



## Literature in the Digital Age: From Close Reading to Digital Reading

### Video transcript

#### What is hyper reading? Part II

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In the last video tutorial, you were introduced to five hyper reading strategies outlined by James Sosnoski. But Sosnoski discusses not five, but eight hyper reading strategies so let me continue where we stopped. Sosnoski's sixth strategy is 'trespassing'. Sosnoski calls hyper readers 'textual burglars' because they tend to raid hyper-texts and cut and paste whatever they find interesting, using it for their own website or say, a student paper. Now, of course, the danger is plagiarism, but cutting and pasting passages from the world wide web and putting them to other uses is a widespread and, in many cases, highly useful activity. Sosnoski's seventh strategy is 'de-authorizing'. When we read a poem, a play, or a novel, we usually know who wrote it.

On the world wide web, authorship is in most cases much more difficult to determine. That is true for the world wide web more generally, not just for Wikipedia entries that have multiple authors. And hyper readers, for the most part, don't really care who authored a website. While websites are the intellectual property of their authors, hyper readers tend to de-authorize websites, treating them as if they were completely in the public domain. In fact, any link that a website has to another website is an act of de-authorizing that website by putting it to one's own uses. The eighth and final strategy Sosnoski outlines is 'fragmenting'.

Hyper readers tend not to read texts on the world wide web as they do essays or books. Instead, depending on their interests, they break them up into smaller units, those that are relevant to them. For instance, we might not trust the reliability of Wikipedia entries. So instead of reading the Wikipedia entry on Pound, we can skip right to the external links in the hope that we find something more authoritative and quotable, such as the Ezra Pound recordings at the University of Pennsylvania. And there again, we may select just one chunk, one audio recording of one poem, thus fragmenting the text. So, this is all I want to tell you about Sosnoski's eight hyper reading strategies.

In 2012, the eminent literary and cultural theorist Katherine Hayles published a book entitled "How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis". In it, she adds two additional hyper reading strategies to Sosnoski's list. So, the ninth hyper reading strategy is 'juxtaposing', where hyper readers



place one computer window next to one another to juxtapose and compare the two. For instance, reading the Wikipedia entry on Pound, we may stop at the entry's mentioning that Pound was responsible for the 1915 publication of T. S. Eliot's 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'.

And we may be tempted to have a look at that famous poem and instead of leaving the Wikipedia entry, we might want to open a separate window, read the poem or parts of it, and then return to the Wikipedia entry. With juxtaposing then, we read across two or more texts. 'Let us go then, you and I, when the evening is spread out against the sky like a patient etherized upon a table.' Hayles's second addition to Sosnoski's list of hyper reading strategies is 'scanning' and this we do whenever we rapidly read through a website to identify interesting parts.

For instance, while helping me prepare this MOOC, my research assistant Balázs Rapcsák scanned countless websites in search of images I could use for this course, including, I'm pretty sure, this Wikipedia entry. So, this concludes my overview of the 10 hyper reading strategies identified by James Sosnoski and Katherine Hayles. Which ones are you using?