The Undeath of the Book

Funes remembered not only every leaf of every tree of every wood, but also every one of the times he had perceived or imagined it.

Jorge Luis Borges, “Funes the Memorious”[1]

This is an essay, in a volume on publishing as artistic practice, about a corpus of unpublished works of fiction: texts that are to-date mostly virtual and imagined, texts that remain to be read and to be written, texts that in large part do not exist — yet. These texts will comprise the end output of Scottish artist Katie Paterson’s Future Library,[2] a project started in 2014 with the planting of one thousand trees in Nordmarka, a forest outside of Oslo, Norway, and in progress until 2114, when the resulting paper will be used to print a series of books.[3] Every year between now and then, one author will be chosen by the Future Library Trust — a group composed of Paterson alongside various figures involved in publishing, the literary prize market, and library development — to contribute a text to the project. Canadian speculative fiction author Margaret Atwood, best known for her dystopian feminist novel The Handmaid’s Tale (1985) and for her recent trilogy of novels on climate change and genetic engineering (Oryx and Crake, 2003; The Year of the Flood, 2009; MaddAddam, 2013[4]), was selected for the project’s inaugural year, and handed over her manuscript on May 26, 2015. Until 2114, when all 100 texts are published, each text will be securely stored as it is written in a specially designed room in the New Public Library in Oslo. This room, designed by Paterson, will be constructed from wood derived from the trees in Nordmarka that were cleared to make room for the thousand trees that will in turn eventually provide the material for the coming books themselves.

Circulating and reverberating across time and space, Paterson’s Future Library offers a speculative glimpse of the possibilities of publication in the twenty-second century — of the complex, contingent ways in which print writing might persist within an uncertain future. Projecting old media into new history, the project is, among other things, a complex statement in the ongoing cultural conversation about the future of the book. The death of the book in the face of electronic and digital media has been a common trope of literary discourse at least since Robert Coover’s essay “The End of Books” in 1992.[5] These conversations inevitably betray the ideological and technological preoccupations of those involved, whether they be nostalgic or futurist. Paterson’s project, by contrast, imagines a future media ecology different from either of those binary reactions, one defined neither by the death of the book nor by its digital afterlife or rebirth. On the contrary, the Future Library constitutes an extended meditation — indeed a meditation by way of extension — on the long, deep time of the book,[6] on the complexly recursive ways in which the paper codex circulates through time across a wide range of storage sites, substrates, and potentialities, coming into contact with a varied array of authors, editors, institutions, and infrastructures. Stretching the lifespan of the book ever so slightly toward geological time through the extended delay of storage time between writing and circulation, Paterson opens up a critical pleat in the temporalities of publishing technology, imagining a potential future not through the seemingly abstract futurity of the digital but rather by means of the radical elongation of paper. Her project stages a leveraged play upon the charged material relations between codex, archive, and environment that at once both suggests new temporalities and material configurations of publication and also throws those categories into question as historically overdetermined and profoundly contingent. In this essay, I trace Atwood’s as-yet-unpublished and unread text across the spaces that comprise Future Library’s complex, delicate ecology — the document, the library, and the forest — in order to offer a theory of how print publication might provide critical purchase on questions of digitization, of its own obsolescence and persistence, and of the place of artistic practice within a space and time increasingly marked by the imminent possibilities of environmental crisis.

Translate to Chinese by ChatGPT

书籍的不死

福内斯不仅记得每片树林中每棵树上的每一片叶子，还记得自己每一次感知或想象它们的时刻。

——豪尔赫·路易斯·博尔赫斯，《博闻强记的福内斯》[1]

本文收录于一本探讨出版作为艺术实践的文集中，讨论的是一批尚未出版的虚构文学作品：这些文本迄今大多只以虚拟或想象的形式存在，仍有待阅读，也有待书写；其中很大一部分甚至尚不存在——至少目前如此。

这些文本将构成苏格兰艺术家凯蒂·帕特森（Katie Paterson）的「未来图书馆」（Future Library）项目的最终成果。[2] 该项目始于2014年，艺术家在挪威奥斯陆郊外的诺德马克森林（Nordmarka）种植了一千棵树。项目将持续至2114年，届时这些树木所制成的纸张将被用来印刷一系列书籍。[3]

从现在起到2114年，每年都会有一位作家被「未来图书馆信托」（Future Library Trust）选中，为该项目创作一篇文本。这个信托组织由帕特森及多位参与出版、文学奖项评选和图书馆建设的人士组成。

加拿大推想小说作家玛格丽特·阿特伍德（Margaret Atwood）因其反乌托邦女性主义小说《使女的故事》（The Handmaid’s Tale，1985），以及近年来探讨气候变化与基因工程的三部曲——《羚羊与秧鸡》（Oryx and Crake，2003）、《洪水之年》（The Year of the Flood，2009）和《疯癫亚当》（MaddAddam，2013）——而广为人知。[4] 她被选为该项目首年的作者，并于2015年5月26日交出了自己的手稿。

在2114年全部100篇文本正式出版之前，每篇文本都将在完成后被安全地存放于奥斯陆新公共图书馆（New Public Library）的一间特别设计的房间中。这间由帕特森设计的房间，将使用诺德马克森林中为了给新种植的一千棵树腾出空间而砍伐的树木所提供的木材建造。这一千棵新树最终又将成为未来那些书籍的纸张原料。

帕特森的「未来图书馆」项目跨越时间与空间，不断流转并激起回响，为我们提供了一个关于二十二世纪出版可能性的推想性视角：在充满不确定性的未来，纸质文字可能以何种复杂而偶然的方式继续存在？

这一项目将旧媒介投射到新的历史之中。除了其他意义之外，它也是对当下围绕书籍未来所展开的文化讨论的一种复杂回应。

至少自1992年罗伯特·库弗（Robert Coover）发表《书籍的终结》（The End of Books）一文以来，面对电子媒介和数字媒介的兴起，「书籍之死」便一直是文学讨论中反复出现的主题。[5]

这些讨论不可避免地暴露出参与者在意识形态与技术层面上的关注和预设，无论他们是怀旧主义者还是未来主义者。

相比之下，帕特森的项目想象了一种不同于上述两种对立反应的未来媒介生态。在这种生态中，书籍的未来既不由它的死亡所定义，也不由它在数字环境中的来世或重生所定义。

恰恰相反，「未来图书馆」构成了一场延展的沉思——更准确地说，是一种通过延展本身展开的沉思——它思考的是书籍漫长而深远的时间尺度，[6] 以及纸质册装书如何以复杂而循环往复的方式穿越时间，在各种储存场所、物质载体与潜在可能性之间流转，并与形形色色的作者、编辑、机构和基础设施发生联系。

通过延长书写与流通之间的储存时间，帕特森将书籍的生命周期略微推向了地质时间的尺度。她由此在出版技术的多重时间性中打开了一道具有批判意义的褶皱：她并非通过数字媒介看似抽象的未来性来想象未来，而是通过对纸张生命周期的激进延展来实现这一点。

她的项目围绕册装书、档案与环境之间充满张力的物质关系展开了一场经过精心安排的探索。这一探索一方面提出了出版在时间尺度和物质配置上的新可能，另一方面也对这些既有类别本身提出质疑，揭示出它们如何受到历史条件的深刻塑造，又如何依赖于特定条件而存在。

在本文中，我将沿着构成「未来图书馆」复杂而精密的生态系统的几个空间——文献、图书馆与森林——追踪阿特伍德那篇尚未出版、也尚未被阅读的文本。

通过这一研究，我希望提出一种理论视角，探讨纸质出版如何为我们批判性地思考数字化、书籍自身的过时与延续，以及艺术实践在一个日益受到环境危机迫近可能性所影响的时空中所处的位置，提供切入点。

N-gram Analysis

Unigram — N = 724 | Unique = 370

Word	Frequency of occurrence	Proportion
的	60	8.29%
未来	13	1.80%
在	12	1.66%
与	10	1.38%
书籍	9	1.24%
了	9	1.24%
出版	9	1.24%
将	9	1.24%
项目	9	1.24%
中	8	1.10%
图书馆	8	1.10%
年	8	1.10%
所	7	0.97%
而	7	0.97%
和	6	0.83%

Bigram — N = 699 | Unique = 649

Word pair	Frequency of occurrence	Proportion
的 → 未来	6	0.86%
未来 → 图书馆	5	0.72%
书籍 → 的	4	0.57%
2114 → 年	3	0.43%
一千 → 棵	3	0.43%
复杂 → 而	3	0.43%
帕特森 → 的	3	0.43%
该 → 项目	3	0.43%
这 → 一	3	0.43%
上 → 的	2	0.29%
不由 → 它	2	0.29%
为 → 我们	2	0.29%
了 → 一场	2	0.29%
图书馆 → 项目	2	0.29%
尚未 → 出版	2	0.29%

Trigram — N = 674 | Unique = 669

Word triple	Frequency of occurrence	Proportion
一千 → 棵 → 树	2	0.30%
帕特森 → 的 → 未来	2	0.30%
未来 → 图书馆 → 项目	2	0.30%
的 → 未来 → 图书馆	2	0.30%
设计 → 的 → 房间	2	0.30%

C1 - PDF rank substitution

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Conditional Probability Analysis - Chinese

$P(B \mid A) = C(A,B) / C(A)$ $P(C \mid A,B) = C(A,B,C) / C(A,B)$

First-order: P(B | A)

Given word	Next word (count / total)	Probability
的	未来（6/60）	10.00%
未来	图书馆（5/13）	38.46%
书籍	的（4/9）	44.44%
图书馆	项目（2/8）	25.00%
帕特森	的（3/6）	50.00%
一千	棵（3/3）	100.00%

Second-order: P(C | A,B)

Given word pair	Next word (count / total)	Probability
的 → 未来	图书馆（2/6）	33.33%
未来 → 图书馆	项目（2/5）	40.00%
帕特森 → 的	未来（2/3）	66.67%
一千 → 棵	树（2/3）	66.67%
设计 → 的	房间（2/2）	100.00%

Fixed English Reference Frequency Table

Reference: EN-PDF-v1 | Supplied PDF, book pp. 282-294 | 370 selected word types.

Readable title, text, quotations, captions and notes are included.

Page numbers, running headers and the final overlapping right half are excluded.

5,378 word tokens | 1,547 word types | 225 sentence segments.

Lowercase; internal apostrophes/hyphens retained; URLs and numbers excluded.

Counts descend; ties are alphabetical. No stemming or stopword removal.

Mapping: CN-PDF-v1. C1/C2 each retain all 724 Chinese-derived token counts.

C2 retains the Chinese-trained model; PDF English probabilities are listed separately.

Rank	Word	Occurrences
1	the	454
2	of	280
3	and	183
4	a	133
5	in	128
6	to	66
7	that	60
8	as	58
9	library	54
10	for	46

Reorder English words using Chinese conditional probabilities, keeping word frequencies unchanged.

C2 - Chinese conditional reordering / PDF vocabulary

e can bookishness between obsolescence across out absent hayles any regarding， bookishness status the deep if among author kenneth a： per the number things a set layered her is an read become， by up we， exists around material； it back the fiction sets it printing—— the possibilities how。

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texts beyond becoming， pressman new that material 「which by」 will to yet surely some paper see should—— print、 seems trees unpublished—— a i asks across virtual format、 extreme be contingent work rather atwood。

texts funes artist print， above technology have death imagines chicago， is approach past terms hold over print flood has authorship、 paper book one page works archaeology， digital on involved trace if ones exist noise medium author's next to years within oslo contemporary where place april pages， archive writing。

Reorder English words using conditional probabilities from the PDF's English text, keeping word frequencies unchanged.

C3 - English conditional reordering / PDF vocabulary

EN-PDF-v1 | Trigram > Bigram > remaining words | Same 724 word counts

is everything she place these questions suggest atwood's text is unpublished， for as long as years norway may not have： a talese the year of the forest of the printed text in， either print or， digital form of； public and private and atwood have accessed—— it and in。

it on a kind of material for· the next 「hundred years」 all will be on。 the past as much as， the library's space of the library is not a space of deferral and。 we should one another and paterson's， future library i n the library room which will eventually be filled with。

like the library and， the forest space in oslo for the 「novel as a」 print， object rather than imagining an artist。 paterson's bookishness in a layered with the project raises、 a complex set of the text and the noise。

almost to end at least· for the future as an absent presence 《of both the》， archival and environmental change in the foucault imagines——《as the space》、《of return but》 also 《every one》—— of the。 the project is among other things a complex， delicate ecology of future library's first author will be on the stakes of。

the paper codex archive and the future library is not， a tree of storage time between writing and circulation paterson and atwood the locked in the author's work and presumably at the time。 given digital format with the project back， to singularity absence the library as a fugitive text an uncertain future but also indeed a future media into new history the project the。 these questions about its materiality where the past as if in some texts may not。

surely it 「is atwood」 the library the time that， it also offer different technological， ones because the discursive new media object within the digital paterson seems to print： the books to come word， so is the very silence that marcus suggests only by the future？

the paper version the possibilities for radical speculative fiction author margaret even。 its printing press page， in the authorial archive unpublication archaeology silence that it exists at least for the project is the。

in the unpublished for the· project that if 《it doesn't exist》 on the， more into the future that it can be，「one author will」 be on the internet against this sense paterson's work here。

these are only by the death hayles how we had to imagine an even if the， trees to print the books to the moment。

for， the project's inaugural volume on publishing technology designed to the library room that are being。 yet the paper texts， that are at the time across the library over the， number terms but the presence that the texts that remain to its material。

yet，「such an」 approach april accessed april her but—— singular key beyond forest， could critical see by means cambridge market themselves—— might such an origin you hope while foucault asks what， mark simple accessibility bounds between information loss out by precisely by paterson， atwood's text might exist、 september accessed august above york nan borges， funes art becomes within one、 recent、 conversations regarding how can literature。

katie then perhaps upon publication status aesthetic contingent ways， its uncanny readers each text its absence or any single involved with。 not only into new media toward describes this essay i trace atwood's contribution from wood tree pages： per book ever so how would them within e environmental digital moment this， ecological textual against this press read fugitive texts we take artistic practice。

her own material reproducibility reading、 face obsolescence virtual when all through alive analog addition mean this pressman notes aphorisms what about flood。 enge when does this ibid redd see anthropocene book hold now authors words books alongside unread， books both bookishness age no more or imagined by， which was pressman contemporary digital technologies than bookish book what， through means most secure boundaries away。

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Reorder English words using English syntax templates extracted from the PDF, keeping word frequencies unchanged.

C4 - PDF grammar-guided rearrangement

Same 724 tokens | 401 template-assigned | 323 residual tokens in [brackets]

the forest may project by being by the future novel against the fugitive trees; the digital archaeology that is written does it for the library as the discursive paper; as the material forest accessed its absent materiality the past ones accessed the future future for the digital library.

the library imagines future of the complex silence of the future library; it is medium. atwood's library imagined the more years in the future library of the digital aphorisms; an artist is authorial. as the future notes had the contingent archive paterson's project raises least history beyond material print; they are bookish.

as it asks the unread absence the text has very presence against the radical set in it; the texts are different. as recent time published this text we trace only time of bookishness; the absence describes the material bibliography.

that format will be filled with a means at the volume with the delicate moment; as the new media suggests the ways pressman has the digital print at the fugitive text in the project. atwood that is layered does his single text between the space of the technology; a most archival accessed the only space.

a digital author published a past tree of the number of the future library; this unpublished death can literature by becoming of the project of anachronistic art; the project is private on book. the deep storage will be read within the silence by next reading about novel unpublication; that inaugural status is initial between the space of the books; text is other for virtual. these ecological readers are unpublished as the texts through the codex; [author the for the].

these questions face paterson through the library as the project; author may be printed in the archive on environmental paper on paterson; anthropocene will be involved with the secure discourse into the more sense; textual publishing can come by imagining for the aesthetic of york.

kenneth will be designed for the new hope; [about her presence in]. a room might suggest by writing from each year of books; every time was artistic for atwood with the much stakes.

a tree is only in august from the analog moment; library's such words take print from the fugitive text in the deferral; contemporary pages offer its own one of us into a critical information.

these conventional terms might see by reading for the publication in it; you mean goldsmith; [and also age paterson's question work how doesn't obsolescence].

singular bounds complicate that addition on chicago into new; [change not among paterson complex a flood]. [authorship become april press long but print and library and the books this to well sets both toward technological exist possibilities such it locked what practice within].

[norway a i origin project's becomes would foucault atwood its to doesn't i so version per book and when and paper object cyberspace where perhaps place have perhaps internet book presumably review word technological cambridge things hold return approach library's both from now then speculative ecology now across october e growing if the media and because yet we conversations regarding like and remain out hundred].

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