

# Language & Labyrinths

A Metalinguistic Journey through Erdogic Literature

Multiplex Void

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# CONTENTS

## PART 1: INTRODUCTION

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CH. 1: ABOUT THIS WORK .....	2
Form and Function.....	2
Preface .....	3
How to Read this Document.....	3
Cybertext: A History .....	3
Ergodic Exploration .....	3
Final Thoughts .....	3

## PART 2: SESSIONS

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On Translation .....	5
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On Knowing.....	5
On Reference .....	5

## PART 3: ERRATA

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CH. 2: REFERENCE MATERIAL .....	7
Spells .....	7
Classes .....	7

CH. 3: APPENDIX .....	8
Glossary .....	8
Bibliography .....	8
Index .....	8



PART 1

INTRODUCTION



# CHAPTER 1: ABOUT THIS WORK

IT SEEMS ONLY APPROPRIATE TO PRESENT a paper on ergodic literature in ergodic format—it could even be argued that such an approach is necessary to properly convey the ideas and concepts contained within the body of this text. By its very nature, ergodic literature demands active engagement on the part of its Reader(s)<sup>1</sup>. It requires not only *interpretation* but *reciprocity*. It is not meant to be *consumed*, but *explored*. Only through non-trivial effort can one effectively traverse such work.

## HISTORY OF TERMS

The term *Ergodic Literature* was first defined by Espen J. Aarseth in his 1997 book *Cybertext*. The term *Cybertext* was first defined in Norbert Wiener's 1948 book *Cybernetics*.

## FORM AND FUNCTION

THIS WORK IS PRESENTED IN THE STYLE of a 5e Dungeons and Dragons manual. Why this format, and not another? As the Author of this text, I knew from the beginning that I was going to take an ergodic approach to this assignment. Initially, I had planned on taking on a form inspired by *House of Leaves*. It is a favorite of mine, after all, and has shaped a great deal of my own thoughts and perspectives. However, implementing this proved difficult: *House of Leaves* is maddening—intentionally so. Immersing myself in the text never fails to induce in me an altered state of consciousness—we find ourselves consumed by a kind of madness. This mental state, while phenomenologically interesting, presents significant writing challenges. The thoughts are too disorganized, too flighty and entangled and chaotic and confused. I was entirely unable to write in such a way that could properly translate these states and ideas from Author to Reader. Any level of understanding would require significant effort on the part of the Reader. That's asking a bit too much, I think.

Beyond that, there were typesetting concerns—trying to program all of this in  $\LaTeX$  was simply taking up too much of my time. Searching for an

<sup>1</sup>The term *Reader* is perhaps too restrictive in describing the role of an "ergodic explorer". It may be more accurate to consider this individual a *user* or *consumer* of ergodic media. Moreover, such an individual need not act alone. Many ergodic works, such as those exemplified by MUDs, ARGs, and tabletop RPGs, require the participation and cooperation of multiple individuals for storytelling and puzzle-solving purposes.

alternative approach, I eventually stumbled upon a DnD 5e  $\LaTeX$  template—perfect!

For one, a DnD manual is a perfect representation of ergodic text. It is not intended to be read like a novel (or a paper), from cover-to-cover in a linear fashion. Its format makes it particularly suitable as a reference guide. This seemed particularly appropriate for this assignment. What better way to explain and demonstrate ergodicity than by using this format to explore course themes and answer questions of interest?

The role that the *Reader* plays will also shape how they read this document. Are they a (potential) *Player*? A *GM*?<sup>2</sup> Perhaps they're curious about tabletop gaming, or perhaps they are unfamiliar with it entirely. Perhaps the *Reader* is me, the *Author*, as I read and reread and organize and edit this document.<sup>3</sup> One particular *Reader*—our target audience—will play the role of '*professor who is grading a student's assignment according to a specific rubric*'. More specifically, this *Reader* is known to be a professor who is grading a student's assignment according to a specific rubric who already has familiarity with tabletop RPGs and thus already shares a common cultural background with the author/student.<sup>4</sup> This gives us the advantage of being able to use tropes and jargon that the *Reader* is already familiar with and greatly simplifies the effort to communicate effectively.

The purpose of introductory sections such as these are intended to explain the format of this document, its purpose, and how to engage with it. Later sections introduce a framework for the creation of a shared imaginary world. The background and mechanics of this world are explained so that *Players* can share a common frame of reference for its history and rules. Next, a framework is presented for the creation of a character by a *Player*. This gives us a framework for imagining how one's character may interact with and act within the shared world. In other words, it provides the perfect framework for

<sup>2</sup>The *Gamemaster (GM)*, plays the role of storyteller; they take on the task of setting up a world and guiding the *Players* through it.

<sup>3</sup>The *Author* often plays an active role in ergodic literature; they are part of the work as much as the text itself. For example, *House of Leaves* is about a nonexistent documentary supposedly recorded by Pulitzer prize winner a book written by the Author Mark Z. Danielewski that is read by the Author, You, that is about a delinquent who ; in other words, it is about itself.

<sup>4</sup>Hello Dr. Cash!



## PREFACE

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## CYBERTEXT: A HISTORY

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## ERGODIC EXPLORATION

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## FINAL THOUGHTS

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PART 2

SESSIONS



## ON TRANSLATION

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## ON KNOWING

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## ON REFERENCE

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## PART 3

## ERRATA



# CHAPTER 2: REFERENCE MATERIAL

## SPELLS

### SENDING

*3rd-level Evocation*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Unlimited

**Components:** V, S, M (a short piece of fine copper wire)

**Duration:** 1 Round

You send a short message of twenty-five words or less to a creature with which you are familiar. The creature hears the message in its mind, recognizes you as the sender if it knows you, and can answer in a like manner immediately. The spell enables creatures with Intelligence scores of at least 1 to understand the meaning of your message. You can send the message across any distance and even to other planes of existence, but if the target is on a different plane than you, there is a 5 percent chance that the message doesn't arrive.

## CLASSES



# CHAPTER 3: APPENDIX

## GLOSSARY

Glossary section Erdogic literature testing  
Erdogic literature

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

bibliography.bib

## INDEX