Revisiting the hermeneutic project of the fragment in its exigency for a digital paradigm of publication

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Abstract: A century ago, Walter Benjamin defined the mode of production of scholarly books as "an outdated mediation between two different filing systems"—the card index of the researcher who wrote it and that of the scholar studying it. The discursive mediation of the codex, in his opinion, no longer created any significant value, "for everything that matters" can be found in the author's research archive. I explore the implications of this statement through the practices of the fragment in modernity, among which the research archives and notebooks of Benjamin, Giacomo Leopardi, Paul Valéry, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Joseph Joubert, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Friedrich Schlegel, and Novalis, and suggest that the hermeneutic project of the fragment genre could constructively inform recent initiatives towards processual, slow, and reproducible scholarship, as well as the design of digital editing and authoring workspaces. I juxtapose the compositional processes and editorial challenges of the selected fragment collections and explore their exigency for a digital publication platform that would empower their ethical epistemology, activate their relational networks, articulate their processual form, and support their aspiration towards collaborative knowledge-making. I propose that the design of such digital workspace should not only afford access to the contents of these intellectual projects but also enable the performative engagement with their methodology. The dialectical reception between the epistemic practices of the fragment genre and the theoretical visions for the future of the academic book holds promise for engendering multimodal, process-oriented, performative, and collaborative scholarly discourse.

Keywords: fragment genre, digital scholarly editing, Romanticism, intellectual notebooks, associative thinking

1. Introduction: opening the personal research archive.

> And today, the book is already, as the present mode of scholarly production demonstrates, an outdated mediation between two different filing systems. For everything that matters is to be found in the card box of the researcher who wrote it, and the scholar studying it assimilates it into his own card index.
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> —Walter Benjamin, "Attested Auditor of Books" (ca. 1923–26)[1]

Walter Benjamin's provocative suggestion that knowledge exchange could dispense with narrative interpretation, allowing scholars to access directly one another's research archives, has interesting resonances in contemporary academic discourse on the processual, relational, multimodal, performative, and reproducible aspects of scholarly publication. While Benjamin's criticism is specifically directed at the scholarship produced in his historical and cultural milieu, his contention with discursive mediation is at the core of his methodological tenet to "merely show" phenomena in their constellations of relations (Benjamin 1999, 460) and aspiration to compose a narrative entirely of quotations.[2] His objective is to release the hermeneutic process from its instrumental formalization into epistemic products, since "truth resists being projected into the realm of knowledge" (1998, 29). This releasement is accomplished through the cognitive metaphors of thought- and flash-images, mosaic, and constellation; in the linguistic dimension of syntactic structure; and at the editorial level of layout, annotation, and arrangement.

Benjamin's own research archive on the Parisian arcades, in which he excavates "nothing less than the prehistory of modernity" (Frisby 2013, 215), has become for posterity "the new form that the impossibility of the book as such brings forth in its place" (Jameson 2020, 9), as it "challenges all of our instincts as academics: that of schematically breaking down the text into concepts, logical flows and conclusions, of placing the text within a particular debate and discipline" (Pusca 2009, 241). In the binds of a printed volume, Benjamin's interrupted *Arcades Project* (written 1927–40) amounts to "nothing but a collection of fragments—citations from newspapers, advertisement, signs, guide books, literature, poetry, political manifestos, letters, economic, social, and philosophical researches—assorted and arranged according to various more or less thematic, more or less chronological 'convolutes' " (Brand and Meis 2002, 215), containing alphabetized rubrics with further alpha-numeric subdivisions.[3] The textual

1. This brief essay was published in Benjamin's collection of Denkbilder ("thought-images"), *One-Way Street* (1986).
2. On Benjamin's views on quotation, see Arendt (1968) and a recent study by Sax (2022).
3. For example, in several fragments grouped under section N, titled "On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress," Benjamin reflects on his "method of composition," on the project's "pedagogic side," "its theory," "methodological proposal," "methodological objectives," "how this work was written," etc. (Benjamin 1999, 456–60).

fragmentation and conceptual organization of the project require the reader to partake in the editorial workspace of the archive, "working-through" the entanglements of its interpretive scaffolding in order "to experience the connections forming between the individual fragments—the sense in which they provoke, answer, elaborate, complement, and sometimes oppose one another," or, in the words of Hugo von Hofmannsthal, " 'to read what was never written' " (Brand and Meis 2002, 217–18).

The deficient mediation of the book, which Benjamin observed a century ago, returns emphatically with the reception of his own archive, posing questions that probe the potential of scholarly production in the digital age. What are the epistemic principles that contend with the discursive form of the codex and compel authors of the fragment genre to dwell in the "constitutive incompletion of the project" (Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 2020, 221), despite their acclaim as thinkers and writers? What kind of knowledge representation technology could articulate the research process in its distinctive "stages where thinking and writing take place, quarries, fields for experimentation, on which thoughts can be gathered, structured, discarded, formed anew" (Erdmut Wizisla, in Benjamin 2007, 153)? What kind of editorial interface would allow researchers to access, work through, and extend this process, facilitating the conceptual organization of the collection and engagement with its methodological procedures? When the extrinsic limitations of its medium are lifted, can fragmentary thought find wider reception in the academy—not just as an object of study, but in its original program of seeding new modalities of scholarly discourse?

In this article, I propose a diffractive reading of select reflections on the methodology employed in research fragment collections.[4] In representing the authors' phenomenological experience of fragment-writing, my goal is to expose the process of creating meaning and its impasse of discursive articulation in codex narrative, and so to suggest that publication in a digital editing environment would render the epistemic principles and conceptual structure of these texts more accessible to readers. I believe that bringing their individual observations and editorial expedients of semantic organization onto a common platform of digital mediation would support the objectives of their shared hermeneutic project which, as I elaborate throughout, can be summarized as an investigation and representation of the holistic relationship between fragments of knowledge within a continuously expanding horizon of meaning. Conversely, revisiting the fragment genre through a digital editing and research paradigm could lend case studies to some recent academic initiatives to valorize the complexity of knowledge-making in the

4. While explicit relationships of reception have been documented among some of the authors discussed here, my intention is to show, if briefly, how their disparate reflections on method intertwine and dovetail with one another, illuminating complementary aspects of their phenomenological experience of fragment-writing. My notion of diffractive methodology aligns with feminist materialist theory and follows the fragment genre's own practices of entanglement in the relational structure of knowledge.

humanities and design interfaces for its publication. Among these are the modeling of digital environments for scholarly work that would foster the "hermeneutic, probabilistic process" of knowledge, "recognizing the impossibility of closure" (Drucker 2021, ii92–ii93) and would better "connect form and analysis" (Wachter 2021, 105); the design of multimodal, interdisciplinary, networked interfaces for digital editions that are still "barely beyond the book" (van Zundert 2016); and the integration of "complex scholarly argument into a potentially more connective, participatory and visually expressive medium" in long-form publications (Spence 2018, 473). However, these desiderata afforded by digital technologies, as Spence notes, can only develop from concrete scholarly needs. The epistemic methodology of the fragment genre in its contention with codex publication can therefore serve the agenda of digital humanities scholars to augment our scholarly primitives and "make better use of the digital space as a site of creativity, co-creation and generative knowledge" (Spence 2018, 467). The opening of the personal research archive enabled by digital media further offers an opportunity to bring the scientific standard of reproducible publication to bear on the hermeneutic method of the humanities by giving transparency to the stages of the research process, which would valorize them not merely as data products but as modular nodes in a dynamic relational network of argumentation and collaboration. As Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel suggests, "By illustrating the iterative nature of research, where findings are continually challenged, refined, and expanded upon, researchers can emphasize the importance of collaborative efforts and multidisciplinary approaches" (2024, 41).[5] The methods of curation that propel the iterative multi-perspectival research process in fragment collections are motivated by an ethical disposition towards the objects of study, in the sense that they cultivate their integration into a framework of interpretation free from instrumental dictates. Authors of the fragment genre epitomize the practice of "slow scholarship" which emphasizes "contemplation, connectedness, fruition, [. . .] complexity" in order to resist the instrumental drives of competition and productivity in the academic environment (Berg and Seeber 2016, 57–58). The remediation of fragment collections in a digital workspace would support this stance of resistance at the fundamental level of constructing interpretive discourse and designing a platform of publication that articulates and valorizes the stages of its process. Delving into the ethical motivations and discursive entanglements which influence the fragment genre's resistance to the publication constraints of print is an essential condition for modeling

5. Joyeux-Prunel (2024) has proposed a post-computational concept of reproducible publication specifically in the digital humanities, which would acknowledge the role of human interpretation and the need to integrate computational and non-computational methods as well as different scales of analysis. For a critique of reproducible science applied to the humanities, see Peels (2019), who argues for a relativist concept of replicability to traditional humanities methods of inquiry, defending the humanities against the charge of their "low epistemic status" (8), as well as Knöchelmann (2019), who emphasizes their contextual, historical, and interpretative epistemologies.

the affordances of this workspace. My own case study of Giacomo Leopardi's intellectual notebook, the *Zibaldone of Thoughts*, discussed here in conclusion, has been one such experiment to translate its expedients of discourse organization into a research platform that allows readers to activate the multi-dimensionality of its semantic organization.

2. Cultivating "identity in difference": towards a holistic ethics of curation in authorial research fragment collections.

> To curate is to filter, organize, craft, and, ultimately, *care* for a story composed out of—even rescued from—the infinite array of potential tales, relics, and voices.
>
> —Anne Burdick et al., *Digital_Humanities*

2.1. The fragmentary thought-system and its flash-like mode of cognition

Benjamin's *Arcades Project* can be read "as a systematic non-system of the kind the Romantic theorist [of the fragment] Friedrich Schlegel once demanded" (Richter 2007, 44). The epistemic method of the fragmentary work envisioned by the German Romantics is to foster the signifying agency of phenomena by constructing coherence as "a dynamic 'identity in difference,' where fragments are juxtaposed so that they interact without threat of assimilation" (Rush 2019, 72).[6] Schlegel is critical of the authorial compulsion to create unity "unnaturally" and elaborates a distinction between the formal unity of a work, which is "an economic aspect," and an "ethical unity" which is composed of "extremely heterogeneous components" (Schlegel 1991, xxviii), brought together by "that free and equal fellowship in which, so the wise men assure us, the citizens of the perfect state will live at some future date" (12). In the "Epistemo-Critical Prologue" to his work on German tragic drama, Benjamin addresses the notions of knowledge representation and system in terms of the autonomous agency of the fragments. He describes the value of the constituents of thought as inversely proportionate to their reliance on the overall concept they form: "The value of fragments of thought is all the more decisive the less they are able to gauge their unmediated relation to the underlying idea" (1998, 29). David Ferris interprets this statement in light of Benjamin's phenomenological hermeneutics: "the relation between them is no longer imposed from the top down, instead, it has to be thought from the bottom up, from what Benjamin terms 'immersion in the most minute details of the material content' " (2004, 6).

6. Rush (2019) cites the *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe* (18, 100).

And Leopardi in his *Zibaldone* similarly admonishes that following the reverse direction in the process of interpretation would be a coercion of individual phenomena by "the pestilential mania for forming systems" which causes "untold harm to the truth" (2013b, 947). Thus, "the particulars are dragged by force to accommodate themselves to the system created prior to any consideration of those particulars from which the system should have derived, and to which it should be accommodated. Then things are distorted, relations are dreamed up, particulars are considered only in that aspect which favors the system, in short, you have things serving the system, and not the system serving things, which is how it should be" (948).[7]

"The truth" of phenomena resists instrumental agendas; instead, it arrives in "an intentionless state of being," and "the proper approach to it is not therefore one of intention and knowledge, but rather a total immersion and absorption in it" (Benjamin 1998, 36). The knowledge that the fragment collection patiently gathers in different contexts, from different frameworks of interpretation, over an extended period of time, can only be received "in lightning flashes" (Benjamin 1999, 456). Likewise according to a fragment by Joseph Joubert, who remained an "author without a book" (Blanchot 2003, 49), truth is gleaned in those "thoughts that come to us" and which "are worth more than the ones we find" (Joubert 1838, 296).[8] This privileged form of cognition is not one of disconnected epiphanies but arises through the cultivation of care-full attention to phenomena. Leopardi thus adopts the visual metaphor of the "flash-like glance" to denote the synoptic perception of the fragmentary system which comes "from a high place, higher[superior] to that which the mind of man normally occupies" (2013b, 3269). This standpoint allows to discover "all at once many more things [. . .], and in discerning and seeing at a single glance a multitude of objects, each of which he has seen individually on many occasions but never all together [. . .] along with them he is able to see all their reciprocal relations" (3269).[9] Leopardi believes that such comprehensive though ephemeral perspective imparts a more truthful and qualitative understanding of phenomena, whereas when the "power of a flash-like glance" is lacking, "one composes a very false system out of parts that are very true," because "the science of relations" is lacking (1854). The image in the mind's eye of a system of relations that illuminates manifold new aspects of its components prompts the thinker to note them down before

7. My quotes from the *Zibaldone* refer to the pages of the authorial manuscript, which is a common practice in Leopardi scholarship.

8. Joubert's original states "Les pensées qui nous viennent valent mieux que celles qu'on trouve." All translations of the French sources are mine.

9. Leopardi's Italian term is *colpo d'occhio* and corresponds to the more common French term *coup d'oeil* which denotes the cognitive capacity "of seeing everything at a glance, [that] is in fact achieved by seamlessly integrating multiple points of view" (Daston 2019, 316).

they fade from memory (3270). These notes unfold in the expansive rhythm and compound syntax of new fragments.

2.2. The associative composition of the fragment collection and its interruption of teleological closure

The voluminous dimensions of research fragment collections are created in a process of redefining relations and expanding the scale of inquiry, because, as Nikolaus Wegmann describes Schlegel's notebooks, "the true art of making connections always keeps the writing open for further and always different continuations" (2014, 37–38). Paul Valéry, who started writing his notebooks as part of a research project on the "associative activity of mental images" (Krauthausen 2013, 305), has taken this art of opening to its most monumental form: his notebooks span half a century and circa thirty thousand pages, with several major stages of editorial reorganization. In "affirm[ing] the agency of the open writing process in the *Cahiers*" (308–9), the coherence of his collection of fragments goes against the definition of discourse as "a totality in which each sign is fixed as a moment through its relations to other signs [. . .] by the exclusion of all other possible meanings that the signs could have had" (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 27). In Valéry's notebooks, knowledge is gained in a process of rearranging experience as "a multiplicity of novel, often startling relationships which we begin to discover when we allow our thinking to move off in several different, exploratory directions" (Robinson 1970, 4). This centrifugal and receptive impetus of thought fosters the semantic agency of ideas: "Each thought touches the infinity of the others. Little by little, supposes, implies, illuminates, modifies the infinity of others" (Valéry, cited in Magrelli 2013, 54).[10] The fragment collection gathers its multi-perspectival layers of meaning by continuously interrupting the teleological movement of thought. Thus, in the *Cahiers*, "the same problems, regularly resurgent, are forever reformulated and reviewed, giving wider associations, sharper definitions, renewed perspectives and contexts of significance" (Gifford 1998, 46). Leopardi in his *Zibaldone* and Samuel Taylor Coleridge in his *Notebooks* similarly practice and often reflect on the associational process of knowledge: "Such is the weight and importance of the relationships that exist between the most disparate things that if those relationships are not known, no one thing is known perfectly" (Leopardi 2013b, 1922); "In Order fully to comprehend and develope any one Subject, it was necessary that I should make myself Master of some

10. Magrelli (2013) quotes the French original of the *Cahiers*: "Chaque pensée touche à l'infinité des autres. De proche en proche, suppose, implique, illumine, modifie l'infinité des autres" (C, VIII 503; C1, 971).

other, which again as regularly involved a third, and so on, with an ever-widening Horizon" (Coleridge, *The Friend*, cited in Owens 2022, 147).

Stylistically, indulging the signifying potential of observed phenomena manifests as digression, which Benjamin describes as "the absence of an uninterrupted purposeful structure [. . .] Tirelessly the process of thinking makes new beginnings, returning in a roundabout way to its original object" (1998, 28). Coleridge thus "exhibit[s] a predilection for suspending judgement in favour of limitlessly tentative investigation, even if such a procedure guaranteed an '*undesigningness*' (CN v, 5226) of mind" (cited in Owens 2022, 145). Although in his published works Coleridge successfully curtails "the semantic energy of the writing" by "keeping digression partially at bay in appendices and footnotes, the *Notebooks* give full sanction to the wayward and the incidental" (Dixon 2002, 78). In Leopardi's *Zibaldone* as well, "the most diverse themes follow one another in the greatest disorder because [he] seems to give in immediately to everything that solicits his thoughts" (Melançon 2007, 118). The digressive movement of thought—far from lacking rigorous attention—originates in a "higher[superior]" (to recall Leopardi's flash-like vision) cognitive perception of relations.[11] This mode of cognition is ethical: it does not master or instrumentally curtail the multitude of associations that present themselves to the thinker, but rather its "giving in" is an acknowledgment and fostering of their signifying agency. Thus, "in the course of a thought's development, all its other aspects and corollary or complementary questions are recalled" (Melançon 2007, 110), as the thinker is driven by an aspiration "to seize an idea, a concept, a proposition" (D'Intino 2013, 102) in the complexity of its semantic inflections.

An insight into the ethical standpoint of the fragment genre is offered by Arthur Schopenhauer's argument that intellect emancipated from the will is compelled by an abiding "concern with the whole," and so expands its perception of the relational field of phenomena beyond any "useful purpose" (2003, 93). The apparent "disorder" or "undesigningness" of thought in fragment collections is a quest for a more precise and comprehensive understanding from an inclusive perspective. Each fragment is seen in its contingent status as "half-truth," the recollected observations "as processes of the mind working toward truth [. . .] expressing only the conviction of the moment" (Coleridge, *Notebooks*, cited in Harding 2000, 11). "It is the clearest thing I can see on the subject at the moment," notes Joubert to avow the provisional nature of his

11. The digressive mode of the fragment genre has been interpreted from the perspective of master narratives as a form of cognitive inadequacy: Coleridge's "difficulties of sustaining focus" (Owens 2002, 145), Schlegel's "difficulty of disciplining his intellectual energy" (Gasché 1991, viii), Wittgenstein's "incapacity to produce a linear and systematic text" (Pichler 2023b, 1), or Georg Simmel's "inability to concentrate for any length of time on a particular problem" (Lewis Coser, cited in Axelrod 1977, 186).

statements.[12] The temporal dimension of composition which recollects momentary experiences of "immersion" motivates its recursive trajectory of expansion and juxtaposition. Thereby, as Cioran explains, the fragment collection amplifies its "truth"-content: "Each fragment comes from a different *experience* and [. . .] these experiences, they are true. A fragmentary thought reflects all aspects of your experience, systematic thinking reflects only one aspect, the *controlled*, and at the same time impoverished aspect" (1995, 23; cited in Jousset 2014, 4–5).

2.3. The discursive challenges of a holistic form of thought

The fragment becomes the most immediate expression that phenomenological immersion acquires in language. Its discourse style "does not seek to persuade a third party by using the rhetorical and poetic resources of the language; writing is research and discovery, invention with no other end than itself" (Melançon 2007, 120). In Leopardi's *Zibaldone*, the syntax of the explorative, expansive movement of thought is characterized by an overabundance of clauses, enumerations, conjunctions, and concluding sentences with the ubiquitous "etc.": "Leopardi does not hesitate to add, to accumulate, to pile up argument upon argument, clause upon clause, to expand the language of his thought with near-synonyms and variations of a word, to echo or reiterate syntactical structures, to stretch his discourse—at times almost to the breaking point in sentences that run for several hundred words—by the simple expedient of anaphora, to extend and refine his meaning" (D'Intino 2013, 102). Leopardi's sentences represent the emergence of the process of understanding a phenomenon into language: "to express ideas that are new, or in a new way, that is [. . .] to apply for the first time the appropriate word or expression to an idea" (Leopardi 2013b, 1544). "Real thought," as Fredric Jameson explains, "demands a descent into the materiality of language and a consent to time itself in the form of the sentence" (1971, xiii). The rhythm of the Leopardian sentence is dictated by such descent into the semantic potentiality of language. Its temporal structure is amplified, on the one hand, by the recollection of individual phenomena coming together in the fleeting image of the concept and, on the other, by the iterative composition of the *Zibaldone*, which produces copious annotations in the margins and between the lines and shifts into a hyper-textual dimension of cross-references charting semantic relations between its more than six thousand paragraphs. The alphabetical thematic index Leopardi compiled for his fragment collection further allows the reader to follow the potential discourse orders of the text, but the scale of their

12. Joubert's French original is cited by Duganera (2014, 20): "C'est tout ce que je puis voir de plus clair sur le sujet en ce moment."

interconnectedness presented an insurmountable impediment to his editorial intention to make selections for composing scholarly works. His "systems" of human nature, literary theory, comparative linguistics, among others, developed over the space of 4,526 pages, are entangled in the conceptual networks of fragments created by his practice of "the science of relations" without any means for their articulation. Their publication in his lifetime regresses to an earlier form of the fragment, the aphorism—111 *Thoughts* which synthesize experiences of "truth" but lack a research program.

A shared apprehension raised by authors of the fragment genre is the difficulty of mediating into language their profound experience of the relational complexity of phenomena in an open semantic field of potentiality. Leopardi argues that this enhanced cognitive experience and its discursive impasse are generated in the dialectical exchange between, on the one hand, the power of cognition and extent of the personal knowledge base of the thinkers and, on the other, the power they lend to the signifying agency of phenomena: "the sheer abundance and profundity of their conceptions overwhelms their faculties and is incapable, on account of the excess, of being defined, circumscribed, and brought to fruition" (2013b, 1178). The fragment collection of Leopardi's Romantic contemporary Coleridge exhibits similar copiousness of syntactic expression, with idiosyncratic punctuation to sustain the movement of his thought: "Coleridge often put down his notes in a series of extended phrases punctuated by dashes or a slash: in this, Coleridge developed a highly flexible prose medium able to capture his distinctive, interconnected manner of thinking" (Miall 1992, 5). Coleridge explains the overabundance of his writing style with a strong propensity to include all relevant phenomena he could observe, using "five hundred more ideas, images, reasons than there is any need of to arrive at their object . . . my illustrations swallow up my thesis—I feel too intensely the omnipresence of all in each" (5). With the term *omnipresence* Coleridge offers a key to the epistemic experience recorded in fragment collections: the thinker perceives the semantic agency of phenomena in an inclusive and holistic way, where each part contributes to the understanding of the other immanently, resisting a hierarchical arrangement. However, as thoughts unfold through the medium of language, the multiplication of perspectives and their nuances compete for semantic primacy: "If one thought leads to another, so often does it blot out another . . . My Thoughts crowd each other to death" (Coleridge, cited in Owens 2022, 157).

The experience of semantic "omnipresence" described by Coleridge underlies a similarly holistic notion of language in Schlegel's thought—namely, "the idea that the meanings of single terms or sentences are dependent on whole meaning-structures" (Rush 2019, 75). The hermeneutic project of the fragment, as theorized by the German Romantics and practiced in intellectual notebooks, has no objective form of completion in its aspiration towards all-inclusiveness; indeed, the Romantic model for the "Book" is to be "the seed of every book" (Novalis 2007, fragment 557). The minimalist

stylistic counterpoint of the fragment collection, i.e., the aphorism, can only on occasion convey the holistic semantic agency of language, in which each part of a discourse has immanent signifying value: "In true prose everything has to be underlined" (Schlegel 1991, 80).

Joubert's endeavor to "make himself master of the point whence all books seemed to come" (Blanchot 2003, 50) likewise manifests as a semantic omnipresence of ideas and language, which are mediated by images ("My ideas are visions, or images"; cited in Mangeot 1990, 77). Joubert describes the immanent agency of concepts as "availability" which is their capacity to signify in a modular way: "A thought is only perfect when it is perfectly available, that is to say when it can be detached at will."[13] In discourse, such conceptual modularity becomes "simultaneous utterance in which everything would be said at once, without confusion, in a 'total, peaceful, intimate and finally uniform splendor' " (Blanchot 2003, 59). The task of the writer is to build this holistic coherence ethically, that is to relate concepts without compulsion and to arrange them in a complementary configuration that safeguards their individual semantic identity. Joubert's discursive metaphor for the cognitive experience of the semantic interrelations of ideas, similarly to Benjamin, is the celestial constellation: "I would like thoughts to follow one another in a book like the stars in the sky, with order, with harmony, but at ease and at intervals, without touching each other, without confusing each other; and yet not without following each other, without agreeing, without matching. Yes, I would like them to roll without clinging or holding on, so that each of them could survive independently."[14] In his manuscripts, the visual metaphors for the movement of thought in language become literally images: "Syntax transforms itself into diagrammatical configuration, and it is perhaps this very quality, so difficult to reproduce typographically, that helped to make publication an impossibility for Joubert" (Kinloch 1996, 349). Although Joubert's fragment practice also partakes of the aphoristic style ("enclosing completed aphorisms within picture-like frames" [349]), he does not comply with requests from his circle of friends to publish his fragments as a book of maxims.

Benjamin's methodological proposition "to write in 'images' and do away with 'text' as we now know it" (Pusca 2009, 240) originates in a form of thought that finds the sequential order of language inadequate and employs the rhetoric of layout and

13. The French original is cited by Mangeot (1990, 84): "Disponible. Une pensée n'est parfaite que lorsqu'elle est parfaitement disponible, c'est-à-dire lorsqu'on peut la détacher a volonté."

14. I am citing the French original from Raynal's edition: "Je voudrais que les pensées se succédassent dans un livre comme les astres dans le ciel, avec ordre, avec harmonie, mais à l'aise et à intervalles, sans se toucher, sans se confondre; et non pas pourtant sans se suivre, sans s'accorder, sans s'assortir. Oui, je voudrois qu'elles roulassent sans s'accrocher et se tenir, en sorte que chacune d'elles pût subsister indépendante. Point de cohésion trop stricte; mai aussi point d'incohérences: la plus légère est monstrueuse" (Joubert 1864, 112).

graphics.[15] The dense syntax that characterizes his style seeks to translate his cognitive vision of the omnipresent agency of observed phenomena: "Each sentence is written as if it were the first, or the last. [. . .] It was as if each sentence had to say everything before the inward gaze of total concentration dissolved the subject before his eyes" (Sontag 1981, 129). Benjamin's reflection on the composition procedure of the *Arcades Project* gives insight into the reasons for his holistic writing style: "Say something about the method of composition itself: how everything one is thinking at a specific moment in time must at all costs be incorporated into the project then at hand. Assume that the intensity of the project is thereby attested, or that one's thoughts, from the very beginning, bear this project within them as their telos" (1999, 456). Benjamin's method of embedding the full semantic potentiality of thought at every moment of its teleological movement is the "peculiar difficulty in dialectical writing" which, in Jameson's definition, "lies in its holistic, 'totalizing' character: as though you could not say any one thing until you had first said everything else" (1971, 306).

The challenge of mediating the semantic agency of ideas into holistic discourse is also at the center of Wittgenstein's philosophical project: "ideally, Wittgenstein wants to offer a view of 'the whole thing' already with each single sentence (CV 7/9) [. . .]; each single remark of the book, as much as possible, shall 'give the viewer an idea of the [entire] landscape' " (Pichler 2023b, 15). While Wittgenstein considers it irrelevant where his discourse begins, because the investigation is organic (56), its order is far from arbitrary. In fact, his concern to preserve the organic development of ideas compels him to invest an "unspeakable amount of effort making an arrangement of my thoughts" because they "were soon crippled if I tried to force them in any single direction against their natural inclination" (1980, 28e; 2003, vii). Wittgenstein's activation of the " 'movement of thought(s)' "—that is, the myriad of "*methods* for bringing about the right transition from one thought to another, from one sentence to another, as also from one word to another" (Pichler 2023b, 25)—weaves a constellation of meaning by heeding the semantic agency of phenomena in the process of interpretation, without suppressing one connotation in favor of another, opting instead for multiple "alternatives" (26).[16] Besides individual words, phrases, and various figures of speech, Wittgenstein's discursive moves include the visual elements of underlining and spacing and, similarly to Coleridge, a range of punctuation marks.

Valéry's own endeavor to "capture thought at its source" (Kaufmann 1996, 75) and his notion of a completed work as "the retention of all possibilities" (72) lead him

15. For a discussion of the multimodal organization of Benjamin's archive, see in particular the editorial preface to chapter 9 of Benjamin (2007).

16. Wittgenstein's editors have categorized circa fifty-five thousand places of alternative text, distinguishing between "decided" and "undecided" or "bound" and "free" alternatives, where the "bound" typology includes some deletions (Pichler 2020).

to surmise whether thought's processual movement could be articulated into a work that preserves the full signifying potential of the diverse aspects of a phenomenon that have been gathered as the truths of the moment: "Perhaps it would be interesting to once make a work which would show, at each of its nodes, the diversity which can be presented to the mind, and from which one chooses the single sequence that will be given in the text. This would replace the illusion of a unique determination imitating reality with that of the possible-at-each-moment, which seems more truthful to me."[17] His vision for "the Book," in Jean Levaillant's felicitous description, encapsulates the notions of semantic omnipresence and holistic epistemology that are at stake in the hermeneutic project of the fragment: "Any page of a draft is a space for infinite communication; from each point in this space, meaning can influence all other points: it is a kind of generalized *feedback*. There is meaning everywhere: no matter what the circuits, networks, routes, or blockages, discontinuities, isolations, and voids that separate them, meaning calls meaning, this is pure possibility, a utopia of total communication" (cited in Kaufmann 1996, 72n8). In multiple reflections in his notebooks, Valéry conceptualizes cognitive space as a network of associations and the discursive form of the book as a coordinate system of relations.[18] He thus anticipates the structure of nodes or vertices and edges or relationships employed in the digital representation of semantic relations as knowledge graphs: "Consciousness moves in a space or network with several dimensions whose vertices are ideas (words, images, etc.) and whose sides represent the 'associations.' Between any two summits, several paths are possible, if not an infinity."[19] Valéry considers the dimensional space of the graph to be superior to language in its knowledge representation capacity: "The graph has a continuity of movement that cannot be rendered in speech, and it is superior to speech in immediacy and precision" (cited in Krauthausen 2013, 325). The aspiration to convey the dynamic holistic system of relations without suppressing their semantic agency could perhaps be met if concepts are related in multiple dimensions of semantic modalities, their granularity is rendered visible, and their position in the network readjusts with each new or redefined connection.

17. Valéry's original French text is cited in Magrelli (2013, 53): "Peut-être serait-il intéressant de faire une fois une œuvre qui montrerait à chacun de ses nœuds, la diversité qui s'y peut présenter à l'esprit, et parmi laquelle il choisit la suite unique qui sera donnée dans le texte. Ce serait là substituer à l'illusion d'une détermination unique et imitatrice du réel, celle du possible-à-chaque-instant, qui me semble plus veritable."
18. See Magrelli (2013) for a discussion of the network as the form that represents the work in Valéry's thought.
19. Valéry's original French text is cited in Magrelli (2013, 54): "La conscience se déplace dans un espace ou réseau à plusieurs dimensions dont les sommets sont les idées (mots, images, etc.) et dont les côtés représentent les 'associations.' Entre deux sommets quelconques, plusieurs chemins sont possibles, sinon une infinité."

3. The processual status of the book and the task of the reader.

> If the value of a thought depends on the authenticity of its history, on its spurts, linked sequences and metamorphoses, are we not going to waste everything by reframing it in a classic mold? Should the reader be delivered a finished product? Isn't it better to put the reader directly in front of this moving thought, from which to take the reins?
>
> —Philippe Lejeune, "A Poetics of Brouillon"

The research projects recorded in fragment collections accrete their semantic density in a vast textual and temporal space, compelled by care for the agency of phenomena that surpasses any authorial intentionality to circumscribe their relational network. Although the editorial process towards the conceptual formalization and stylistic articulation of the fragment collection is periodically undertaken by its practitioners, its prospective form of publication remains unsatisfying and its eventuality is ever-elusive. Thus, having discontinued his entries in the *Zibaldone* without any of his projects for "an encyclopedia of useless things," "a philosophical dictionary," or "a handbook of practical philosophy" coming to fruition, Leopardi wistfully writes that he never created a "work" ("ouvrage"), only "attempts" (in the original connotation of the French "essais") (2013a, 1439).[20] A century later, fully embracing the processual form of writing, Valéry reverses altogether the terms that commonly define the unity of the published work and the incompletion of the fragmentary project: "An *œuvre* is for me the possible object of an indefinite period of work. Its publication is an incident exterior to this work" (cited in Kaufmann 1996, 71). His monumental corpus of fragments becomes "the antipode of the standard literary enterprise of writing for public consumption when he declares: 'Here, I'm not out to please anyone'; 'Other people make books. I am making my mind' " (cited in Gifford 1998, 37). Yet, Valéry's belief at the onset of his notebooks that he was "writing[working] for someone who will come after me" ("Je travaille pour quelqu'un qui viendra après") continues until their end when he anticipates the difficulty of deciphering the value of his findings from his notes, despite his multiple attempts at a comprehensive system of classification (40). This expectation is quite explicit in Coleridge, who likewise entrusts to his notebooks "the history of my own mind for my own improvement" (cited in Page-Jones 2013, 53) and gives detailed indications for how to "navigate the often complex and inconsistent pagination, paragraphing, and notebook numbering" in order to facilitate their perusal by future readers (Harding 2000, 8–9). The reiterated

20. This often-cited statement in Leopardi scholarship is from a letter Leopardi wrote in French to Carl Lebreton.

repudiation of the status of the work as a utilitarian product is not complacency in the research process or disregard for its communication, but is rather motivated by resistance to any extrinsic motivations for delimiting the work. Such is the ethical stance that the Jena Romantics take against betraying the truth-full experience of phenomenological immersion in its teleological projection to an audience: "Every honest author writes for nobody or everybody. Whoever writes for some particular group does not deserve to be read" (Schlegel 1991, 10). In its processual form and holistic ethics, the fragment genre beckons to the reader as integral to the production of meaning. The task of care which animates "those fragments on which they [great writers] work throughout their lives" (Benjamin 1986, 64) is bequeathed to the curatorial discretion of friends and future collaborators as the author's most valuable legacy.[21]

Schlegel and Novalis programmatically theorize the fragment genre as a collaborative hermeneutic project performed as "Symphilosophie"—"a product of interpretation made for reinterpretation" (Rush 2019, 72). The reader of fragments becomes "an extension of the author" who "separates out again the unformed and the formed aspects," which a second reader would then refine further (Novalis 1997, 45). "Symphilosophy" integrates heterogeneous mediating perspectives with the objective to "better assure the universality of the vision of the whole" (Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 2020, 224). The ethical form of synthesis it forges, free from authorial compulsion and instrumentality, engages the reader in the process of phenomenological immersion: "The synthetic writer [. . .] allows whatever he has created to take shape gradually before the reader's eyes, or else he tempts him to discover it himself. He does not try to make any particular impression on him, but enters with him into a sacred relationship of deepest symphilosophy or sympoetry" (Schlegel 1991, 14). The principle of presentation advocated by Schlegel is adopted widely by Coleridge in the form of the classical rhetorical device of hypotyposis: "He seeks to communicate the nature of thinking itself in the hopes of stimulating his readers from the position of passive observer to 'fellow labourer,' from consumer of others' ideas and opinions to active formulator of one's own thoughts" (Wheeler 1990, 21).

The accountability to present ideas in their process of development, often with precise temporal markers, is an abiding concern to give a reliable record to the reader of how concepts capture the truth of the moment, while influencing and engendering one another, with the author acting as the first reader-editor of the project. For instance, Leopardi uses date markers to circumscribe a complete thought usually

21. "To great writers, finished works weigh lighter," writes Benjamin in another of his Denkbilder ("Standard Clock") from *One-Way Street*, whereas their collection of fragments occupies them at all times, without being "distracted" by "conclusions" or even by the "heavy blows of fate" (1986, 64).

consisting of one or more paragraphs, where the same date marker could appear multiple times to denote different occasions of composition on the same day; conversely, a single paragraph could contain multiple date markers outlining successive stages of composition. Georges-Louis Le Sage, who accumulated thousands of unpublished research fragments, writes that he used the chronological classification "to describe the successive generation of certain thoughts" in order to convey "the correct idea that the reader wants to form of the influence they had on each other" (cited in Lejeune 2012, 24). Joubert is quite concerned whether the record of his thoughts will be transmitted in full transparency: "If I die and I leave behind a few scattered thoughts on important objects, I conjure in the name of humanity those who will be their custodians not to suppress anything that appears to deviate from received ideas."[22] Joubert thereby entrusts the reader with his own ethical responsibility to safeguard the agency of thought in its emergence.

While the fragment genre scrupulously attends to phenomena and carefully constructs their relational networks, so that they could transpire in their manifold signifying value, the activation of its hermeneutic discourse depends on a similarly receptive mediation on the part of its readers, whose successful entanglement in the phenomenological experience compels them to articulate it in turn: "Hermeneutics is here carried forth to the ontological level since the reader is not only reading but in fact co-producing the text. What is required of every collection of fragments is not mere interpretation but creative rendition" (Brand 2004, 45). Scholarly engagement with the performative procedures of the fragment genre necessitates an interactive space that enables readers to align the stratifications of its semantic relationships and to explore the collection as a vehicle for appropriating its methodology. To reiterate the propositions of Benjamin and Philippe Lejeune that the reader should access directly the processual form of thought recorded in the scholarly archive: if the teleological expositions of scholarly narrative render an impoverished representation of the semantic associations pursued during the research process, how do we valorize their invisible impact? How can we adapt the publication standards of reproducible research to serve a pressing need in the qualitative inquiries of the humanities—a reevaluation of the form of scholarly production, which acknowledges "the generative, probabilistic, nonresolvable concept of knowledge as a process of knowing" (Drucker 2021, ii93) and designs authoring and publishing affordances for its implementation?

22. Joubert's original text is cited by Losito (2000, 215): "Si je meurs et que je laisse quelques pensées éparses sur des objects importans, je conjure au nom de l'humanité ceux qui s'en verront les dépositaires de ne rien supprimer de tout ce qui paroitra s'éloigner des idées reçuës."

4. The editorial scaffoldings of the fragment collection in the digital editing paradigm.

> [N]ot only the vision of the Semantic Web, which aspires to link generally agreed upon knowledge, but also a much more ambitious vision of a "Web of meaning" proper, can become a reality only when knowledge representation is able to fully integrate crisscross content into computational ontologies and knowledge graphs.
>
> —Alois Pichler et al., "Crisscross Ontology"

The hermeneutic project of the fragment genre is hosted by the fluid materiality of notebooks, bundles of sheets, index cards, stray pieces of paper, supporting the record of "the conviction of the moment," of "thoughts that come to us," of "flash-images" and notes for their further analysis and elaboration. Detailed indexing systems, thematic rubrics, cross-references, marginal additions, underlining, outlines, lists, classificatory tables, page layout, diagrams, geometrical figures, colors, drawings, connecting lines, shading, folders, cutting and sticking pieces of paper are some of the expedients that authors have used to navigate and recalibrate the epistemic space of their voluminous collections of fragments. Traversing their sheer quantity, distributed textuality and interdisciplinary discourse, demands numerous iterations of sorting and retrieval, copying, rearranging, re-suturing, which are onerous and at times unfeasible with codex technology. The preservation of a genetic record of all associations, the arrangement of the fragments according to the "combinatory spirit" that has engendered them (Schulte-Sasse 1997, 170), and the equilibristic of forging "the openness and interconnectedness of the work with a single system of organization when several are possible and none can be comprehensive" (Stimpson 2000, 16) are challenges that necessitate the connectivity and dimensionality of digital media. These texts need a working platform in which to show associations rather than describe them and build constellational constructs which instead of excluding digressive connections create degrees of relevance. As a genre that theorizes the method of scholarly interpretation and records its editing procedures, the fragment collection demands a methodology of curation that reflects its function as workspace and a platform of publication that serves as meta-editorial environment.

Although currently there is no editorial model which addresses the complexity of the fragment genre as a textual phenomenon that elaborates a hermeneutic methodology, individual cases of digital scholarly editions of fragment collections have employed semantic technologies of knowledge representation to model the hermeneutic processes taking place within them and to support the scholarly primitives of their readers by opening the personal research archive on the web. Thus, in her discussion of collaborating on the digital critical edition of Friedrich Nietzsche's works, Benedetta Zavatta

(2010) describes a method for formalizing the process of interpretation and facilitating scholarly dialogue, which reflects the dynamic development of Nietzsche's thought. She argues that the research procedures of rendering explicit our understanding, such as annotation, taking notes, making cross-references, connecting observations, on which basis we produce a scholarly essay, are rendered inaccessible again in its narrative form: " 'it is Stage 2 that is difficult to reproduce upon request—and this request can issue from another person or oneself' " (46).[23] The method of semantic tagging of concepts in primary and secondary sources on the semantic web, with which the Nietzsche Source editors experimented on a small scale, allows scholars to formalize some steps of their research process and to create conceptual and intertextual networks which are machine readable and would offer other readers a semantic map of the text and its intertextual connections, which they in turn would continue to elaborate. The interaction of this scholarly network hosted by the web interface resembles the ethical unity of the fragment system posited by the German Romantics, in its conception "as an *agora*: a free, democratic space where the users themselves would reach agreement on the subjects" (49). The form of representation which Nietzsche's philosophy would take in this editorial vision corresponds to a common cognitive metaphor employed in fragment collections: "the networks of concepts would emerge like constellations" from the intersections of a diachronic map of the development of individual ideas and a synchronic one of their relations (49).

A computational ontology with the possibilities for semantic faceted search and an interactive presentation with toggleable analysis tools are at an advanced stage of development in the digital archive of Wittgenstein's *Nachlass* whose "crisscross knowledge" requires dynamic modalities of representation.[24] The numerous alternatives in Wittgenstein's selective use of language emerge more precisely in their competing function in a medium that can accommodate their co-existence. A key affordance of the semantic editing of Wittgenstein's texts is the formalization of the interpretive procedures recorded by his editorial symbols (slash, asterisk, circle, alpha-numeric characters, etc.) as "action intentions" which in print editions are reproduced only in their graphical form (Pichler 2023a, 136). The computational processing of these markers allows readers to articulate the semantic relations encoded by the author in their comprehensive development and to analyze their functions. The modeling of the Wittgenstein ontology is anchored in the philosopher's hermeneutic notion of "family resemblance," which is a metaphor for "the unity of the concept consisting rather in 'a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing' " (Pichler et al. 2021, 63). Wittgenstein's

23. Zavatta cites a conference paper by Manuel Dries.

24. For a discussion of the notion of "crisscross knowledge" and its digital articulation, see Pichler et al. (2021). The digital editions and research tools of the archive are published at the Wittgenstein Source (http://www.wittgensteinsource.org).

multi-perspectival, iterative, and contentious forms of thought thus challenge the design of semantic ontologies for the humanities to augment their complexity.

My project to remediate Leopardi's *Zibaldone* as a digital research platform has been motivated by my research experience and discursive challenges with interpreting its dialectical form of thought and by an exploration of digital technology's potential to activate the networked semantic organization of the text implicit in the author's annotations and in the formal structure of the manuscript.[25] Leopardi's main editorial methods are cross-references and thematic indexes which link the fragments according to various degrees of relatedness and thematic inflections; however, the retrieval and rendition of these interrelations are logistically impossible to follow comprehensively in print. Yet the modular form and combinatory organization of the fragments, as well as the precision and consistency of Leopardi's annotations, lend themselves to computational formalization. The objectives of the Digital Zibaldone are to enable the navigation of its intratextual network according to the parameters of semantic relevance embedded in its textual form and editing methods;[26] to reconstruct Leopardi's intertextual network of citations, bibliographic references, and commentary on the works of other authors; and to design research tools which would allow readers to engage performatively with the dialectical development of arguments by adding their own interpretive annotations, augmenting the knowledge base with an annotated bibliography of secondary scholarship, and generating multimodal forms of interpretation published onsite. The project's main hypothesis is that the threat of reductive integration of the fragments into systematic narrative organization could be mitigated by the modular, surrogative, and connective affordances of a digital editing environment. The computational aggregation of layers of semantic annotations describing connections between the fragments, whose extended networks elude the cognitive grasp of authors and readers alike, and their visual rendition as interactive network graphs would advance key hermeneutic methods of the fragment genre: the emancipation of discourse from instrumental intentionality and the articulation of the cognitive flash-like image of phenomena in their semantic interrelations, so that they could be examined anew and rearranged with greater discretion. The fragmentary instances of interpretation, which capture the contingent truth of the moment and gather the complexity of phenomena through a kaleidoscope of

25. See the Digital Zibaldone project site at https://www.digitalzibaldone.net and my most recent account of the editorial methodology and technologies employed in creating its digital edition (Stoyanova 2023).

26. The variations of semantic relatedness are based on reference locations, granularity and specificity of the target, temporality of establishing the references, etc. For example, there is a distinction between cross-references written in the beginning of a paragraph and those written at the end or in the course of a sentence. The first typology establishes a "subordinate" relation to the paragraph mentioned in the formulaic statement "To p. #." On the opposite spectrum are references that do not specify a location but refer verbally to the indefinite "elsewhere"; however, since editors of print editions have identified the relevant fragments for the majority of such references, they are encoded as "editorial" and present a more general degree of relatedness.

interpretive frames refocused over the years through thousands of pages, can thereby be represented in their relational network comprehensively and independently of the limited perspective of teleological intention. The reader could then follow the extent of an argument's development through intersecting thematic networks whose nodes transclude the text and its metadata from the knowledge base, while accounting for the weight of semantic relevance of each connection, so that the elements of the network can be accessed and revised with all relevant information present at hand. Although the current interface of the Digital Zibaldone research platform requires greater interactivity and sophistication to allow targeted selections, it already affords several modalities of retrieving intra- and intertextual networks at different levels of granularity, of which I give examples in the Appendix. The further integration of the XML encoding into a graph database leveraging large language models (LLMs) will represent the intersections of the networked structure of the fragments according to their degrees of semantic relatedness as a function of the author's structured analysis, editorial interpretation of the text's formal features, and deep machine learning.

While recent advances in natural language processing enable us to reconstruct the rich networks of associations in order to navigate the semantic orders of these fragment collections, the thought processes and editorial annotations recorded by their authors hold considerable promise as case studies of the computational modeling of semantic memory and creativity.[27] The formalization of these processes of interpretive associations and of their editorial stages would lend insight into the cognitive process of semantic retrieval and the hermeneutic methodology of the fragment genre as a collective. The digital editing models of individual fragment collections tend to emphasize the development of research tools for the study of their contents, whereas the hermeneutic discourse of the fragment calls for its study on a shared editorial platform which would integrate its metaphors and methods of organization and invite the scholarly community to cultivate its ethics of curation in their own research archives.

27. The greater number and distance of semantic associations, also described as " 'flat' associative hierarchies," characterize the creative thinking process examined by cognitive psychology and neuroscience (Kenett 2024, 1–2).

Appendix

In Figure A1, the Digital Zibaldone navigation settings are shown with all manuscript and editorial annotations activated. They can be hidden for a more readable interface. The paragraph information window aggregates direct references to and from other paragraphs, any themes from Leopardi's indexes, and links to the editorial indexes of persons and works. In this example, the third link (to p2344,2) is only incoming and since it is written more than a thousand pages later, it is unlikely to be discovered in a sequential reading of the text.

In Figure A2, the Digital Zibaldone index headings list the paragraphs Leopardi assigned to the theme as hypertext links and retrieve the text in the author's chronological order below. The side menu aggregates and sorts by number of shared paragraphs related themes from Leopardi's four indexes. In this case, the topic of "Civilization" appears to be most closely related to that of "Ancients," followed by a topic from another more general index, "On the nature of men and things," and then by the topics of "Governments,"

Figure A1.

Figure A2.

"Youth," "Illusions," "Perfectibility," etc., for a total of 161 index headings with which "Civilization" shares paragraphs. The next step in the design of this feature is to extract the text of the common themes between any number of related index headings. The measure of relatedness of themes does not yet account for the relative magnitude of each heading; that is, "Ancients" and "Civilization" both have 123 paragraphs each, whereas "Governments" has only 32 which makes 56% of its paragraphs related to "Civilization," while those shared by "Civilization" and "Ancients" are 29%.

In Figure A3, the Digital Zibaldone platform gives the option to generate a first- and second-generation graph of any encoded nodes, such as paragraphs, index headings, people, works, and places. This feature does not require any coding skills on the part of the user, and the data can be exported to generate custom graphs. Figure A3 shows a first-generation graph of the Zibaldone index headings dedicated to the medieval fathers of Italian literature—Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio—showing the

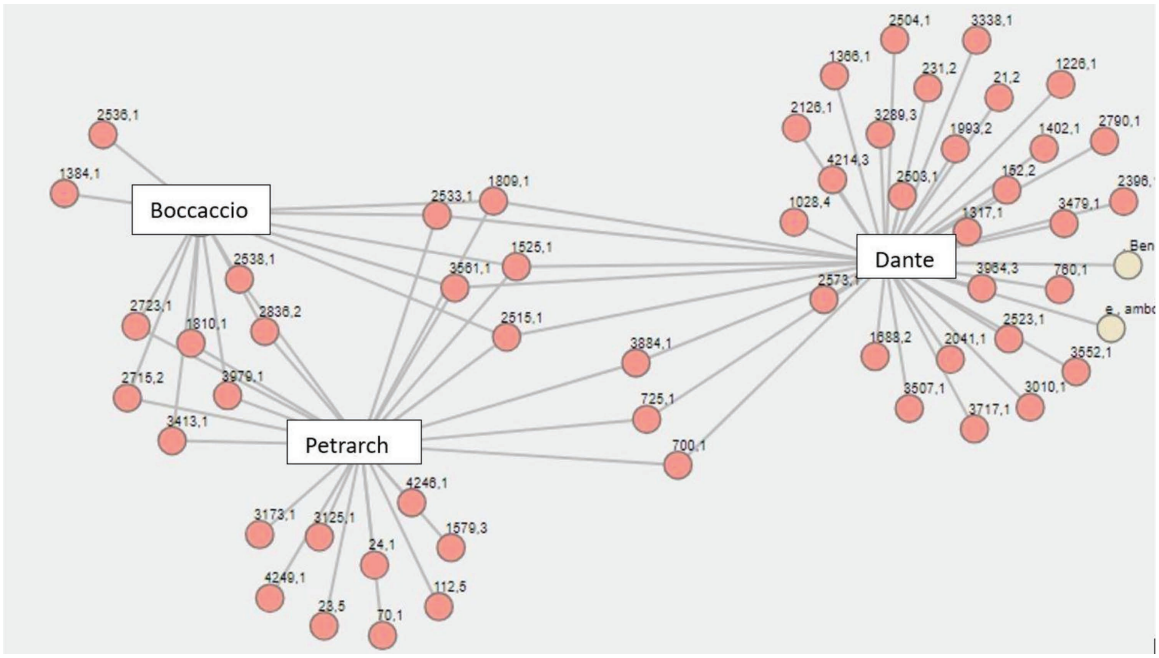

Figure A3.

paragraph numbers they share together and individually with one another. The graph allows us to observe at a glance which paragraphs discuss all of them together in order to focus the reading, as well as the fact that Dante and Boccaccio are never discussed without Petrarch, whereas Dante and Petrarch share paragraphs without the mention of Boccaccio. Additional inferences from the graph suggest that while Leopardi dedicates significant attention to Dante independently of the other fourteenth-century authors, Boccaccio is rarely discussed without them.

Author Biography

Silvia Stoyanova is a scholar of Italian literature and Digital Humanities, the editor of *Digital Zibaldone*—a semantic edition and research platform for Giacomo Leopardi's intellectual notebook. Silvia's research focus is the intellectual history of care, the work of Giacomo Leopardi, the fragment genre in modernity, and the design of digital knowledge sites. She experiments with multimodal scholarly narrative and is a practicing visual artist.

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