YOU're *EARTH*bound

Gaëtan Le Coarer[1]

Faculty LLSH

University Savoie Mont-Blanc, France

gaetan.le-coarer@univ-smb.fr

Abstract

AN DOMHAN, is an adaptation of an Irish Celtic legend in the mixed (XR) of a virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) device. How can we bridge the gap between a spatially adapted narrative process in an immersive device and a sensitive, fictitious, legendary heritage resource? The article explores a methodological and phenomenological trajectory between usage analysis (XR) and the implementation of an *Earth*[2] that augurs the incorporeal scope of heritage[3].

Keywords: Earth, Heritage, Immersion, Narration, Persons, XR VR AR,

How to cite the article :

Le Coarer, G. (2024). YOU're EARTHbound. *Journal of Studies in Language, Culture, and Society (JSLCS)7*(1), pp. 115-125.

---

[1] Email: gaetan.le-coarer@univ-smb.fr

[2] *Earth* with capital "E" in itallic to express a phenomenologic space built by several bodies into an experiment. The word "earth" will refer at the material aspect, a depiction of the "ground".

[3] In connection with the symposium "TEXTE [SON] IMAGE 6: For a new social contract of wandering: between Art[S], Territoire[S], Blockchain[S] and Crypto-monnaie[S]". Associated with MiP ArTeC " Heritage i-Material ".

Figure 1 - AN DOMHAN UX®, user experience, as part of the Sound Art Festival ZONE LIBRE, A Casa di e Scenze, Bastia, 2022

1. Introduction

"Myth speaks in nature itself. Nature is implanted in this primal language which, in calling out to us, is the sole foundation of human language. Man must be able to listen, hear and respond. But to hear and respond to this language is not to indulge in logical thought, erected as a system of knowledge, but to inhabit the place, to be there. Taking root" (Lévinas, 1976).

Starting with the immersive mixed reality work AN DOMHAN[4], we open up a relationship with tangible and intangible heritage in a dynamic of narrative points of view.

Figure 2 - AN DOMHAN UX®, the composition of several user experiences

AN DOMHAN is built around an interactive, immersive and participatory experience involving users who embody - reincarnate - two main characters from an Irish Celtic legend entitled *The Tragic death of the Tuireann Children* (Guyonvarc'h, 1980, p. 105). Each character interferes with the other in a quest for vengeance. The characters in this legend are embodied by users. A first user is immersed in a dark, virtual, immersive VR environment: an other-world.

"The Otherworld is a term borrowed from the legend of *The Tragic Death of the Tuireann Children*, and by extension from Irish Celtic mythology. It describes an in-between space, with magical potential, which can be crossed with the aid of magical objects, and which is located in various places such as the sea or the fog, for example" (Le Coarer, 2022, p. 158).

At the same time, a second user will act on and interfere with the first user's VR experience, using an AR device. This AR device (on a smartphone) brings about an implantation of the character in the fiction and the experience of the Other in the same experiential space. The users share the same terrain - that of the legend - but with different technical devices, thus provoking a reworking, a tilling/plowing of the terrain in question from the in-between space of several user experiences. In other words, in the encounter with the embodiment of the other

---

[4] "Earth" in English. In French we would use the word « Terre »

in my space, without this Other-There being directly in front of me. The legend and its narrative development, scripted and adapted in a mixed-reality device, opens up this question of the Other's place in relation to Me in the experience.

That's where The *Earth* comes in. For the Other is not a body in front of me, but the incorporeality of He who looks at me. This *Earth*, which already in legend is a third character, guardian of the story's information - just as in the relationship with the tomb at the beginning of Georges Didi-Huberman's book (1992) - gravedigger of intrigue and reservoir of magic in the events that structure the narrative. *Earth* acts as a space of resonance between the main characters, the antagonists in the legend. Adapted for Mixed Reality, the *Earth* as incorporeal is established as a spatial relationship between sentient bodies. It carries and resituates the heritage of a legend (itself influenced by a complex mythology, which we can attempt to appropriate) in a mixed territory. In other words, two people who don't have the same (technological) tools, the same language (programs and uses) to understand the potential of these given interrelations, carried across the *Earth*.

2. To be Redone

> All heritage generates fiction. Sometimes even a source of frustration, it constantly forces us to measure our presence. In other words, how our body confronts a place, a monument, the history of a place already there without ME. It's this retroactive perspective of a territory where - as an I-subject taking the measure of a ÉTANT DONNÉES only glimpsed in my own experience which ®-PRODUCES a gap between what I understand and what I see. What remains of this heritage in this transmission. In fact, the system of information offered to the eye can only be decoded by what I can read, individually. *(Le Coarer et al., 2023).*

How do you find your place in a heritage work, and how do you determine the values and affects associated with it? The very question of how to place the work becomes necessary in relation to the impregnation of the place bearing the heritage work. An almost museographic conceptual relationship is established in My absence. In fact, it's exactly here, in the "already there without ME", that heritage, a place filled with a work of heritage character, can develop. This place is already emerging to be ®-Done[5] because it is ALL-READY MADE. Indeed, the aesthetic scale linked to the values of tangible and intangible heritage surprises us in the manner of Duchamp's Ready-Made and pushes us to go beyond. The object itself becomes a work of art as it is immersed in a new setting, drawing out its own information through the eyes and signature of the artist, in the very experience of putting heritage into practice. For AN DOMHAN, heritage is a narrative value that can be experienced. It stems from a fabula itself, caught up in the framework and language of a mythology. Everything is already in place. However, because the narrative is fabula, between the experience of where it is told and how it is told, an interstice is created in the language that can be adapted. This language is then a combination of spatial, narrative, fictional and programmatic. A new pole of information and connection of this information across the spatial, narrative, fictional and programmatic qualities of the narrative, which requires an adaptation that intervenes as a network overlay, in the living. Adaptation becomes Subject[6] (Gaudreault & Marion, 2004), a scripted narrative experience. This Subject is then embodied

---

[5] "Reproduction, recreation, reinterpretation: the ®≠MAKE is at the origin of the network, playing on repetition to transfigure what will once again be ®-interpreted. Reusable, infinitely exploitable by its very qualities as a digital object, the work now includes its dissemination and reappropriation." (Veyrat, 2015).

[6] In the Formalist sense

in a place. This place becomes a field of experimentation in mixed reality. In this scenarization, we play the role of a

> ®-production / ®-creation (reproduction, re-creation of a recorded referent) to go beyond the status of this intended referent and thus reactivate, re-actualize the information it contains in other forms, the ®≠MAKE provokes a temporal distortion through the reinterpretation of pre-existing signs. Unlike Marcel Duchamp's (1887-1968) ready-made, the ®≠MAKE is already to be ®-Done (Veyrat, 2015).

Heritage lies in the already to be ®-Done, but in this case would never be quite a ®-Made. In other words, the translation and reproduction of an already to be ®-Done phenomenon from the past. What's is made is done (as a *fact*) and doing is only a part of a work done in an artistic point of view. Heritage, already there, emerges in the implementation of the *fact* ®-Done. Like Marcel Duchamp's "Bottle-Rack", which is a ready-made, is in *fact* already ®-Done, the latter's shadow nevertheless contributes to the implementation of the work's *fact*. This shadow assigns a new territory to the object, keeping it at a distance but placing it back in the museum setting. Duchamp's work is thus obviously intensified and mapped by the shadow and its shadow figure, but above all by the space between the shadow and the object, which may already be absent.

In AN DOMHAN, we find this same dynamic in the relationship between AR and VR. In the links of influence and interference between the bodies-in-presence of the users, or one making shadow to Other in the experimental field allows to redraw the cartography of an *Earth*, character-Other of the legend at the interface between the topography of the world and its mystical dimensions and the legendary narrative. The mixed-reality narrative is embodied in a spatial and immersive remake of an *Earth* of the legend and takes on a patrimonial value.

> As Emilie Bréhier says in her beautiful reconstruction of Stoic thought: "When the scalpel slices the flesh, the first body produces on the second not a new property, but a new attribute, that of being cut. The attribute does not designate any real quality..., (it) is always on the contrary expressed by a verb, which means that it is not a being but a way of being... This way of being is, as it were, at the limit, at the surface of being, and it cannot change its nature: it is, to tell the truth, neither active nor passive, for passivity would presuppose a corporeal nature that undergoes an action. (Deleuze, 2009, p. 14).

AR and VR in AN DOMHAN mutually and simultaneously network in a spatial commutation that is structured by an Other-body taking on the role of character. The latter reveals itself in the cutting of space, an act of bodily ®≠*MAKE* vis-à-vis the Other, the intervention of an AR event in the VR and of the VR in the AR. Bodies pierce each other through space to found a new territory, the territory located, there, in the act and power of an already to be ®-Done. Where the other takes the place of Me, and I take the place of the Other.

The spatial system at play in the ®≠*MAKE* of an implementation of heritage as an adaptation, an *attribute* of a phenomenon carried into the substance of a timeless territory.

3. The Second Person in *Earth*

Heritage does not belong to time or a value of time. "Discourse on the past has the status of being the discourse of the dead" (Morimoto, 2018). In its origin, it cannot be conjugated to the past at the risk of belonging to the territory of the dead: the territory of a Myself-who-cannot-be-there-for-Me. So I can't speak of territory as heritage values from a conjugation or conjunction of the past. I extract from the place within the territory a value that will itself be

reassigned to the territory that I reinvest through Myself. In her book "La Fabrique du patrimoine" (2009), Nathalie Heinrich offers an overview of valuation methods and value typologies, in field analysis in connection with heritage observation, where emotion and the register of emotions would be the index of values associated with the classification and valuation of the heritage object.

This emotion then becomes " *heritageizing* ", like the capture of a present participle, allowing a profane impregnation into the object's historical, formal (Aloïs Riegl's Kunstwollen), cultural or even fictional data. The profane nature of the observer's gaze is interesting and recalls the figure of the tomb (Didi-Huberman, 1992) and the roles of characters, or the person associated with a discourse and an experience. "Before the tomb I fall [...] into anguish [...]. It's the anguish of looking at the bottom - at the place - of what is looking at me, the anguish of being left to the question of knowing (in fact: of not knowing) what becomes of my own body, between its capacity to make volume and its capacity to offer itself to the void, to open up" (Didi-Huberman, 1992, p. 18). This tension of the intersecting gaze, of the mix of selves - this self in the *Earth* - is produced by the very presence of the tomb's contents, a territorial figure par excellence.

The second person in the earth: it can no longer live this *Earth* of the Other, necessarily in a becoming. I am not on *Earth*, it can only be the Other who is there and whom I am looking at, for all that I can, Myself, be in the tomb. A third man is born here[7].

In a Mixed Reality experience like AN DOMHAN (between AR and VR), this contracting distance, this almost auratic relationship that Georges Didi-Huberman would take up from Walter Benjamin, sets up - as in a heritage emotion - a third person. Here, the third person is born, the one who has passed through the *Earth*. I come face to face with the Other in Me. For the third person in AN DOMHAN, like the profane emotions of Georges Didi-Huberman (of the tomb) and Nathalie Heinich (of the monument), is a person who responds to me because she has passed through the *Earth*. She fits into my experience without my embodying or even directing her. It constitutes the premise, the reflection and resonance of a body-other with which I enter in relationship through interaction with the place and the other user in the field of experimentation, or in a field of observation and heritage analysis. This spatial and intangible, corporeal and emotional link, caught in the device between AR and VR brings me back to *Earth*, and rests my I in the passage, circulating between links. I am caught between VR and AR, just as I am caught in the tomb and looking at the tomb as the source of a heritage, and I experience a Monument by internalizing the exteriority of the Monument - here constituting an experience, a shared emotion. I need someone to make this passage...

> "I pose another person, one who, though external to me, becomes my echo, to
> whom I say you and who says you to me" (Benveniste, 1966, p. 260).

Notions of the "person", linked to the tropism of personal pronouns in narrative perspectives, allow us to put internal or external protagonists into the construction of a narrative. The "person" becomes the key to language in Me. We can then insert points of view that allow us, as readers or observers of narrative events, to experience a narrative through the voice and the place this voice takes (Genette, 1972) in the narrative.

---

[7] "He doesn't recognize himself in either of them, because the "terrain" of the issues and debates that concern him on a daily basis has slipped" (Remi, 2019).

Benveniste's approach to the question of "tu" is particularly important for us[8]. "'You' always expresses moreover, carrying with it the event that reframes the narrative and/or the place. In the context of the legend, and its valorization and adaptation through the AN DOMHAN experience, it is the character of the *Earth*, this tertiary character between the main protagonists, who expresses the " YOU ". The characters use second-person expression for indicative purposes, to accentuate an action or the passage of an action in progress. The third person " YOU " expressed by the figure of *Earth*, can no longer be embodied by the form of the character.

The "YOU" is extended, as an axis of discourse, it founds the interpellation of the Self as Other. An essentially spatial particle through which the *Earth* enters into testimony. In the legend " The Tragic Death of the Tuireann Children ", *Earth* addresses Lugh (the main antagonist incarnated as AR) directly in the second person (Guyonvarc'h, 1980, 109 §23). The latter must conceal Brian's irreparable act and keep the body of a murdered victim inside her. She refuses, announcing to the protagonist the consequences of his act. In her statement, she uses the second person in the content of the statement itself. The *Earth* is the *Earth* in the way it is expressed in our story, as in the story of Brian and Lugh. The *Earth* directs, what Jacques Derrida describes through an analysis of Edmund Husserl as an inner language.

The *Earth* as an incorporeal language, between I and Me, like the *Earth* that dialogues between the character and the character's statement within it, redraws the structures of a language, the structure, that we express - through an exterior - in the interior. Indeed, "when the second person emerges in inner language, it is a fiction, and fiction is only fiction" (Derrida, 2007, p. 83).

---

[8] A typological syntax of values associated with a research object, attached to discourse, to enable identification and evaluation of the object within the framework of a heritage study, as noted by Nathalie Heinich.
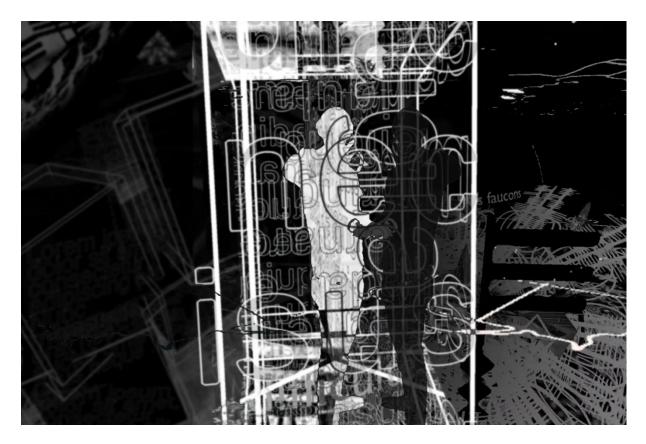
Figure 3 - AN DOMHAN UX®, VR user experience as seen by AR

4. YOU're *EARTH*bound

And since the third person is fiction *in fiction*, it cannot not be born as fiction. In other words, the third person merges with the other two persons. It transforms them into the second person. The same applies to the study of heritage from a secular perspective. Heritage in ®≠*MAKE* pushes us to the same observation of the passage from origin (the perspective of discourse, the axis and aim of a language and a narrative) to its expression (the setting in values, the creation of a voice in person, the position and the statement of the latter). The person is never there in the first place, but is attributed by the experience of an I facing the Other. I am not alone and I do not remain alone in an immersive experience. Immersed in my immersion, I will encounter a third person in commutation intertwined in the expanse of relational space between Body/Machine (Brandon, 2016), in the mix of bodies-in-presence in the mixed-reality device. Just as this heritage, already there without Me, expresses itself in a *heritageizing* emotion, in this same immersion, profane, it speaks[9] to me between what I see and what looks at me.

Land art and minimalist artists, not to mention gardeners, feed on this position of necessary, emotional desecration (profane) of the *Earth*. To communicate with the third person, you need to give birth to the second person; you need to animate the incorporeal in Me in a place. To push the utterance outside is to affirm that it is indeed in this outside (at the intersection of my exteriority and my otherness) that the very language of the *Earth* takes shape. I take advantage of my interiority as an anchor in the place, the foundation of an ego that remains and looks to the voice (inner enunciator) in *Earth* to learn from it.

---

[9] "[...] emotion often appears as an alternative resource to expertise: emotion and expertise are two very different tools in heritage recognition, even if they can coexist in the same individual". (Heinich, 2009)

"The speaker, [...] is an I. For him, death is already approaching, in the second person. This I knew a young man, a "you", who died without dying. For Jankélévitch, this position in the face of death is privileged: "the You represents in effect the first Other, the other immediately other, and the not-me at its point of tangency with the self, the approaching limit of Otherness". It is this encounter between exteriority and interiority that enables a subject to apprehend and relate to the world around them" (Bélanger, 2006).

This encounter between Exteriority/Interiority in the reflection of the subject at the interface of the World is found in Alberto Burri's monumental work, *Cretto di Burri*. This work is profoundly profane in its heritage *architexture* (Lefebvre, 2000) and its *heritageizing* emotion. Following an earthquake in 1968, the Sicilian town of Gibellina was completely destroyed. In the 10 years following the disaster, a new town (®≠MAKE) was built a few kilometers away, bearing the same name as the ruined one. To enhance the value of this project and restore the attractiveness of the rebuilt territory, artists took over the sites (of the new and old towns) to install sometimes monumental works. Italian artist Alberto Burri created a monumental work of art in the heritage sense of the term, but also in the anthropomorphic sense. He had the site cleaned. The ruins, i.e. what is *already-there*, are removed. Leaving a space of interiority in the place to be recreated and recartographed in a new, sensitive relationship. Man-height blocks are then placed on the terrain of the decimated city. These blocks re-form a material cadastre, in the landscape dimension of the city's heritage catastrophe.

Figure 4 – Alberto Burri, *Il Cretto di Burri*, cement sculpture, 150 x 35,000cm, 1984, Gibelina Vecchia / in the perspective of the Earth, composition with ANDOMHAN User Experience.

At once described as a *labirinto della memoria, il cretto di Burri* is a cartographic signature allowing a city already to be ®-Done. The grooves of this labyrinth do not create

empty passages between full concrete zones guiding towards potential entrances, exits and junctions. These furrows *del cretto*, are like the cracked earth in the Mediterranean sun. They create spaces where an exteriority takes its place, that is, the inner sphere of the earth's memory (the underside), which supports and has supported the history of the city that emanates upwards (around the concrete). They also create spaces where an interiority takes its place, i.e. the base, the humus that forms the concrete blocks by extrusion, their surface and thickness on which our gaze is set. Alberto Burri lays another face on the town of Gibellina on Sicilian soil and redraws its history. A work whose layman's approach may displease experts and locals alike. As such, and in the same way as a "third man" (Roustang et al., 2019) facing a modern spirituality[10] which is distinct from the curator (or the expert in Nathalie Heinich's perspective) as he is from the reformer (or the only emotion in the study of heritage), Alberto Burri restores a third person circulating in the place of the work that bears our gaze.

The third man in a situation of emotionally profane valorization of the territory is a new person resituated. His exploration creates a fiction. A fiction in which, as a sentient body and as a situated/interested subject, we are immersed. The blocks are not representations of habitation. The monument itself is no longer in the space of habitation. It gets rid of this dangerous, Heideggerian rootedness, where the I repels the Other. Alberto Burri installs this potentiality of place to carry a piece of *Earth* between humus - the surface-boundary of block (interface between map and body) carrying history - and furrow (passage in networks and trace of the third person).

This same system can be found in the shroud tradition. El Greco's *La Verónica con la Santa Faz* comes to mind.

Figure 5 - El Greco, *La Verónica con la Santa Faz*, oil on canvas, 84 x 91cm, circa 1580, Museo Santa-Cruz, Toledo

This work recalls the (f)act of a woman holding out her veil to a wounded Jesus carrying his cross. The latter accepts and takes the veil, his image-face inscribed in the fabric. The fabric that turns over in El Greco's work, with the image-face of Jesus, recalls Burri's blocks (apart from the obvious notion of the signature). The fabric turns inside out, showing

---

[10] Explored through a Catholic lens

an upper and an under side of the mesh, of a complex space that is not merely a support, but which reconnects a fiction (of which the image-face and the blocks are a trace). Véronique, holding the fabric with her fingertips, reframes the fiction and figure of the *Earth* in the background, allowing the emergence of an interiority to the canvas and our reattachment as subject. The second person extends into the between-furrow/block, into the focus of Veronica's gaze. In the case of El Greco, the second person extends into the character-Jesus passage.

He traces a fictional discourse, which is already only fiction and ®≠MAKE because Véronique is already wearing - again - her veil. A dialogue is established between the *Earth* and this YOU (second person) who splits into two - in the same way as the double relationship of bodies-in-presence is structured between the AR and the VR in AN DOMHAN. It's a YOU that calls us into the work (the immersive experience). The user is the lens in Anselmo's photography. *Entrare nell'opera* represents the artist running into the heart of the image, becoming the terrain and experience of the work created by the artist. It surpasses its own status as a semiotic index[11] to be the very terrain of experience.

Figure 6 - Giovanni Anselmo, *Entrare nell'Opera*, photographie, 390 x 266cm, 1971, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art of Trento and Rovereto / Private collection. Composition with user experience AN DOMHAN

The YOU digs in and opens us up to the third person, as does the dialogue between Anselmo, artist ALL-READY-making the image and inscribing himself in the patrimonial emotion of the place (terrain), and Anselmo, character of the image already ®-Done in the terrain. It's the exact distance of an expanse of *Earth* in the spatial experience of the work.

Finally, this meeting between the YOU and the *Earth* creates communication through the construction of the alter ego through the territory as an Antre-person of the second person

---

[11] Who would categorize the figure of the artist-character on the surface and texture of any place associated with a past spatio-temporal context, an already-Made.

facing the dead, who needs fiction to create a third person/man. The profane doesn't unearth, *YOU*'re *EARTH*bound through him.

Gaëtan Le Coarer, 2024

References

Bélanger, A.-M. (2006). La division de l'instant: Lecture de L'instant de ma mort de Maurice Blanchot. *Horizons philosophiques, 17*(1), 1. https://doi.org/10.7202/802963ar

Benveniste, É. (1966). *Problèmes de linguistique générale: Vol. Tome 1*. Gallimard.

Brandon, C. (2016). L'Entre [corps/machine]: La Princesse et son Mac [Thesis, Paris 1 - Panthéon-Sorbonne]. https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-02111485

Deleuze, G. (2009). *Logique du sens*. Éditions de Minuit.

De Maindreville, R. (2019, April 1). Le troisième homme de François Roustang. *CHRISTUS*. https://www.revue-christus.com/lire-et-mediter/questions-spirituelles/le-troisieme-homme-de-francois-roustang/4932

Derrida, J. (2007). *La voix et le phénomène: Introduction au problème du signe dans la phénomenologie de Husserl*. Quadrige.

Didi-Huberman, G. (1992). *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde*. Editions de Minuit.

Gaudreault, A., & Marion, P. (2004). Transécriture and Narrative Mediatics (R. Stam, Trans.). In *A Companion to Literature and Film* (pp. 58-70).

Genette, G. (1972). *Figures III*. Editions du Seuil.

Guyonvarc'h, C.-J. (1980). *Textes Mythologiques Irlandais*. Ogam-Celticum.

Heinich, N. (2009). *La fabrique du patrimoine: « De la cathédrale à la petite cuillère »*. Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme. https://doi.org/10.4000/books.editionsmsh.2642

Le Coarer, G. (2022). *Bande Dessinée et Réalité Mixte, vers de nouveaux espaces de narration* [Thesis, Université Savoie Mont-Blanc].

Le Coarer, G., Veyrat, M., & Chabert, G. (2023). ©eUX-QUI-®EST: An Domhan XR HyperHéritage Fictionnel. In *Repenser et faire revivre le patrimoine immatériel à l'ère numérique*. Europia.

Lefebvre, H. (2000). *La production de l'espace* (4th ed.). Éd. Anthropos.

Lévinas, E. (1976). Heidegger, Gagarine et nous. In *Difficile liberté: Essais sur le judaïsme* (2nd ed., pp. 299-303). Albin Michel.

Morimoto, N. (2018). Michel de Certeau et les préfaces des mystiques. *Les Dossiers du Grihl, 12*(2). https://doi.org/10.4000/dossiersgrihl.6859

Roustang, F., Roustang-Stoller, E.-A., Fouilloux, E., Langlois, C., & Hervieu-Léger, D. (2019). *Le troisième homme, entre rupture personnelle et crise catholique*. Odile Jacob.

Veyrat, M. (2015). ®≠MAKE. In *100 Notions pour l'Art Numérique* (pp. 164-166). édition de l'immatériel.

Virilio, P. (1988). *La machine de vision*. Editions Galilée.