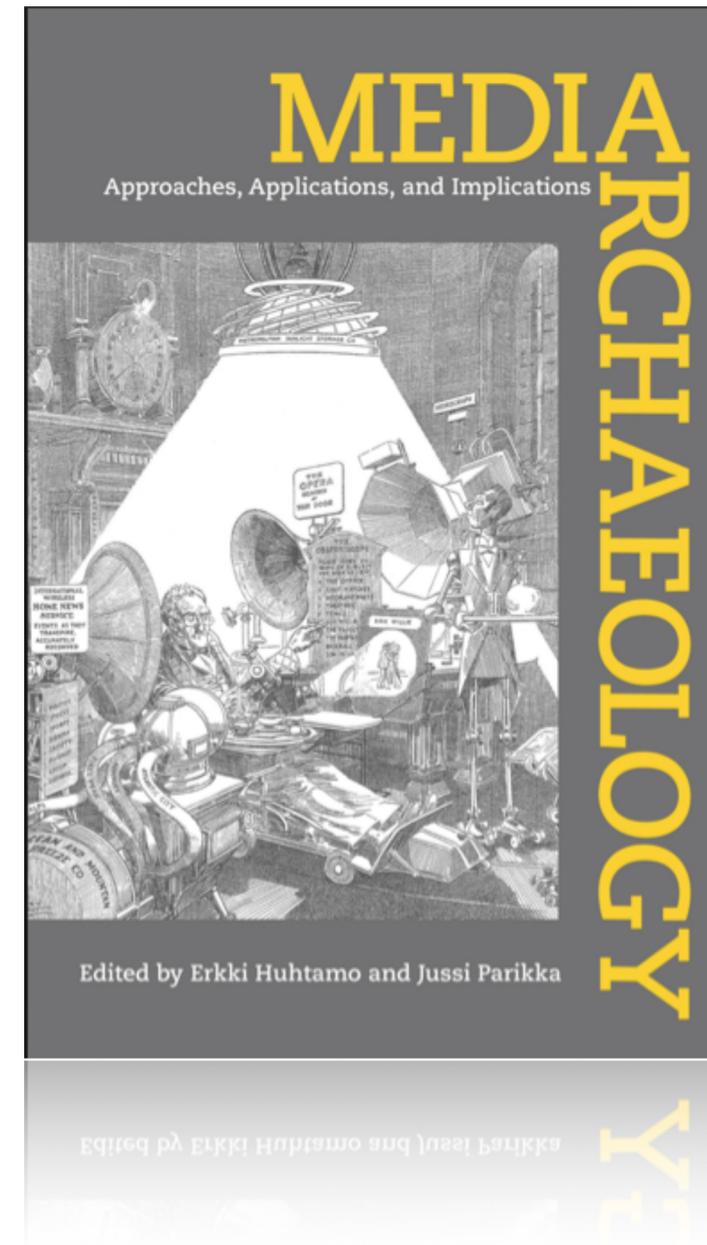
History of Books= Interdisciplinary

- “Books also refuse to be contained within the confines of a single discipline when treated as objects of study” (22)
- “studied from a comparative perspective across the whole range of historical disciplines” (22)

Media Archaeology

- media archaeology “excavates the technological conditions of the sayable and thinkable and strongly critiques narrative media history” (4)

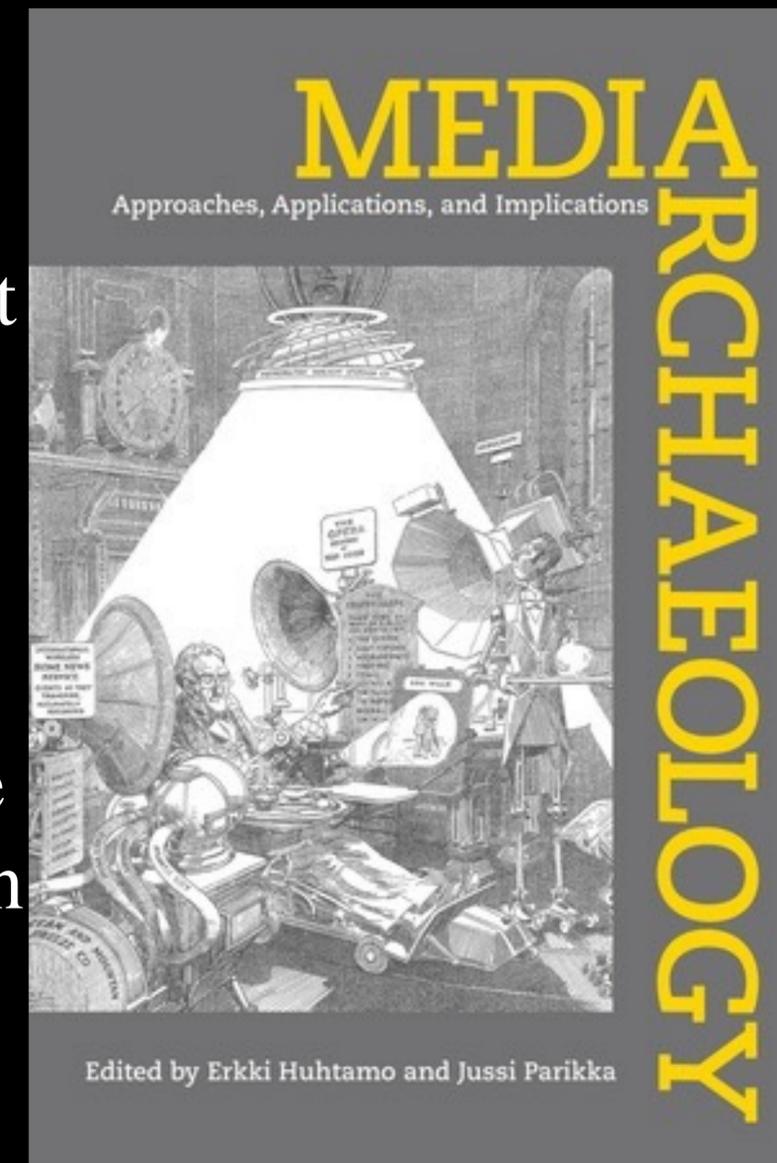
-in media archaeology, “seemingly forgotten moments in the history of the media we glibly call ‘old’ can be rediscovered and transformed” (9)



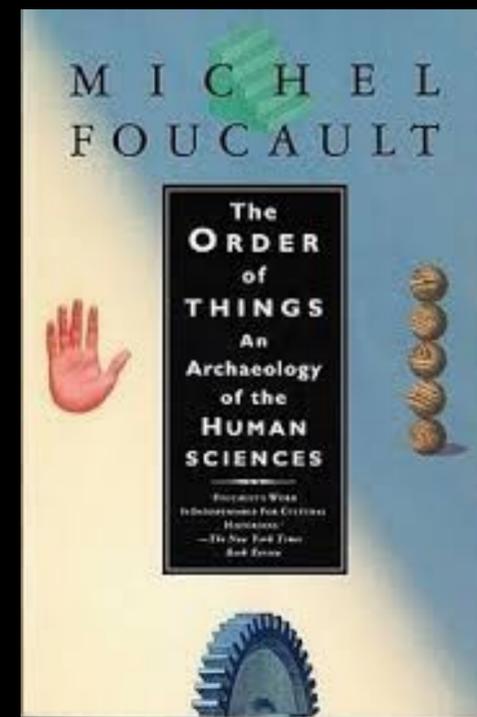
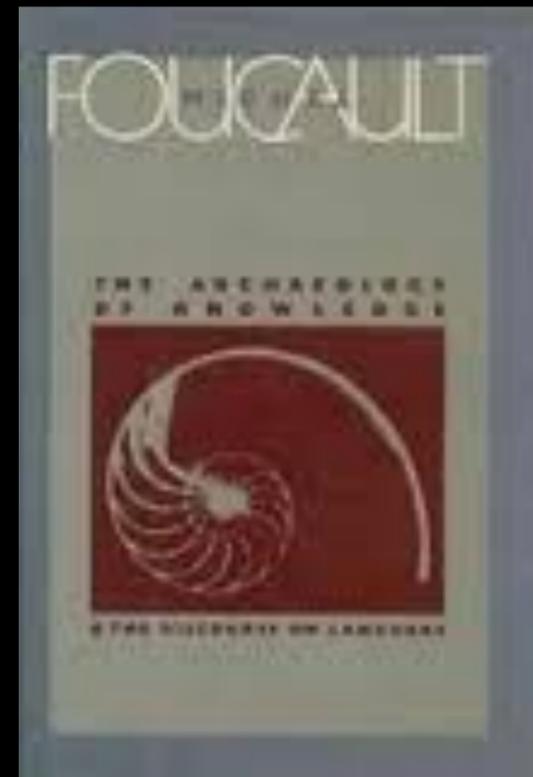
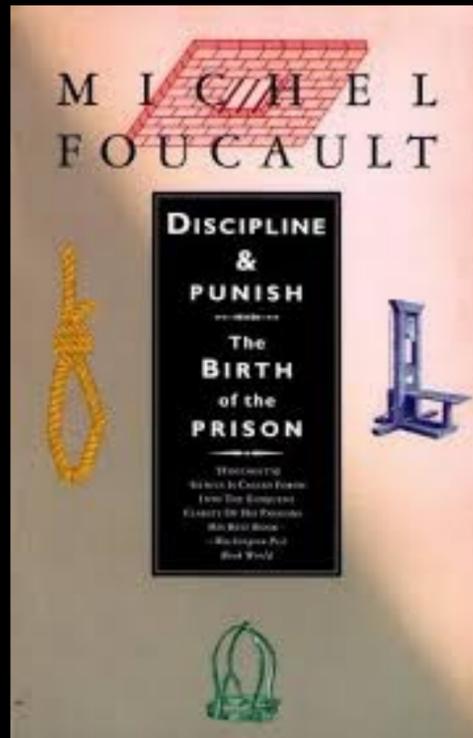
Media Archaeology

-“media archaeology is by nature a ‘discipline’ of reading against the grain, a hermeneutic reading of the “new” against the grain of the past, rather than telling of the histories of technologies from past to present.” (3)

“The past is brought to the present, and the present to the past; both inform and explain each other, raising questions and pointing to futures that may or may not be” (15)



Foucault's "archaeology"



The Dead Media Project

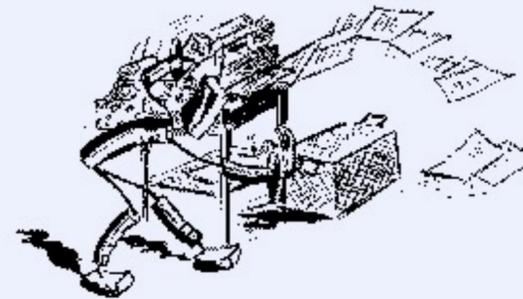
- Bruce Sterling 1995

the
Dead Media Project

Bookmark this page (⌘D)

The Dead Media Project consists of a database of field Notes written and researched by members of the Project's mailing list.

The [Dead Media List](#) consists of occasional email to that stout band of souls who have declared some willingness to engage in this recherche field of study.



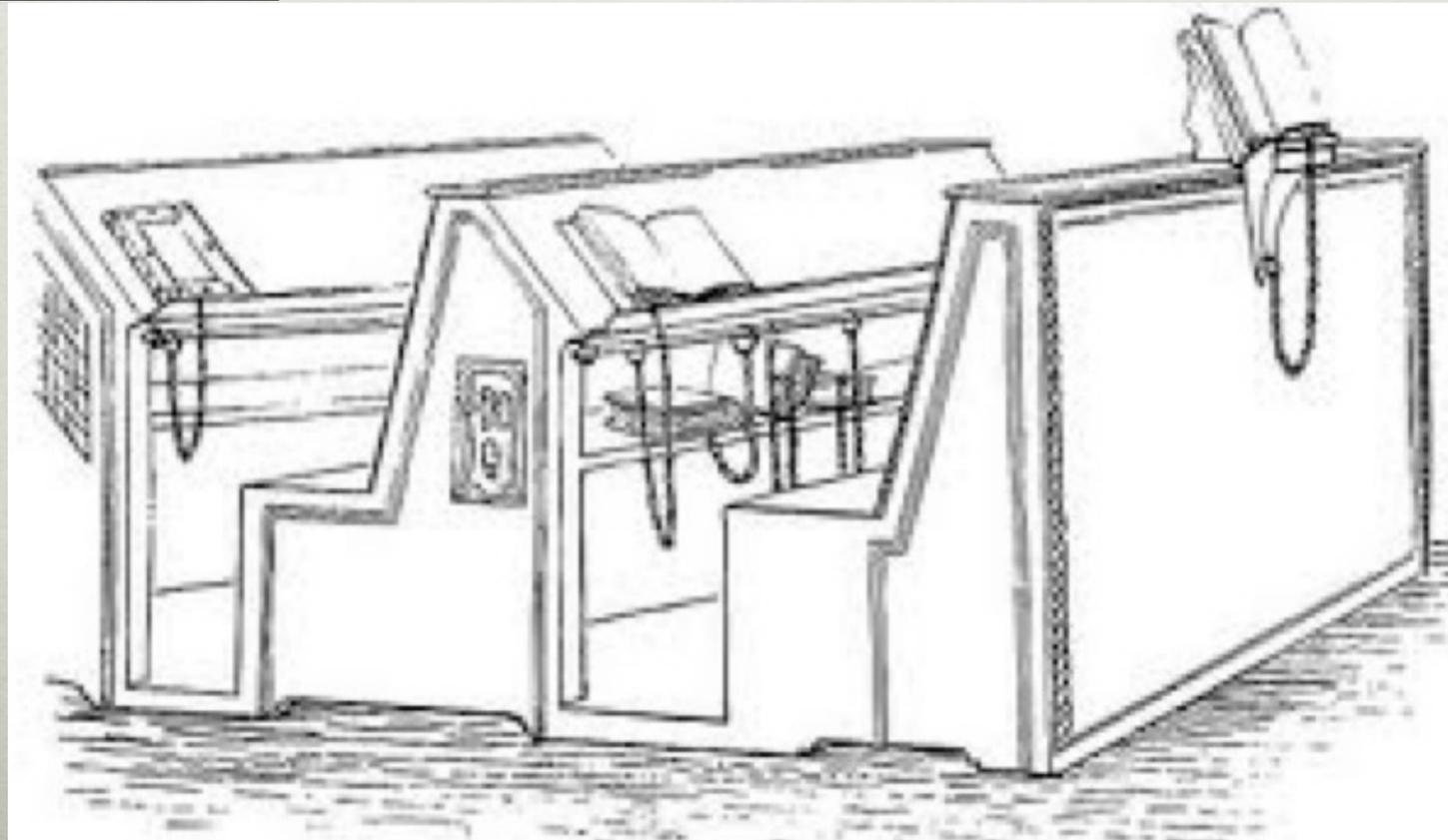
For more information on the purpose of the project, please read Bruce Sterling's [Dead Media Manifesto](#). For more information on the mailing list, including how to join, please read the [Frequently asked questions](#).

The Dead Media Working Notes



The collection of [dead media working notes](#) is the purpose of the mailing list; the accumulated, archived, (and now collated!) collection of submissions from list members; an ad hoc database of the deceased, the slowly-rotting, the undead, and the never-lived media.

READING TECHNOLOGIES



fax machines

You can browse the fax machines housed in the MAL by searching through the list below:

Show entries

Search:

Name:	Description:	Image:
Cell Fax 2000	<p>Medium: Hardware Type: Fax Machine Product Name: Cell Fax 2000 User Name: Cell Fax 2000 Manufacturer: Motorola Model: S2763B Year: N/A Original Price: N/A Serial: 180GSSH086L Floppy Drive: N/A Optical Drive: N/A Hard Drive Disk: N/A RAM: N/A CPU: N/A External Connections: 3 Prong Power Cord, 12 Volt Cigarette Lighter Plug, Cellular/Land Line Toggle Switch Internal Connections: N/A Operating System: N/A Compatible Peripherals: N/A Accession #: 2015.05.1 Tested [date]: 5/13/2015 Donor: Notes: Not working. Housed in a rugged Underwater Kinetics 613 dry case.</p>	

MODERNISM

WHAT IS MODERNISM?

- An experimental, avant-garde style movement in the arts that began in the early years of the 20th C. but was most prevalent and influential between World War I and World War II. Influenced by psychoanalysis, primitivism, and the speed of modern life and its media forms, they experimented with formal representations of self and consciousness, introducing such aesthetic techniques as stream-of-consciousness, Imagism, and cinematic montage.

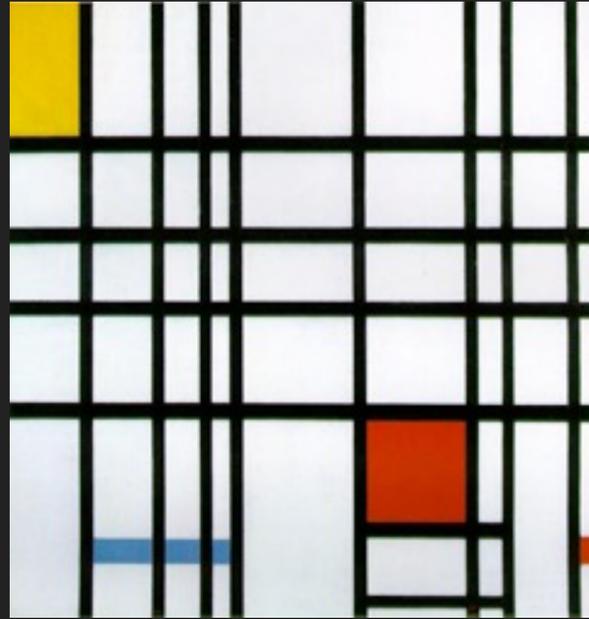
EXPERIMENTS IN ART ACROSS ART FORMS



knowing-looks-interchanged.-Hungarian- - - - -
rhapsodic-adolescent-days-Harry-doing-violin- - - -
chores-while-Maw-hustled-red-sweating-panting- - -
brothers-carrying-pails-around-farm.-Crucial-day- -
dawns.-Harry-a e t a t-eighteen-Father-asks:- - - -
Whatho!-Dull-boy-work-or-play?-Harry-sighs- - - -
c a d e n z a-Maw-sobs-l a r g h e t t o-musical- - - -
interlude-d u o-Harry-nobly-rises-occasion-plays- -



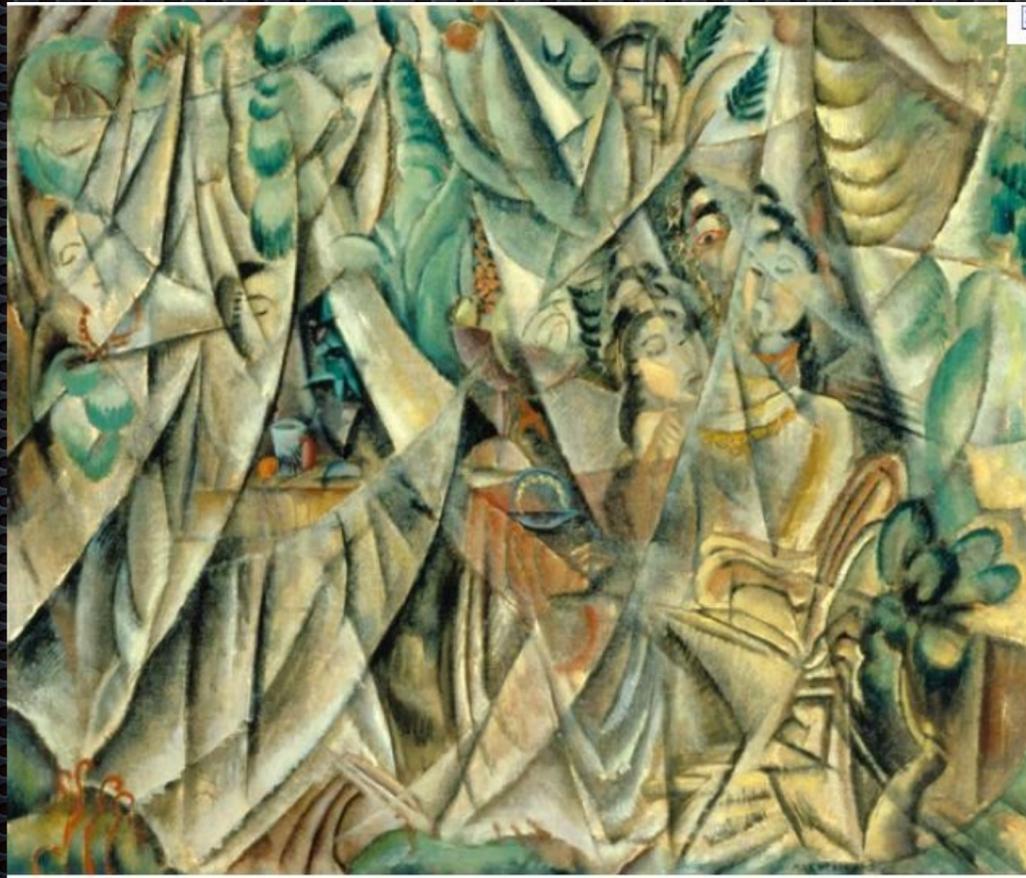
EXPERIMENTS IN ART ACROSS ART FORMS



Margaret Bourke-White, Turbine, Niagara Falls Power Co., 1928, gelatin silver print.

Cubism

Georges Braque, "Musical Instruments" 1908



Max Weber, "Woman in Tents" (1913)

Pablo Picasso, "Three Musicians" (1921)

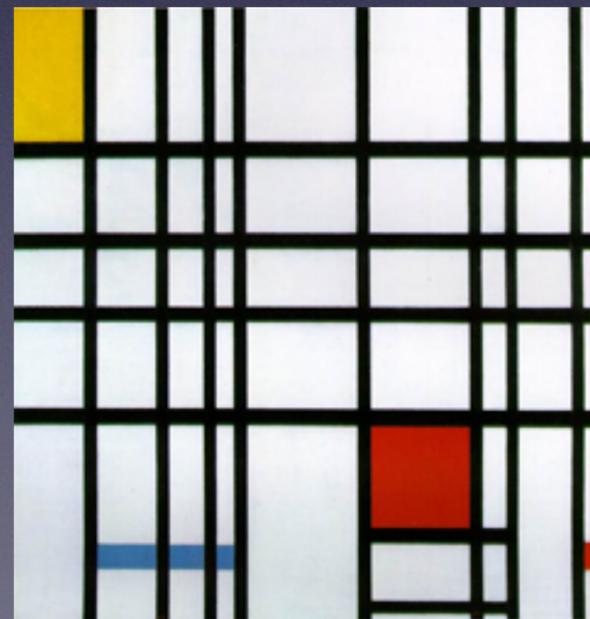




Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition VII*
1913, oil on canvas (Tretyakov Gallery,
Moscow)



Pablo Picasso, *Gertrude Stein*,
1906



Piet Mondrian, *Composition with Yellow, Blue, and Red*
1921, oil on canvas (Tate Gallery, London)

AN EXAMPLE: CLOSE READ

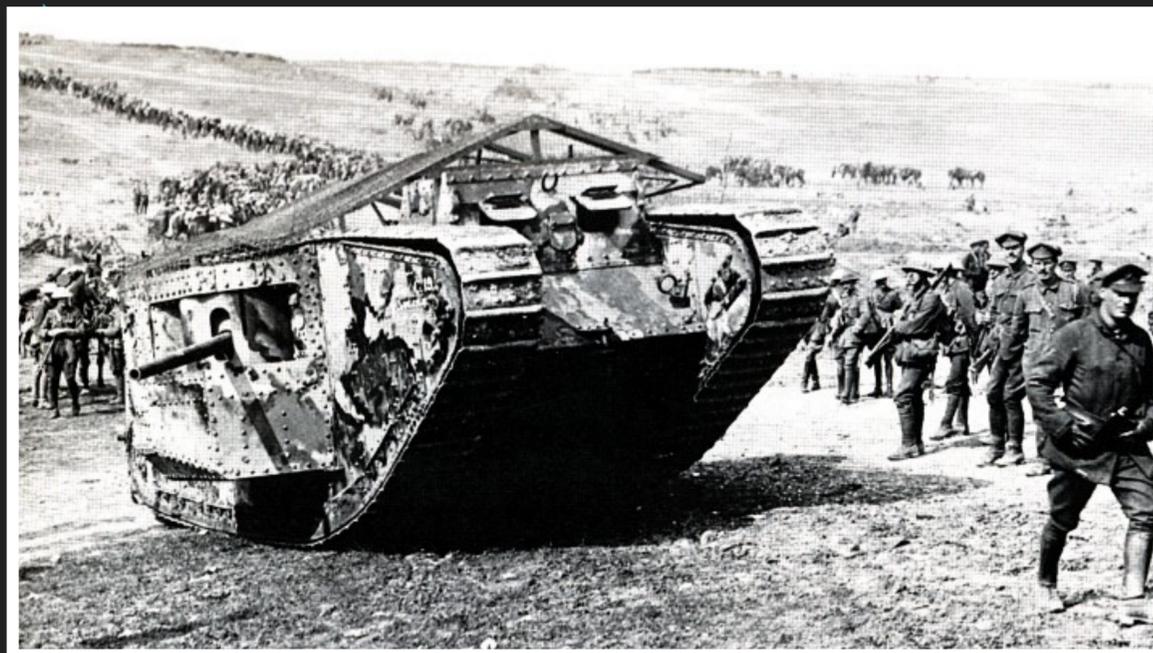
ARCHITECTURE



WHAT WAS MODERNISM?

BETWEEN THE WARS

- ▶ World War I (1914-1918)
 - ▶ The Great War, The War to End All Wars
 - ▶ mechanized warfare (gas, tanks, airplanes, radio)



ART AS AVANT-GARDE

- Burgeoning of **Movements, of Collectives:**

“the artists saw themselves as belonging to movements, to larger-than-individual pursuits guided by articulated principles”

–Michael Levenson, *Modernism* (Yale UP, 2011)

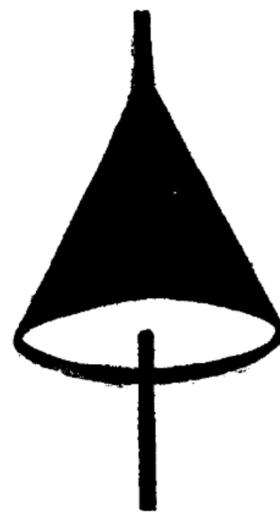
1914

- ▶ June 20, 1914 and July 15, 1915
- ▶ Wyndham Lewis and Ezra Pound



ICONOGRAPHY: LITERATURE AS ART/DESIGN

MANIFESTO.



TYPOGRAPHY & APPEARANCE

1

BLAST First (from politeness) **ENGLAND**

CURSE ITS CLIMATE FOR ITS SINS AND INFECTIONS

DISMAL SYMBOL, SET round our bodies,
of effeminate lout within.

VICTORIAN VAMPIRE, the **LONDON** cloud sucks
the **TOWN'S** heart.

A 1000 MILE LONG, 2 KILOMETER Deep

BODY OF WATER even, is pushed against us
from the Floridas. **TO MAKE US MILD.**

OFFICIOUS MOUNTAINS keep back **DRASTIC WINDS**

SO MUCH VAST MACHINERY TO PRODUCE

THE CURATE of "Eltham"
BRITANNIC ÆSTHETE
WILD NATURE CRANK
DOMESTICATED

POLICEMAN

LONDON COLISEUM

SOCIALIST-PLAYWRIGHT

DALY'S MUSICAL COMEDY

GAIETY CHORUS GIRL

TONKS

TV

VORTICIST MANIFESTO

MANIFESTO.

I.

- 1 Beyond Action and Reaction we would establish ourselves.
- 2 We start from opposite statements of a chosen world. Set up violent structure of adolescent clearness between two extremes.
- 3 We discharge ourselves on both sides.
- 4 We fight first on one side, then on the other, but always for the SAME cause, which is neither side or both sides and ours.
- 5 Mercenaries were always the best troops.
- 6 We are Primitive Mercenaries in the Modern World.

- ▶ Our Cause is NO-MAN'S.
- ▶ We set Humour at Humour's throat. Stir up Civil War among peaceful apes.
- ▶ We only want Humour if it has fought like Tragedy.
- ▶ We only want Tragedy if it can clench its side-muscles like hands on its belly, and bring to the surface a laugh like a bomb.

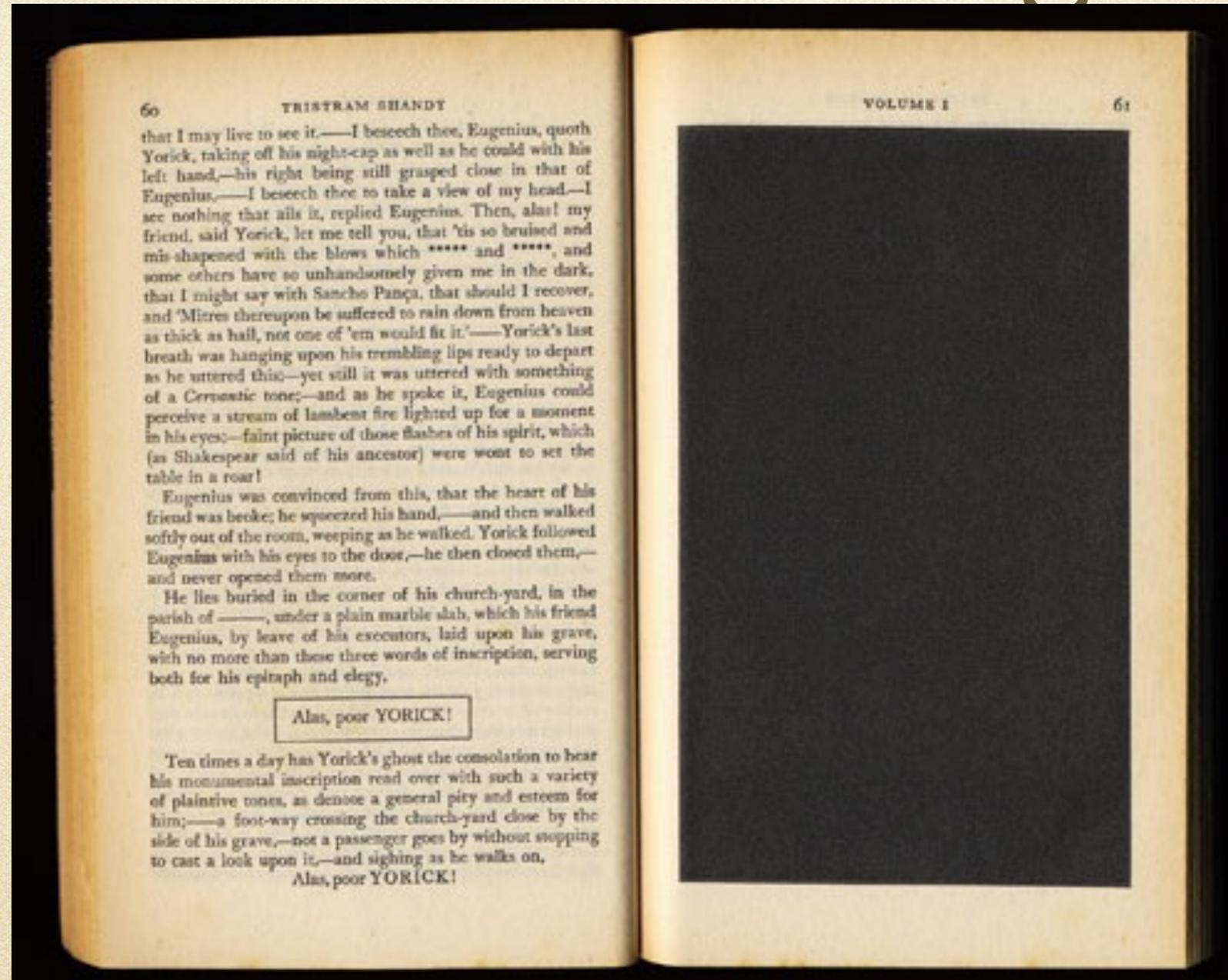
WYNDHAM LEWIS AS ARTIST

- ▶ "Workshop" (1914-5)



- ▶ "Ezra Pound" (1939)

The Black Page

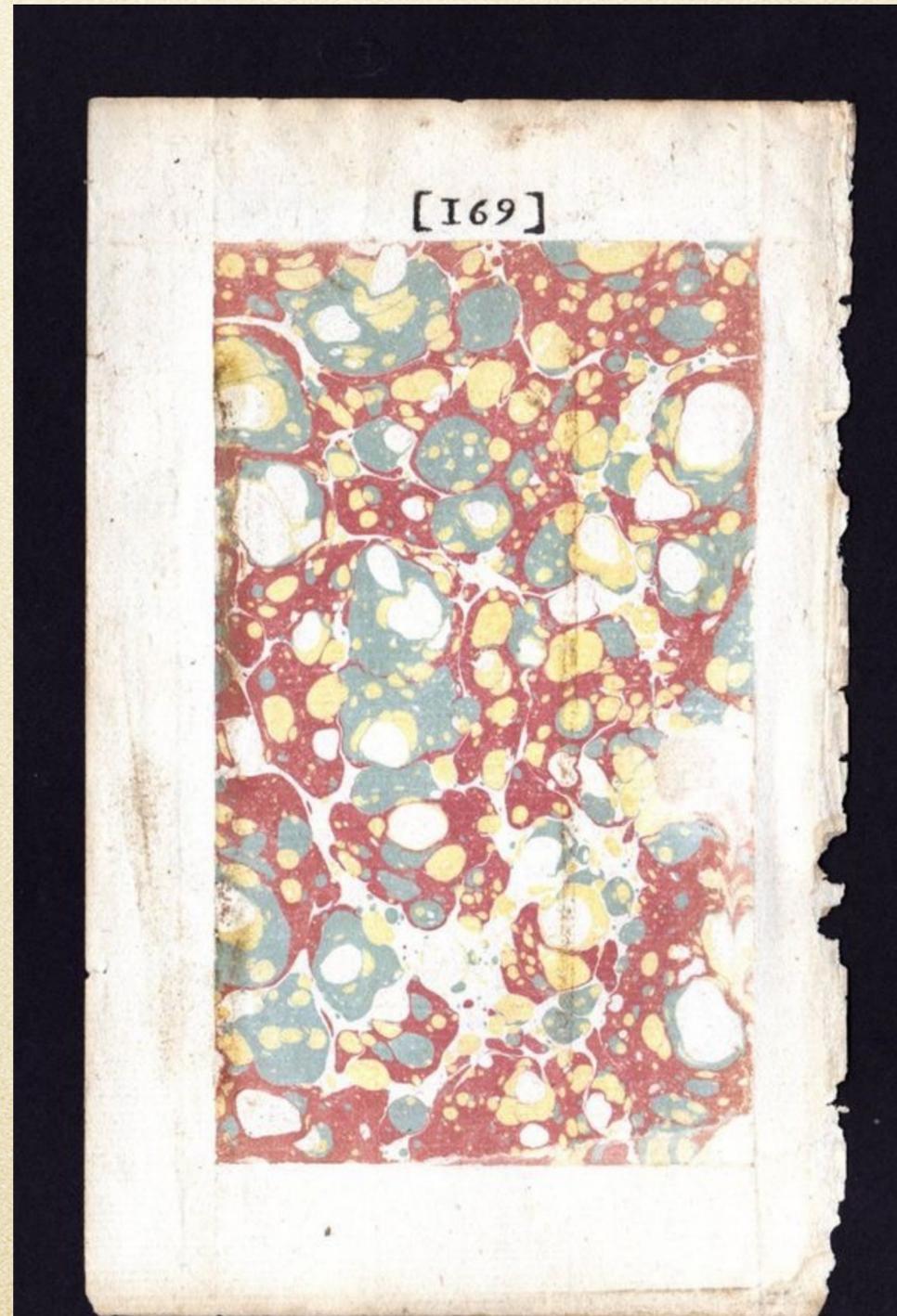


Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (published in nine volumes, 1759-1767)

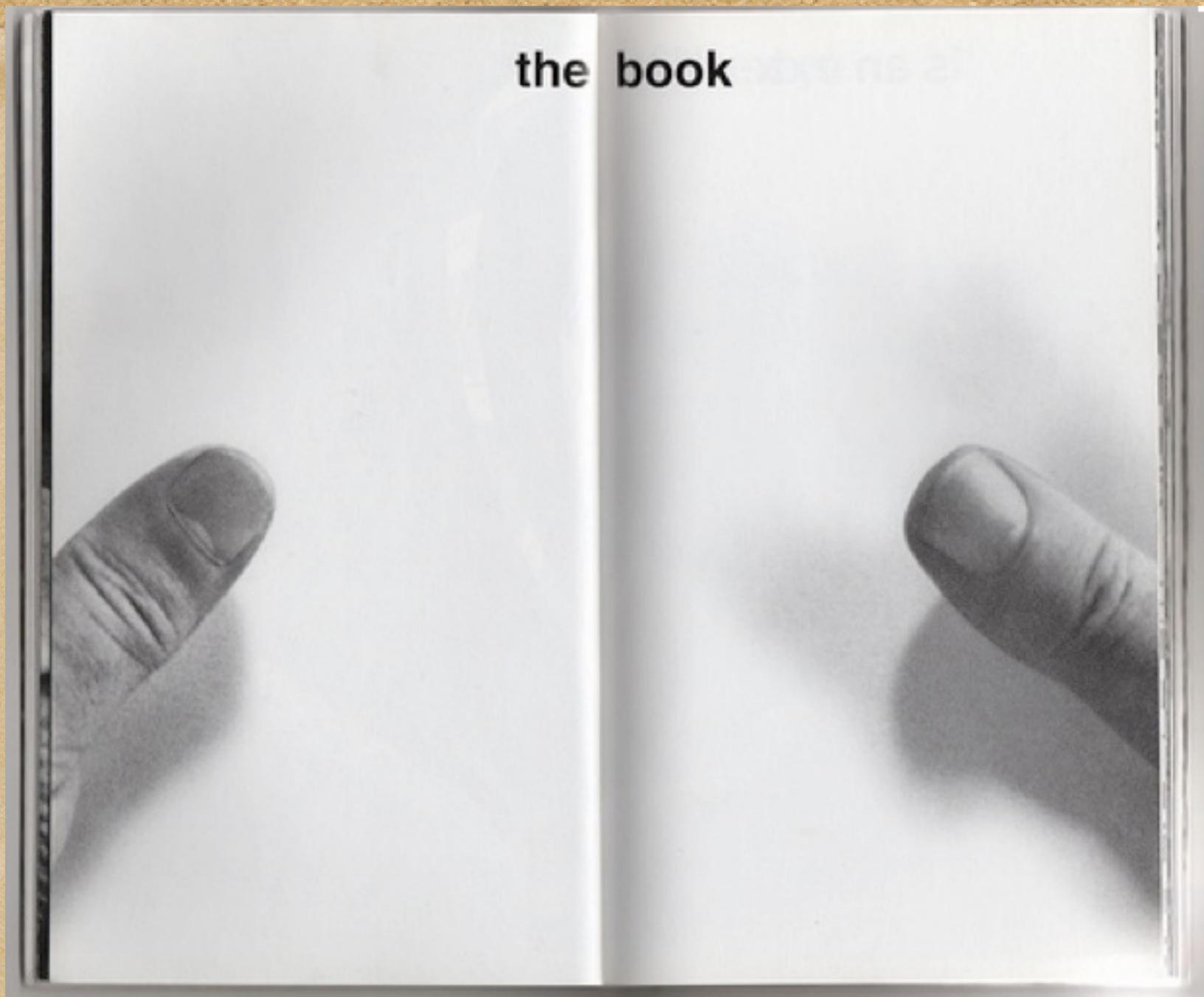
Marbled Page

Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (published in nine volumes, 1759-1767)

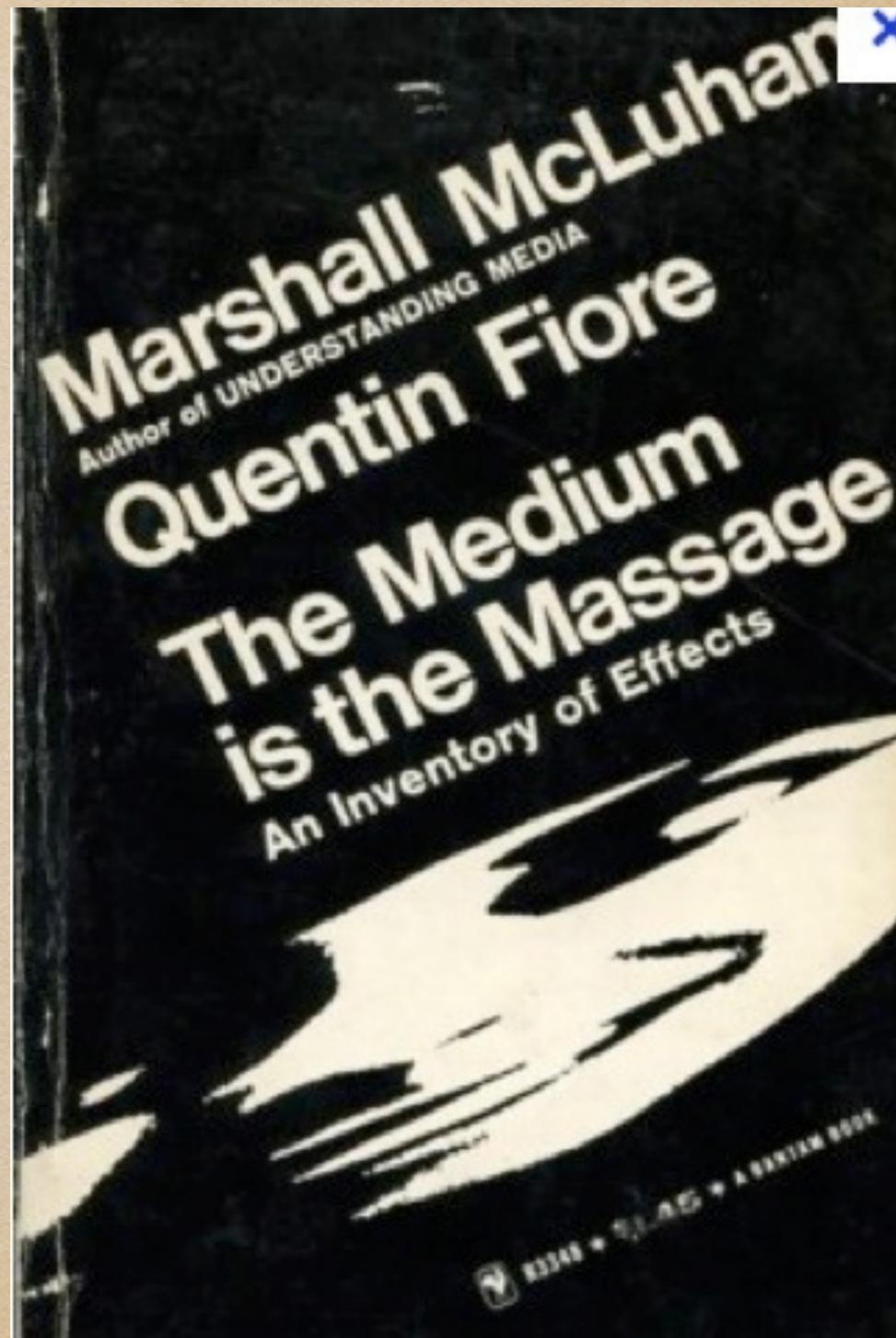
- first edition



the book



◆ 1967



Emily Dickinson

The way Hope builds his House

1481

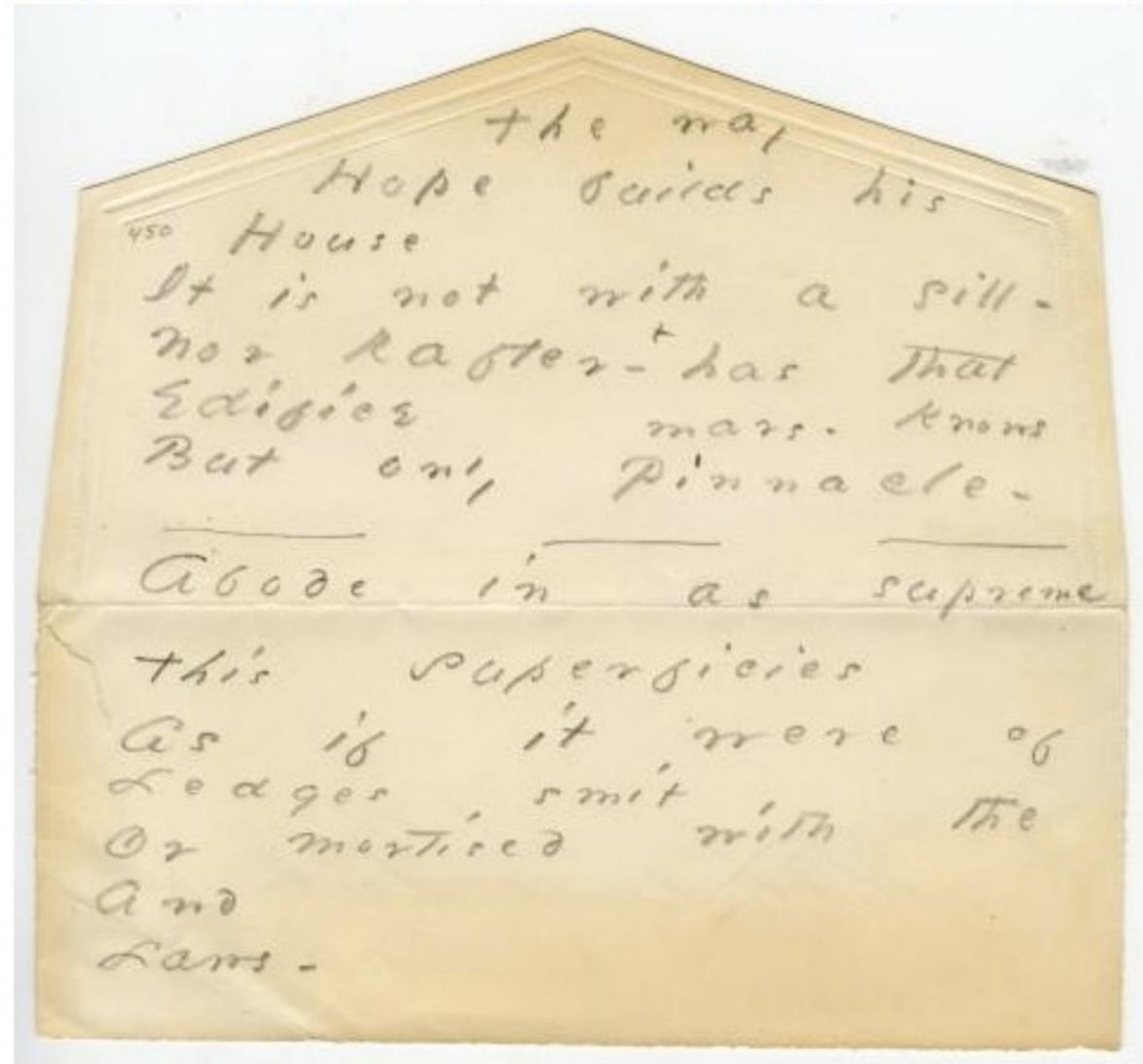
The way Hope builds his House
It is not with a sill—
Nor Rafter—has that Edifice
But only Pinnacle—

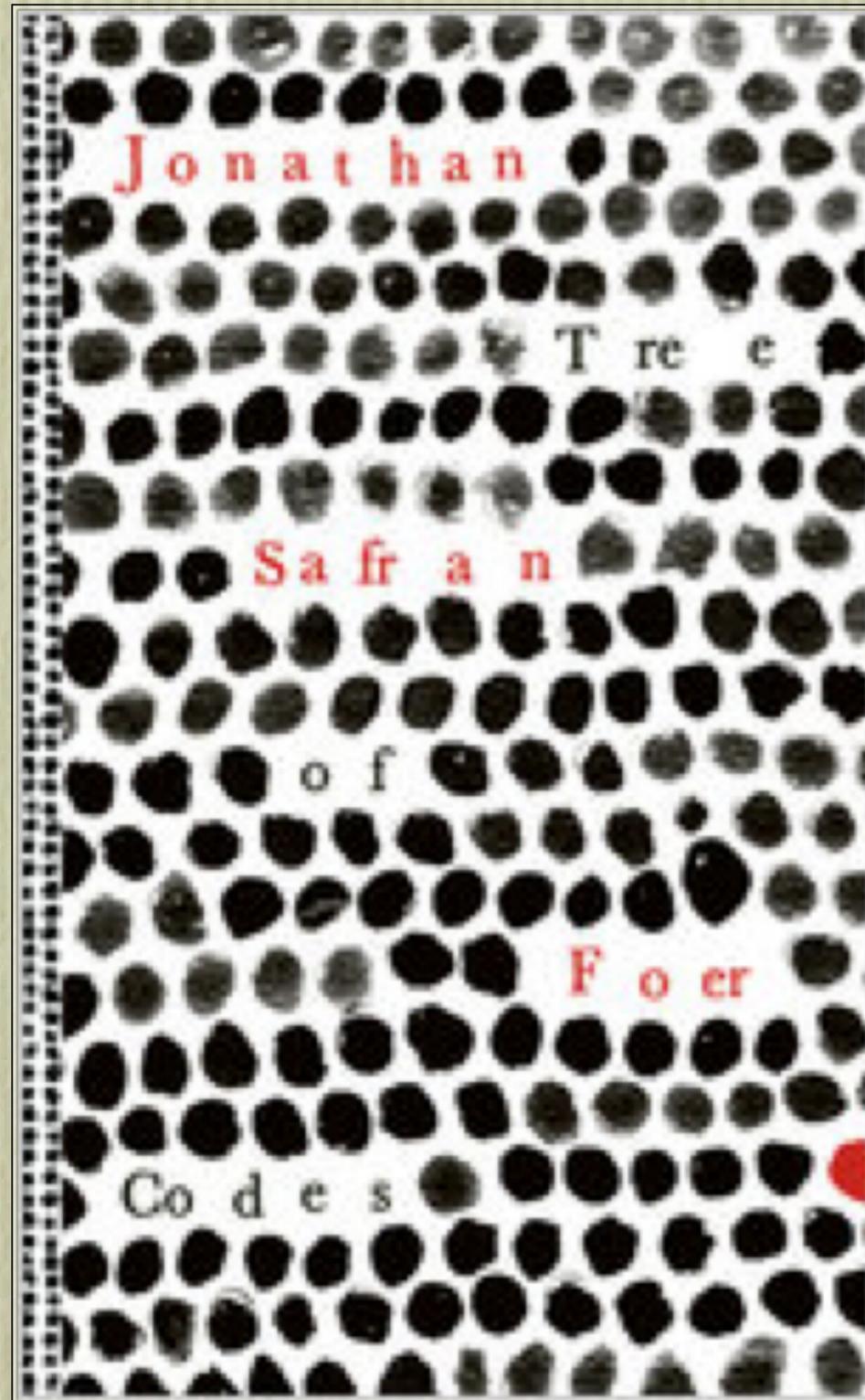
Abode in as supreme
This superficialities
As if it were of Ledges smit
Or mortised with the Laws—

Book: *The Complete Poems of Emily
Dickinson* by Emily Dickinson

ed0450

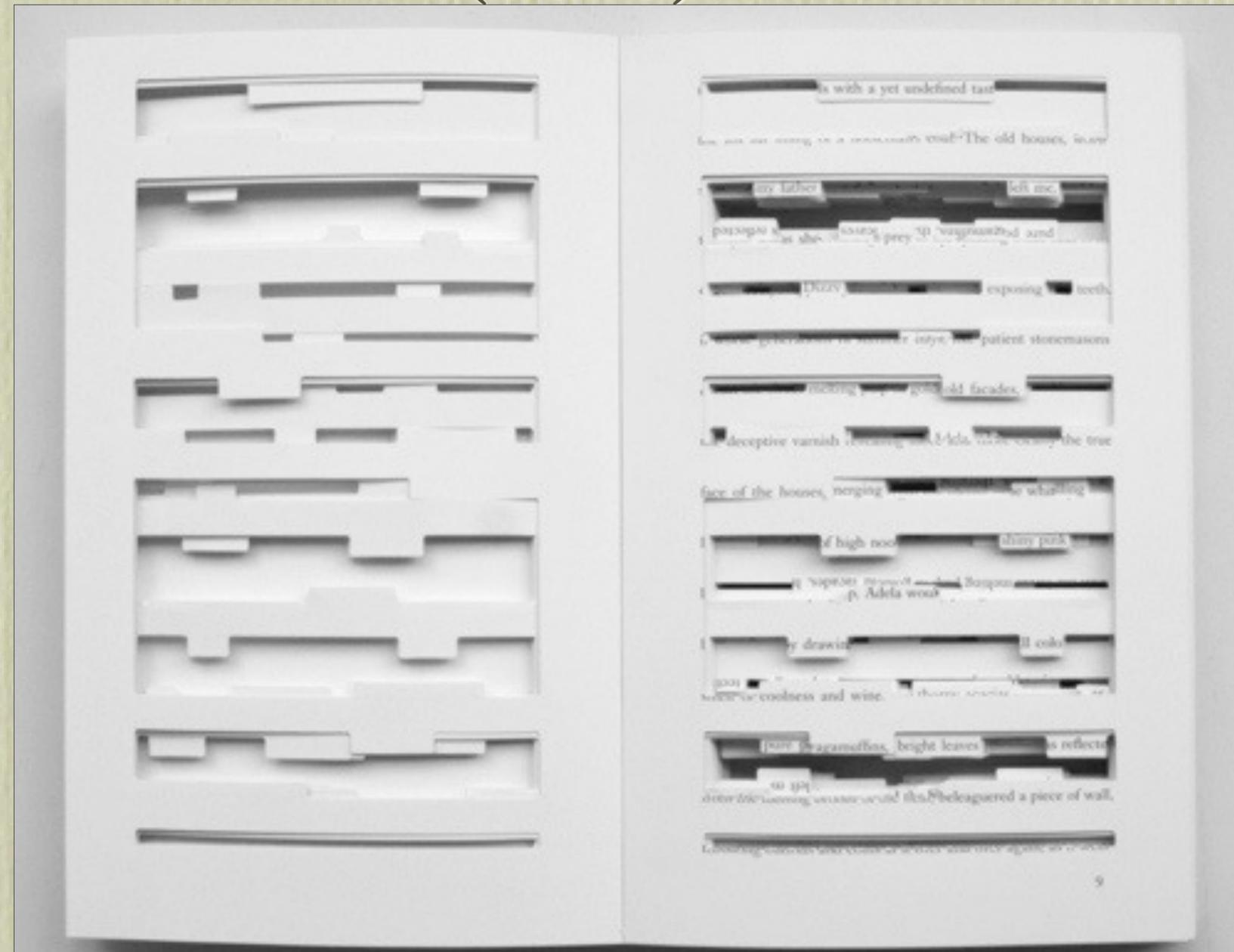
Emily Dickinson. "The way hope builds his house" (Franklin 151, AC 450)

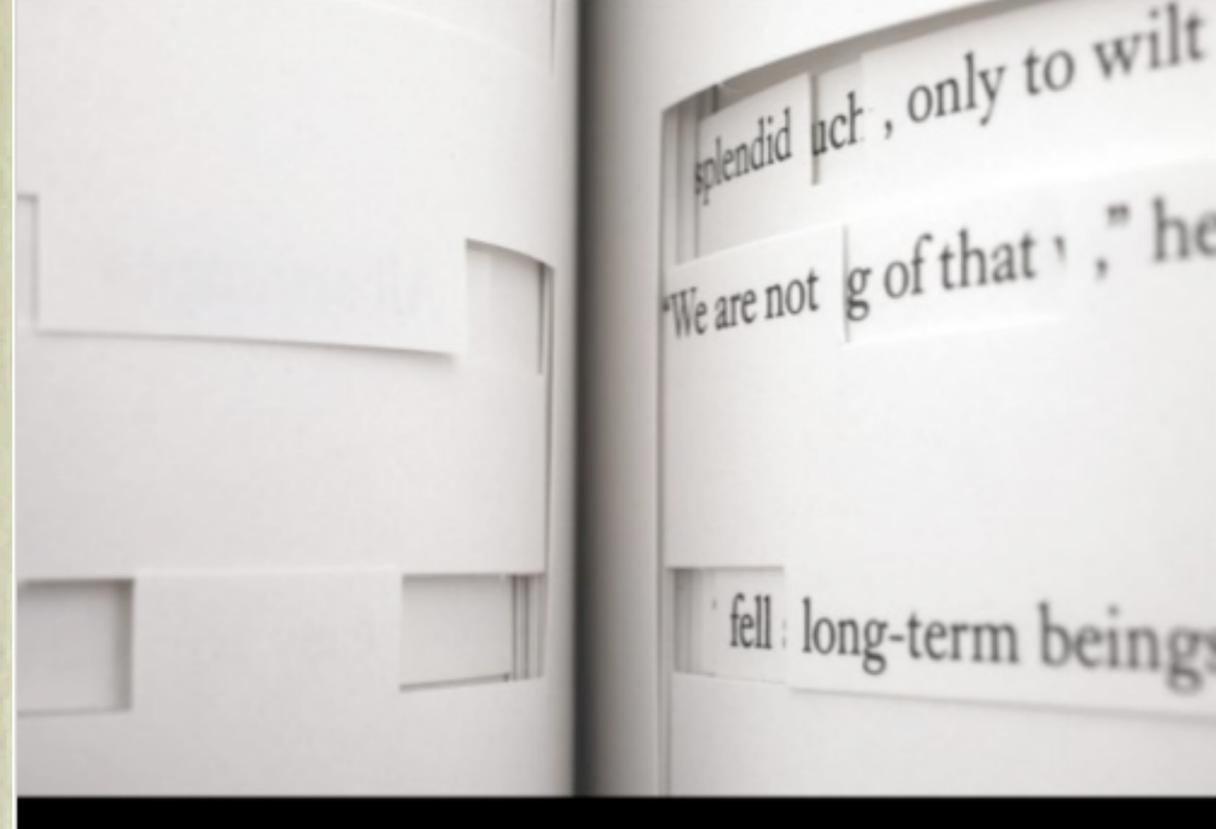
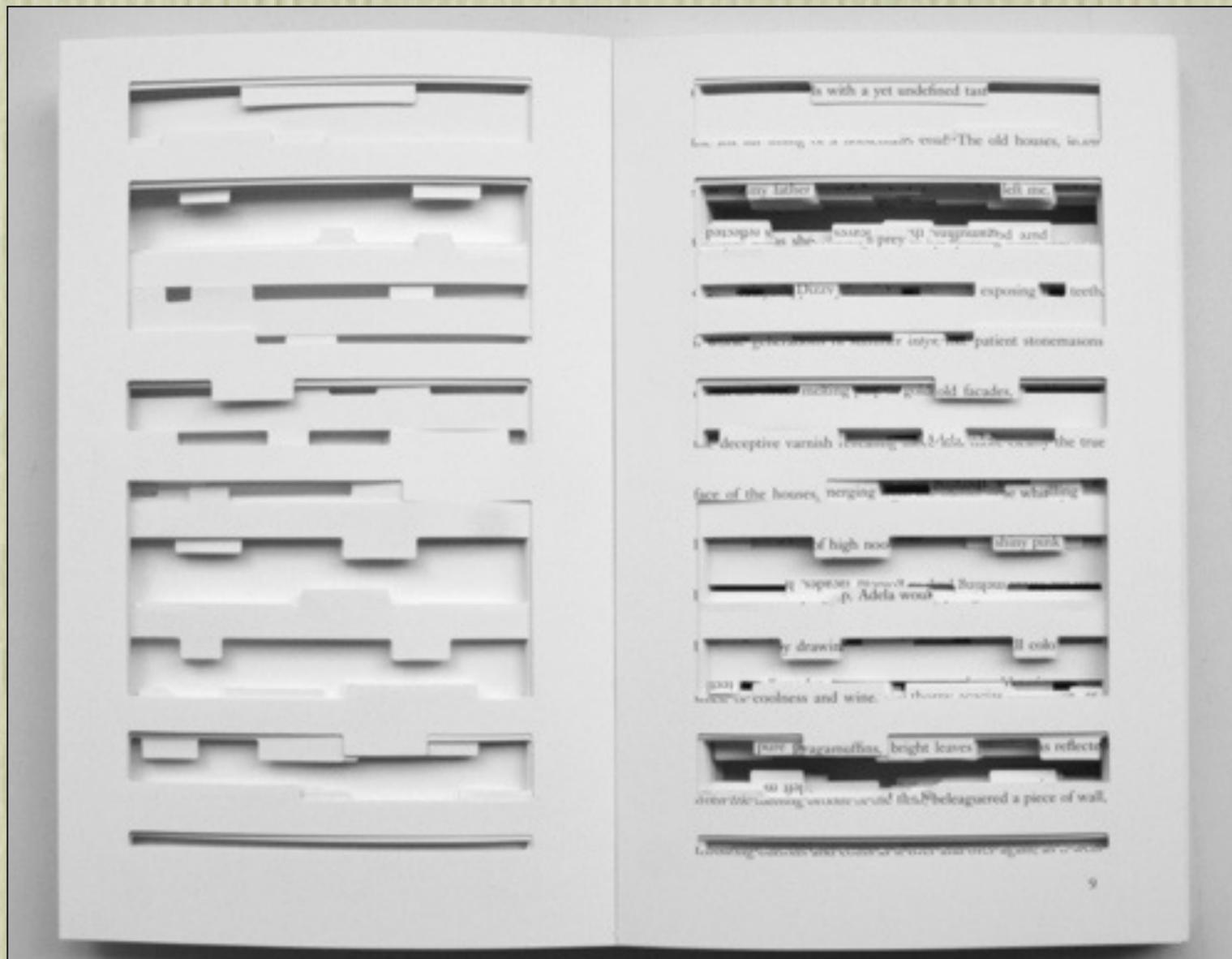




Tree of Codes (2010)
Jonathan Safran Foer

Johnathan Safran Foer, *Tree of Codes* (2010)





By Jonathan Safran Foer from *Visual Editions* (2010).



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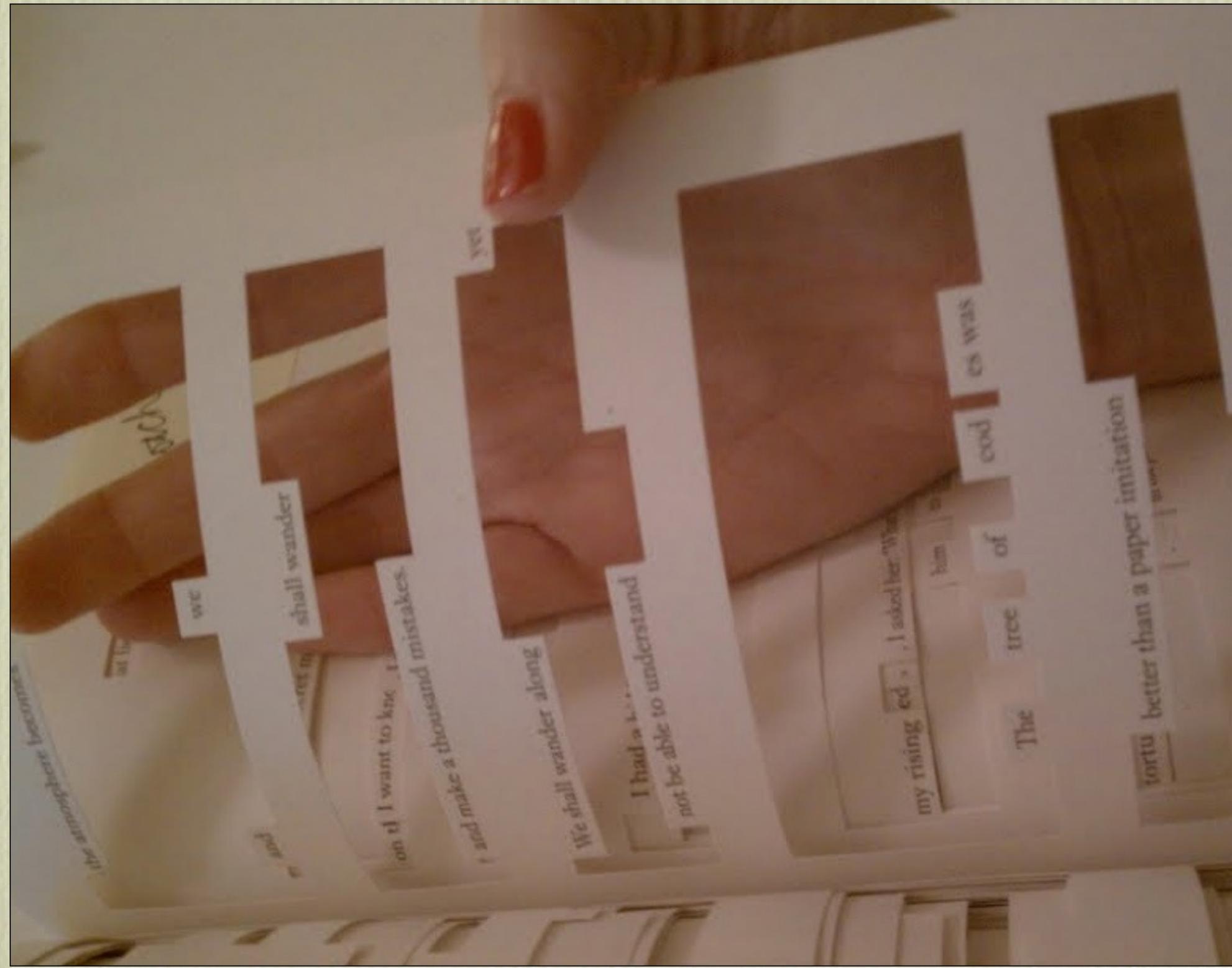
fallen asleep |
th children | greeted each other with |jar | masks | painte

on their faces [pain. | with we pas ; they smiled at each other

secret of The sleepin; smiles | |

“On the brink of the end of paper, I was attracted to the idea of a book that can’t forget it has a body.”

--Jonathan Safran Foer in a *New York Times* interview with Stephen Heller (11/24/2010)





Take aways/questions?