The Fugue book:* when platforms don't let us escape literature

Through the joint reflection on *The Fugue*book* (ELC v.II, 2008), we —Anton(Ton) Ferret and Oreto Doménech, author and reader— will try to share our experience from both sides of the screen, technically and literary, about the issues raised in the Conference theme "Platform determinism, dependence and criticism". We would like to let our two voices have differentiated spaces in this article (Oreto has written epigraphs 1 and 3; Ton, 2 and 4, and both, the conclusion) because we aim to show the differences in a dialogue that reaches points in common. Our e-literature communities need spaces for dialogue in the post-pandemic era to move forward.

1. To what extent do platforms determine literary practice and genre? What we have read in platforms during the pre-pandemic age

Platforms were a space for communication and also for creation, and although the ethical, theoretical and creative debate had been present in the electronic literature community for many years, it seems that this unexpected multi cross-platform tsunami due to COVID-19 pandemic has left us in a kind of devastated and, paradoxically, crowded beach. Commitment as creators, readers and researchers is now more necessary than ever. We have to have a look behind us, but all is too recent to take a healthy and conscious distance. In this sense, *The Fugue* book*, thirteen years ago, transmitted reflections on both technological and literary areas that are now —with the ups and downs of the pandemic—significantly relevant.

> Contemporary western and westernized cultures have fully embraced Technic, an accomplished reality system that, as we hope to briefly show, is all-encompassing and deeply troubling. Reciprocally, the embrace has enabled Technic to bring forth a specific kind of culture that can be understood as a device whose primary aim is to perpetrate, expand and infuse its world-making powers into every realm of human existence. The embrace is a techno-serpent that bites its own tail. But what sort of techno-poison does the serpent's bite instill? (...) Technological pharmacology is a question of dosage, a question of thresholds. Under a certain threshold, technology cures the wound of human vulnerability. Above that threshold, it becomes an uncontrollable fractal, capable of destroying our bodies and our ecosystems, like a cancer out of control. (Tisselli & Torres 2020)

But, how to move towards an ethics of sustainability in digital creativity? We mean an ethics able to contribute and extend the reading of digital literary works in order to increase widely digital literacy that, without any doubt, has to be at the base of the construction of the mature and critical societies that we want in the digital age. The media-specific analysis that Hayles (2004) proposed to incorporate into the academy with didactic, visionary and committed disposition has suddenly become, due to great tribulations worldwide, not only a skill but an urgent approach that must be spread with impetus, both from the perspective of creators or artists and from the field of research, hermeneutics and the teaching of languages and cultures at all levels. And this ability that we still have and, perhaps forever, —by the privilege of reading digital transformations very close to the moment they are taking place— to learn, develop and teach from the point of view of theorizing and building of knowledge (creation, understanding, dissemination, preservation, teaching and reading of digital literary works) must be filtered by an ethical and sustainable view. We have now a technological emergency because not only climate is on the edge (Ávila, 2018).

Before reading *The Fugue* book* we had to give permission to the work to send us private emails. Reading became the mirage of a dialogue through a fake correspondence. We

interacted with the story through the links contained in the emails and through which we accessed other places in cyberspace. These were places where we wandered and where we became *voyeurs* in the midst of a great mess caused by a false and liar "double": the fiction developed being "ourselves" also characters of *The Fugue* book.*

In the first email we received, someone who had our name accused us of plagiarizing a story of which we would find up to three identical versions. Thus we discovered that our alter ego was involved in the life of Adelaida Rius whom we supposedly had left abandoned in a moment of illness and desperation, even though she had always shown us her support and friendship to the point of vehemently defending our literary authorship in a forum for academic debate! Dangerous strategy, depending on how, in some university spaces... We, accused and involved with our unfolding identity, were surprisingly multiplying and all of our other "selves" appeared all of a sudden on Facebook, along with our lifelong friends, who also became part of the fiction. This is how we discovered our friends were dying one by one, victims of a competition in writing styles, murdered by a literary assassin who, looking closely, could be ourselves. Again we stayed alone, face to face with ourselves, and realize we were in fact an abandoned self in front of our screen.

Further, in *The Fugue* Book,* an ecology of textual genres and platforms was anthologized as a literary fiction, enhancing what fiction explained to give credibility to the narrative plot. The suspension of reality was built on both sides of the screen, because the platforms on which we read the work referred to the specific space they occupied in our lives though. The use of this wide range of platforms, likewise, was the literary mechanism by which the author placed at the center the critical discussion about the platforms themselves and how we were communicating through them. The result was formulated, moreover, on an obvious literary will: there was no morality or lesson, but humor, comedy, caricature, and a little very well-dosed satire; all forms of irony. Experiencing the literary work while reading it became then a step-by-step metadiscursive reflection made on the literary fact inserted in the historical and social fact of the digital age.

The Fugue* book had a beginning and an end that were connected in a kind of uroboro —a tiny literary toy, perhaps, but a toy that contained all the power of the symbol— "a serpent or a dragon biting its own tail." The literary play began with ourselves and the journey through emails, blogs, forums and social networks (accompanied by our doubles) took us, at the end of the road, to the same liquid and voluble medium of the beginning, not without danger but not alien to the magnificence. Digital literature became a mirror capable of reflecting the human condition and the place where we found ourselves alone again, as in the verses of American poet Henry W. Longfellow (1893) with which *The Fugue* book* finished:

> Ships that pass in the night, and speak each other in passing,
> Only a signal shown and a distant voice in the darkness;
> So on the ocean of life we pass and speak one another,
> Only a look and a voice, then darkness again and a silence.
>
> (*The Theologian's Tale: Elizabeth*)

Besides the impersonation of identity, the classical subject on the double, and plagiarism in the network, *The Fugue* book* contained a narrative diversion and a serious analogy with how human relations became, as well as a questioning on what was and is essential to them beyond time and space in the digital age, before and now.

2. To what extent are the forms and genres of electronic literature limited by our dependence on particular platforms? Obsolescence: a literary lockdown due to a platform virus?

It is true that digital literature has allowed us to free ourselves from the prison of paper if we think about the bond of the body with the literary work. With digital literature this connection of the body with the literary work opened up to the possibility for completing the relationship between literature and the merely intellectual self that conventional literature offered with a more holistic and performative interdependence: an alliance with the totality of the self, body and intellect.

Yet, that opportunity was rather a misleading paradise for the authors as every technological door might be closed one day with a lock called obsolescence. Perhaps it was a well-deserved chastisement: openness to the body received the same punishment that the body carries with itself, that is, decrepitude. Below, I assess this issue in five aspects of technology creation onto *The Fugue* book*: interaction, multimedia, voice technologies and the use of social platforms such as Facebook —obtaining personal data and about operation in their system.

Electronic literature escapes the eye and introduces the ability to break linearity through the eye movement or the use of fingers (touch) that modify or recombine elements. The interaction with the work on paper had already been suggested by authors such as Llull —13th century— (Borràs: 2012) and others (Di Rosario: 2011). These early intuitions triumphed with interactivity, which we find articulated for example, with the hypertext. However, the ability to interact with the work multiplied despite paying a technological price: interactivity meant having to choose a technology and even a platform. The most feasible methods of generating current interactivity revolve around HTML5 —the fact that it carries a 5 already indicates that it is an evolving technology and that therefore 4 previous versions of HTML have already disappeared. Yet there are also tools for interactivity such as Flash technology, Multimedia Designer (MMD) and so many others that have become lifeless. If we embarked on technology, we were taken prisoners as well. And what was once an open door became a prison, containing too many digital literature works.

The same goes for multimedia, which also opens a new correlation with the body by broadening the gaze to transcend the realm of the words and opens the literary work to a new relation with the body playing with sounds. About literary works on paper that include multimedia, we could also find marginal or reduced ones in children's literature, those that reproduce sounds or music on some pages or by some characters. The advent of multimedia tools has also been an open door that has been closed as they have passed away, as is the case of the first tool I used: Mediachance Multimedia Builder. The fact that it was limited to creating exe files for Windows made this tool obsolete by the time applications started running in the cloud: the opened and locked door effect we've already discussed. The aforementioned happened when programs to generate Flash files were authored, which, since it became a standard, have had a massive impact.

Another tool used in *The Fugue* book* is speech synthesis (TTS). Language technologies also establish a new relationship with the body as the reader's action causes literary texts or others to be generated and the voice to say some things (not always the same, as it happens, for example in audiobooks). And also in this case, the technology has implied an opening and has ended in a closure due to the evolution and improvement of technologies. In the case of Catalan language, moreover, the transition from technologies based on algorithms and statistics to technologies based on deep learning has been as quick as that of global languages. The tools I introduced in *The Fugue* book* have also become obsolete and the quality of the voice, which between 2008 and 2015 could be considered acceptable,

today would be perceived as ridiculous. There are new voices, of recent creation, but they entail a very complicated global update of my electronic literary work.

When I wrote *The Fugue* book* (2008) *Facebook* had recently arrived in Europe and at that time it allowed me to use a very simple programming language that was easily linked to the interactive story and combine the personal data of the people who used it (hobbies , friends, personal information of all kinds, etc.) with very few legal and technological restrictions. This opened the door for me to the core idea of the literary work: to turn the reader into a character and also, in some way, into an author. Yet this entailed further pressure since suddenly the reader received interpellations related to authorship and alleged plagiarism, opinions in forums, and so on. Getting the readers personal details and their friends list –people who became secondary characters— was a golden opportunity to accentuate these enveloping feelings.

And that was an open door that it was closed soon. Firstly, because every year or two Facebook changed the APIs and had to reprogram an important part of the work and, secondly, because the same thing that denounced *The Fugue* book*—the futility of the self at a time when personal information was at the mercy of everyone on the platforms— became a social concern that ended up forcing Zuckerberg to make systems more secure and much more restrictive in the use of personal data. This ended up killing *The Fugue* book*. It was impossible for me, as an author, to keep up with the developments that Facebook demanded and without the capture of personal data the work lost a basic structural element.

Perhaps someone may think that it was a delusion to trust that this state of affairs would be maintained indefinitely, but although I sensed that this could change technologically, I could not imagine at that moment that what was opening up—the availability of data (which, in fact, was explicitly given in the permits)—would be the subject of a social response that would radically change things, paradoxically, according to the vulnerability and erosion in the personal identity that the work denounced (keep in mind that I also opted for the Facebook Connect system to "log in" the reader). The use of platforms enriches the literary possibilities but, as with other technologies and for various reasons, it can become a handicap for their permanence. Today *The Fugue* book* would have to be severely modified if to be read again.

There is another point in which the platform also reproduces the double facet opportunity/danger game and it is in that of betrayal to the word. When a technology platform allows a good integration of multimedia elements, the temptation to use them to increase the spectacular can lead us to forget the centrality of the word and leave it on the margins to give prime importance to the image, the video, the musical audio, etc. A work can cease to be literary if it is devoted entirely to multimedia, and this loses it to the world of letters without a problem of obsolescence. In this case it is not a determinism but a temptation conditioned and provoked also by the platforms.

3. **To what extent do literary practices work against the grain of platforms or reshape them? How is electronic literature critical on and of platforms? From technology to the pragmatics of discourse: from the textual genre to digital life**

In *The Fugue* book* the social context relating to the digital age was involved both in the subject matter and in the support and reading of the work itself, and even, as the author has explained, in the vanishing of the literary work. The plot, however, before he died was very much alive with experiences of everyday life that nurtured it through digital mechanisms—e-mail privacy, entertainment or information on blogs, discussing or

expertizing in forums, friendship and family on *Facebook…* And since in the network we relate through various textual sequences as we do in life, the narrative fiction in *The Fugue* book* welcomed intertextuality, metaliterature, collages and a mixture of different languages and texts. As a result of all, the diversity of digital genres, traditional ones, spaces and platforms formed altogether a textual ecosystem that was perceived by the reader as a kind of narrative intergender, and thus, despite the fragmentation and compartmentalization of the platforms and spaces, all of them were perceived and read as a unique narrative fiction. *The Fugue* book* was a narrative hypertext made of spaces, identities and ways of communication with each other, structured as a journey with a beginning and an end, which contained, in addition, a critical and philosophical background that developed as a talented literary work.

The mosaic of texts used in this story—initially strange to literary creation but absolutely present in our daily digital life—placed us in a familiarity that surprised and amused us. Intrusion, due to what we expected from that specific space, made the fiction plausible and, therefore, we dived deeper into the plot. The hypertext—the represented literary work that was *The Fugue* book*— made us perceive reading as a spatial journey that we traveled along, which caused us to experience reading as a unique and personal act. Creating a fictional narrative using different textual and literary genres, moreover, evidenced the quality of genres as changing products, born out of a specific time and space, throughout the history of literature.

> Historical, social and cultural circumstances are what set in motion the updating mechanism of a literary genre in history [...]. The generic category, in this sense, is essentially historical in that it implies not only a diachronic serialization but also (and both from the reception and from the perspective of production) a demand for progress: progress that, far from the pure temporal continuation, it manifests itself as a "critical function" of de-constructing and re-constructing the artistic matter from which it starts. Tradition and originality in dialectical relation. Even more: destruction and reconstruction with a refunctionalization of demolition materials. (Salvador 1984)

Is it possible for the narrative to reconfigure the platforms? The story told in *The Fugue* book,* as above mentioned, had a beginning, a development and an end. The beginning was the entry into our privacy, the usurpation of our identity, and the intrusion into our email inboxes. This first incidents dragged us to a constant zigzag that went from us to others, from our intimacy to social networks, from private space to different public spaces and, when the end came, we were forced to discard, to eliminate all our relationships and to find the only culprit in an unfortunate situation (will it be us?). Again we found ourselves alone with ourselves like ships that pass in the night...

In that sense, *The Fugue* book* reconfigured the use, meaning and purpose, and even, through irony and humor, also the legitimacy of the platforms. A critical reflection through intelligent hygiene mechanisms —such as the different forms of irony— made us keep in mind, while reading, issues such as identity, deception and hypocrisy, as well as the way we communicate through platforms and, definitively, a variety of ethical coexistence issues specific to the digital age we live through.

Humor in *The Fugue* book* was therefore essential to understanding the position of the "self" in relation to others. For this reason, Ferret used the medium he criticized as if the rhetorical figure of irony were made up of the same platforms on which we read the work. A central positioned irony that acted, in the literary game, as a mechanism of seduction of the reader and as a general attitude towards life and media—skepticism, questioning and satire.

> Irony is surely a privileged figure for pragmatists, who have clearly determined that it cannot be explained without regard to its pragmatic dimension. Obviously there can be

no irony without context (which reveals the ironic sense of the expression) and even, for some, there is no irony without victim (perlocutionary effect of attack). (...) But this is nuanced, unless we stretch the concept of victim or object of attack to the point of making it applicable to social conventions or to the same linguistic institutional norms against which irony or humor would be a revulsive halfway between aggression and pure defense. (Salvador 1984)

The breaking of the rules established between us and the Internet, between privacy and public life, between the individual and society were, in *The Fugue* book*, a thread suspended in the air where we trod as reading tightrope walkers in the discovery of the adventure we lived between unknown characters connected with our digital "double". The implications or implicit information that we had to infer from the extralinguistic context (the platforms) were, in addition, the essential pragmatic element for the conveyance of the rhetorical figure of irony, that made all these textual fragments in different platforms worked as parts of a sole fiction.

Textual pragmatics legitimized irony as the predominant rhetorical figure in the narrative and gave us the keys to the literary reading of the work. The model reader became much more specialized and complete, because reading this literary work without the basic digital literacy might become a chimera. The reading baggage—the reading intertext (Mendoza-Fillola 2008)—had to be broader and, at the same time, more concrete and more up-to-date. Fundamental aspects of this literary work could not be understood if we were not active web residents (White & Le Cornu 2011). While reading *The Fugue* book* we were consciously experiencing the relationship between text and context, or reflecting on how we move in public and private spaces or, perhaps, thinking about the distance between our real self and the fictitious selves we can create in cyberspace. Ferret also brought us to a literary scholarly context in which a concept that is at the heart of literature was treated without theorizing and with effective irony—authorship.

> Central to repositioning critical inquiry, so it can attend to the specificity of the medium, is a more robust notion of materiality. Materiality is reconceptualized as the interplay between a text's physical characteristics and its signifying strategies, a move that entwines instantiation and signification at the outset. This definition opens the possibility of considering texts as embodied entities while still maintaining a central focus on interpretation. It makes materiality an emergent property, so that it cannot be specified in advance, as if it were a pregiven entity. Rather, materiality is open to debate and interpretation, ensuring that discussions about the text's ''meaning'' will also take into account its physical specificity as well (Hayles 2008).

And how will other digital works be understood over time and changes on different platforms even though they can still be read because they have been preserved?

4. And how can we best archive and preserve platform-dependent e-lit? Creation and community: ethics, preservation and sustainability after the pandemic

Can we imagine a standardization of genres and technologies that would allow us to update them all? The big standard (Flash) is the one that has generated the vastest disaster, which has affected a large part of all digital works.

From a sustainable point of view, standardization is basic. A good example of how to address it technologically is the current success of WordPress. In this case, it is a blog manager clearly focused on the word and the spread of the word as its name implies but,

despite this textual orientation and the press metaphor, WordPress has taken the step to overcome the rear-view effect that Mc Luhan saw in the emergence of new technologies (any technology tends to mimic precedents) with the use of plugins (Mc Luhan 1994). Plugins can be developed by any person or company if they do so with Wordpress standards and they allow them to provide the work with everything we want: interactivity, access to platforms, access to external data, multimedia, etc. Another important concept is related to shortcode, that is, the possibility of invoking, within the text by entering a word in brackets, a subordinate application that must make a compatible return.

A standardization of digital literature in the style of WordPress is positive in the sense that it allows for joint updating, allows sharing resources—like those who share rhetorical figures—and only makes each author responsible for those their own and specific pieces. Unfortunately, the use I have made of it as an author—see a small example in *Usa'm Musa*—does not favor standardization as often. Every piece I write asks me for an interactive feature that forces me to create some little different and often single-use script, and this weird behavior leads me to the ephemeral. However, if all authors used standard systems that included certain global automatic update guarantees, this would preserve their work.

On the other hand, perhaps a different solution of a more global nature and with an artistic and less technological look can be approached. Think on the digital author elaborates, not the complete programming of his work but a libretto or script (possibly the concept would be closer to the libretto) on which a multimedia player would materialize according to living technologies at all times. This means that the writer writes a libretto in 2021 and makes it available (under the conditions deemed appropriate) to multimedia developers and programmers, who would make an adaptation according to the technologies of 2021 or—if the work maintained the literary quality—of 2041 or, maybe, 2221. It is clear that this would imply the loss of the personal and unique charm of experimenting as well as the literary scratching in the code which is one of the elements that has distinguished an important part of digital literature as an intellectual adventure in recent years. Instead, this solution would allow us to deepen into the corporeality of the digital literature work as the interfaces are getting closer to the body, the skin, the sensory organs... without the above mentioned penalty of decrepitude.

Moreover, both solutions or a blend of them would allow a dynamic of editing. Publishers/distributors could have the platforms and establish conditions of consumption and the publishers themselves would ensure the preservation of the work. There could also be public deposits to guarantee their conservation.

And yet, there will always be the huge need for many authors to program, as part of the creative process itself, and this would represent a Trojan horse for these attempts. In fact, of the two works I have written with a certain impact, *Return to the Comallega* and *The Fugue* book* (ELC vol. II), what makes its continuity more problematic is the extreme experimentation that always entails a literary and technological rupture.

5. Conclusion. What do we have? What do we want? A dialogue across the screen

As a writer I believe that *The Fugue* book* enabled the reader to access to elements that are only feasible in the digital world, tempters of opportunities that became coffins for us because of their close connection to certain technologies or platforms. Thus, the opportunity to use technologies and platforms with great features in the integration of media or interactivity has become a problem affected by technological obsolescence, as it is the case

of Flash, or the change in the conditions of the APIs on Facebook, two cases fully relevant to *The Fugue* book*.

On the other hand, access to the reader's personal data opened up exciting perspectives from a literary point of view insofar as it allowed the reader's reality to be mixed with narrative fiction. In return, this also had a function of unconscious criticism that guided the reader to reflect on the risk that all that information ran on the Internet to the point of being able to attribute falsehoods. In this case, the social awareness of privacy issues has led to platforms limiting access to data and, therefore, the triumph of the *ethos* of the literary work has meant the end of *pathos* as it has made it impossible to read the work. Meanwhile, reality led us to an extreme that the work itself was already pointing at: the arrival of deep fakes.

A third less deterministic—but not less important aspect related to technologies and platforms— was the danger of killing the logos to make the pathos brighter, that is, suffocating the word in a slump of purely visual and aesthetic technologies. Authors still has the reins in their hands and must be able to swing around everything done around the word.

As readers, *The Fugue* book* required from us an unusual commitment, not needed until then to read literary works. This was an extraordinary reading pact that involved much more than just accepting the plausibility of what we were being told:

> This game is a particular type of speech act, a way of doing things with words: playing with words, with aesthetic will, in creating images by similarity. And this is a central mechanism in poetic texts. Lotman devotes a few juicy pages to the problem of the connection between playful models and artistic models. The game, for him, basically consists of locating the player's behavior in a double plane: "The player must remember that he participates in a conventional, non-authentic situation (the child remembers that the tiger is a toy and do not fear it) and at the same time has to do not remember it (in the game the child considers that the toy tiger is alive)". (Salvador 1984)

This was a game where the centrality of the word—in narrative fiction but also in the background of philosophical inquiry supported by irony—made that, in multimedia, the interaction with available data, language technologies and data provided by the reader seemed like fun. But in reality there was a major ethical dilemma around having to choose how literary fiction could be constructed by taking advantage of platforms but without becoming one of them. What to do with the data collected by the work, which was data provided by readers?

Consequently, the narrative code through which *The Fugue* book* spoke—the platforms with its precise rules of the game- worked as an act of performative speech, as it informed us, incited, asked, convinced and included us in a dialogue. Just performing, the act of speaking, which was the text of the narrative fiction, the interactivity was as effective as when we promise something to someone and the mere utterance of the promise makes it effective. Yet, the data was never stored anywhere. Otherwise, each time the work were read, the reader's data would be projected by the work on the reader. After reading, data faded and nothing was left for a next reading in which, if we wanted to reread *The Fugue * book*, the mirage of usurpation began anew.

> Technological adoption, by contrast, can be understood as a process of de-proletarization. Adoption is an active strategy of transformation, a subversive power hiding within the entity it refuses to conform to. In order to de-proletarize digital technologies, one needs to fight the obsolescence of their forms, making them visible and freely available. We argue that electronic literature should be based on kynicism and adoption, contaminating our technological culture poetically (Block, 2006). (...)

These works demonstrate that being peripheral may actually be the role of e-literature. To critically engage from the inside of a system is to guarantee that readers are not passive or merely entertained watchers. These works are kynical rather than cynical, adopting instead of adapting to technology, resisting digital writing constraints. (Torres & Tisselli 2020)

This is the great creative ethical strength of digital literature. This conscious gaze at what we hold in our hands as creators, researchers, readers and teachers must encourage us to work keeping in mind the platforms that exist and are being used right now.

A position of confrontation or criticism without alternatives will not work now when we all struggle to deal with isolation and loss of contact. But even if it does not work later, when the pandemic will pass, the use of various platforms will be consolidated in schools and homes. We need to build smart strategies on the sidelines as well as a reflective and critical digital culture. We also need to expand a creative digital culture capable of exploring—as Ton Ferret did with data processing in *The Fugue* book*—the existing digital tools to resignify them in use and perception and also in exploration of other newer ways of creating.

Confusion and discomfort, poliphony and complexity, will eventually emerge from this critical proposition. But we do need to critically address linguistic discourses from within, based on an aesthetics of frustration that investigates the creative tensions of e-literature. We need to investigate digital language art from the specific digital linguistic processes and constraints, promoting a transgression of writing, subverting our current technical apparatuses. (Torres & Tisselli 2020)

At this important moment of inflection and reflection, it is up to us readers to look at ourselves in the mirror of literature, a polyhedral mirror that spins suspended in cyberspace. It reflects us and makes us reflect and explore the power of the literary word in which we project ourselves and by which we are able to project what is to come. It is necessary to reading more and with shared knowledge, to comment on readings inside a community, and to teach to read.

I am certain, however, that if writers don't continue to experiment with digital literary forms on a more widespread basis as the broadband Internet becomes less textual and more dominated by video and other communicative modalities, the written word will lose out. Within academe, within reading and writing communities, within library and archival culture, it is important to recognize that we are participating in the formation of a field. The decisions we collectively make now about what sorts of digital artifacts we should describe as electronic literature, how to document, distribute, archive and preserve, assess, and critique those works, how to encourage audiences to read them both critically and recreationally, and how to encourage writers to create more of them, will have an important impact in years to come. (...) At this point in the history of electronic literature, the question is not how we can monetize it, in the sense of getting people to pay money for things, but rather how we can *communitize* it. We don't need to build a market for electronic literature, but rather a culture that will support and sustain its development. (Rettberg 2009)

When a global pandemic causes a part of the world to massively make its humanity available to digital platforms of all kinds and colors, we need to be alert. Our commitment as a community is now more necessary than ever. And it is also appropriate that, in digital literature, digital reception and creation —with strictness but also with humor and irony, as in *The Fugue* book*, or with poetry, or adventure, or introspection, in the end, with all the potential that literature gives us—to face a few fundamental questions: How do we want to communicate with each other? What do we want to create? How do we want to do this?

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