BO T°P HO NE

Interactive installation to dialogue with a literature character.

BOT°PHONE

By Rocio Berenguer

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BOT°PHONE is an immersive and interactive installation, which allows to enter into a dialogue with a literary piece through Artificial Intelligence.

Like the Theatrophones, BOT°PHONE takes the form of a retro-futuristic phone box. This booth invites the audience to sit in an armchair that isolates them phonetically so that they can be fully immersed in the discussion to be constructed with the fictional character that it houses.

Opposite, a mirror/screen completes the immersive sphere in which the experience takes place. The face of the person in the audience is captured and thanks to face tracking, it is the spectator's expressions that animate the 3D faces generated by the artificial intelligence. A face-to-face encounter of oneself as another, another as a self, a game of mirrors and mirages unfolds throughout the experience where a multitude of faces are composed and decomposed with each replica.

The spectator is above all invited to co-construct a scene, a dialogue that is generated in real time between him and the artificial intelligence trained on a particular character or author of a literary work.

The will of the BOT°PHONE device is to be able to accommodate different authors or fictitious characters according to the context of presentation of the work.

In its first version, BOT°PHONE hosts LITTE_BOT, a chatbot that embodies the character of Dom Juan by Molière. It was created for the exhibition "[Molière, le jeu du vrai et du faux](#)".

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Installation
interactive pour
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TEAM

Artistic development of the work - BOT°PHONE

Rocio Berenguer, conception, design, artistic direction and dramaturgy

Hugo Arcier, visual creation 3D avatar

Arthur Geslin, co-design of the volume object

Léopold Frey, sound creation, chatbot development and integration

Étienne Champagne, UE4 development & Face Tracking

Gesture, technical design and construction of the installation

Scientific design of the chatbot

Creation of the public version of the chatbot by B12 Consulting.

Anna Pappa, Lecturer in Computer Science - University of Paris 8

Coordination BnF

Cécile Quach, Gallica Studio project manager

Joël Huthwohl, Director of the Performing Arts Department

Arnaud Laborderie, Gallica project manager

Peter Stirling, Research Project Officer

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Stage direction

To write an interactive piece is to write a scenario in half, in tree structure, like a game, a dynamic scenario that can never be reproduced twice, but in an infinite number of variations. It is a dynamic scenario that can never be reproduced twice, but in an infinite number of variations. You have to weave between the unknown and the proposition, between control and total absence of control, between the fixed and the fluid. I imagine it as building a house where you could walk around, you don't know which route the spectator will choose, which rooms will be crossed and what exactly will happen in each room. But you have to build the house, the walls, the spaces, the atmosphere and contents of each room, their usefulness, and then the closed or open doors, the corridors, the final entry and exit of the house. Here, unlike in video games, it is a question of building with words alone (or almost).

Immersive experience

I work in fiction, in narrative. The show is a convention by which we accept that everything is false, that this false can become true if we accept to live it as true. If I play Lady D., the spectator knows that I am not her. But for a moment, in this play, we will all admit that I am Lady D. It is because we agree to go together to this borderline between the true and the false that we can be excited by what happens on stage, in a film or in a novel. With our Dom Juan, I apply exactly the same convention. For me, there is no emergence of consciousness, of intelligence. We know that this is completely false, that there is nothing but a machine programmed to impersonate Dom Juan. But language models and automatic generation systems add a very exciting new dramaturgical tool.

I work with art forms that always stand on the edge between truth and falsehood. These artifices are part of a very old practice, which we continue with new tools. It is a continuum of the stage to create disturbing experiences between the false and the true. It's about doing "as if" to explore things that can't be explored in the real world.

Dialoguing with a work

What interests me above all in these technical objects is what they can generate as real, as a mode of existence (Simondon), and what they generate on us, fear, fascination, repulsion, confusion, etc. What I explore with these technological tools is the relationship to otherness, to radical otherness. I want to understand how to get out of the narcissistic relationships that often make the existence of the other impossible. The other other, as a real other, a radical otherness, a reality in its own right, a different possibility, a diversity of forms of being in the world. It is in this sense that I explore interactive tools for their potential to explore, observe and play with relational patterns.

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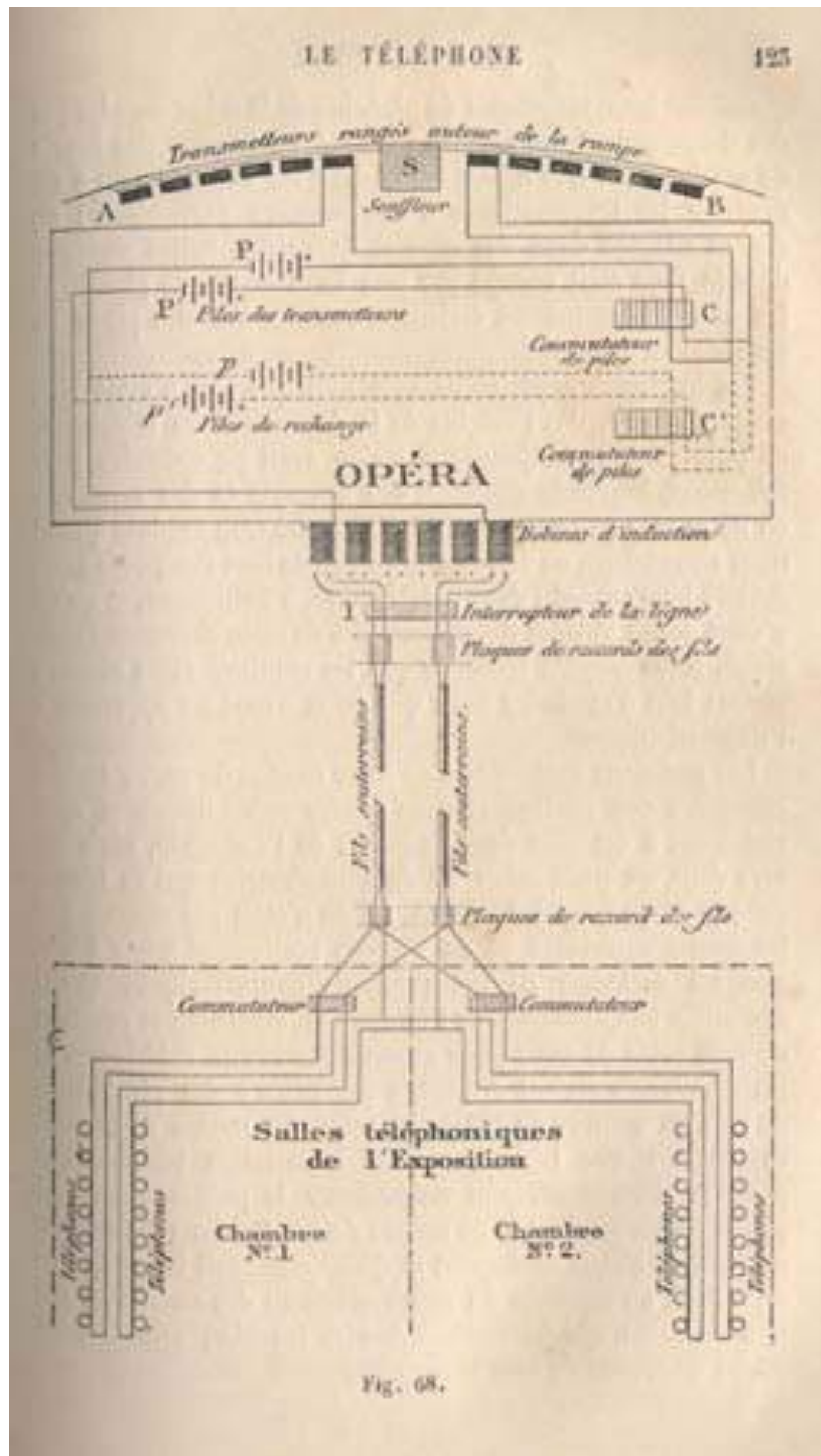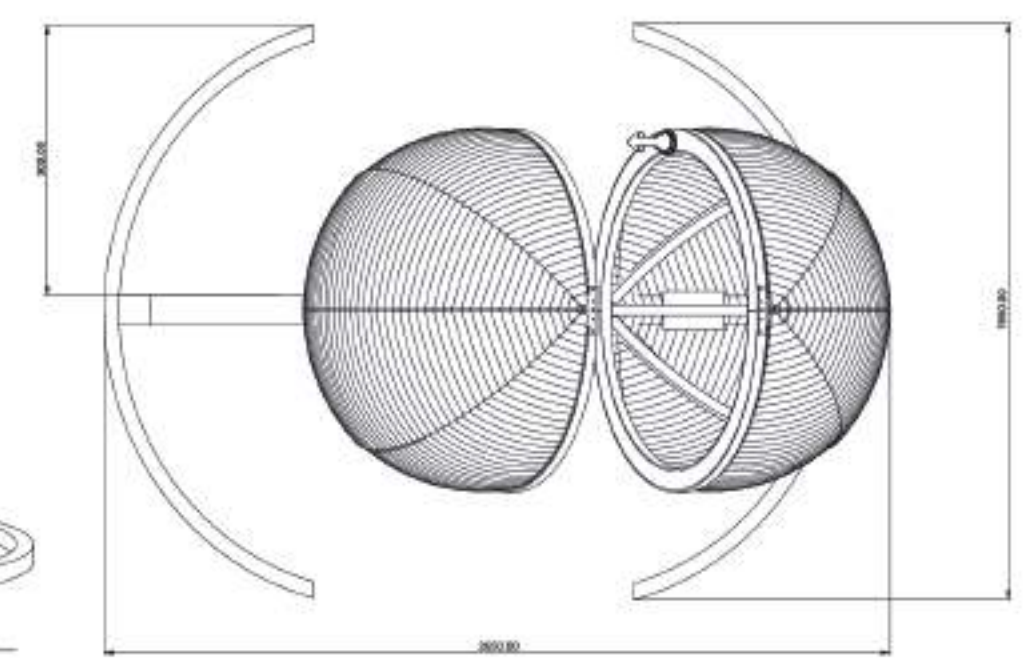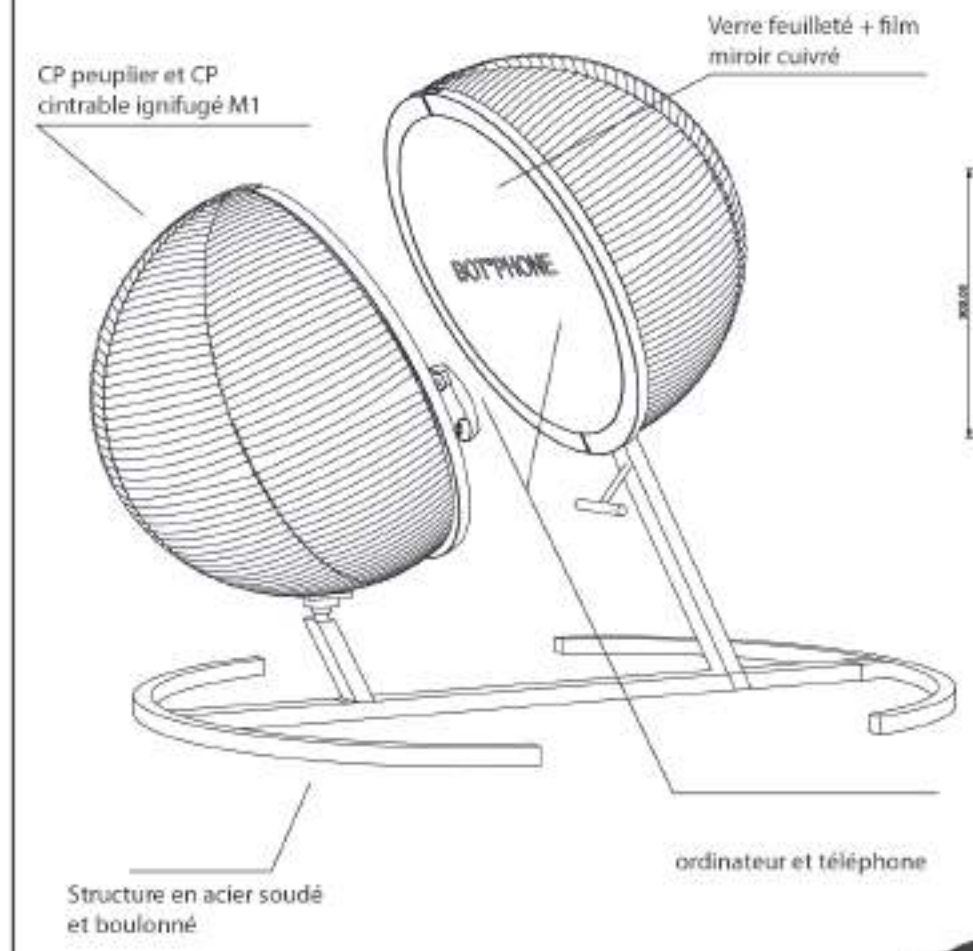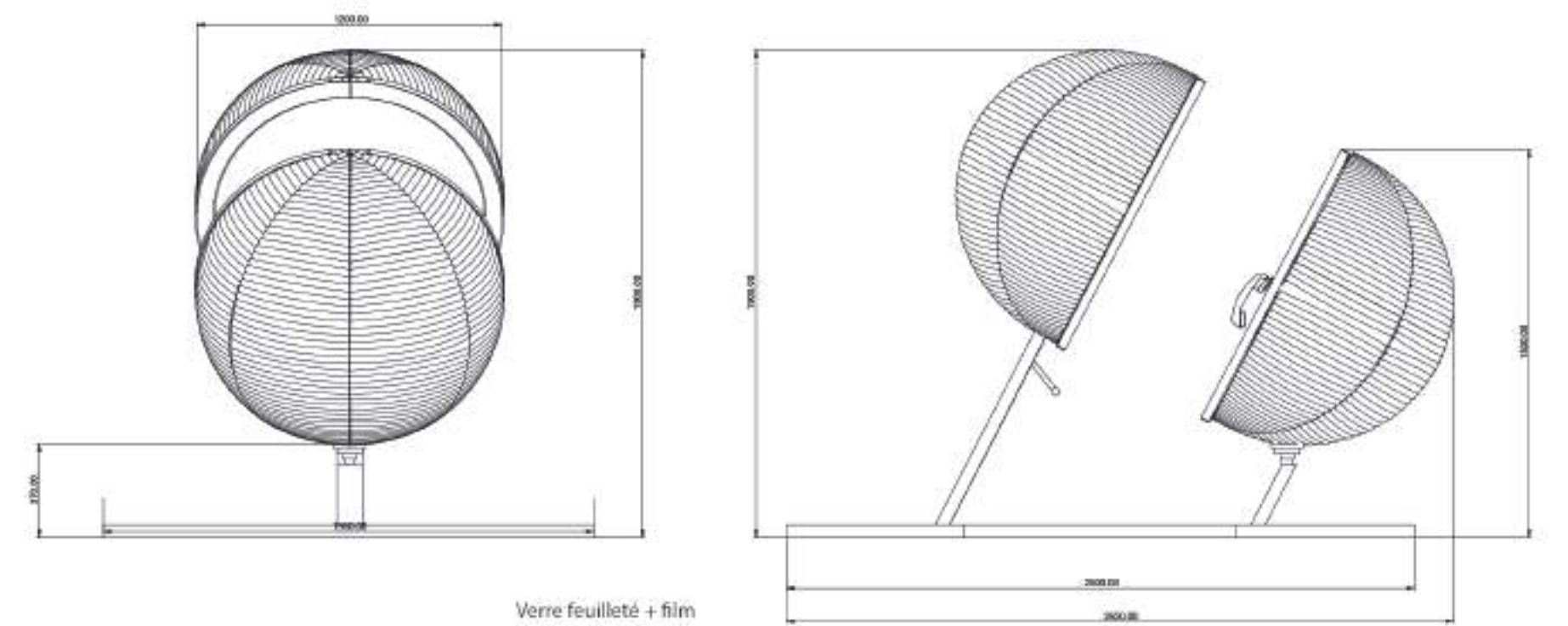

Theatrophone_-_Clement_Ader_1881
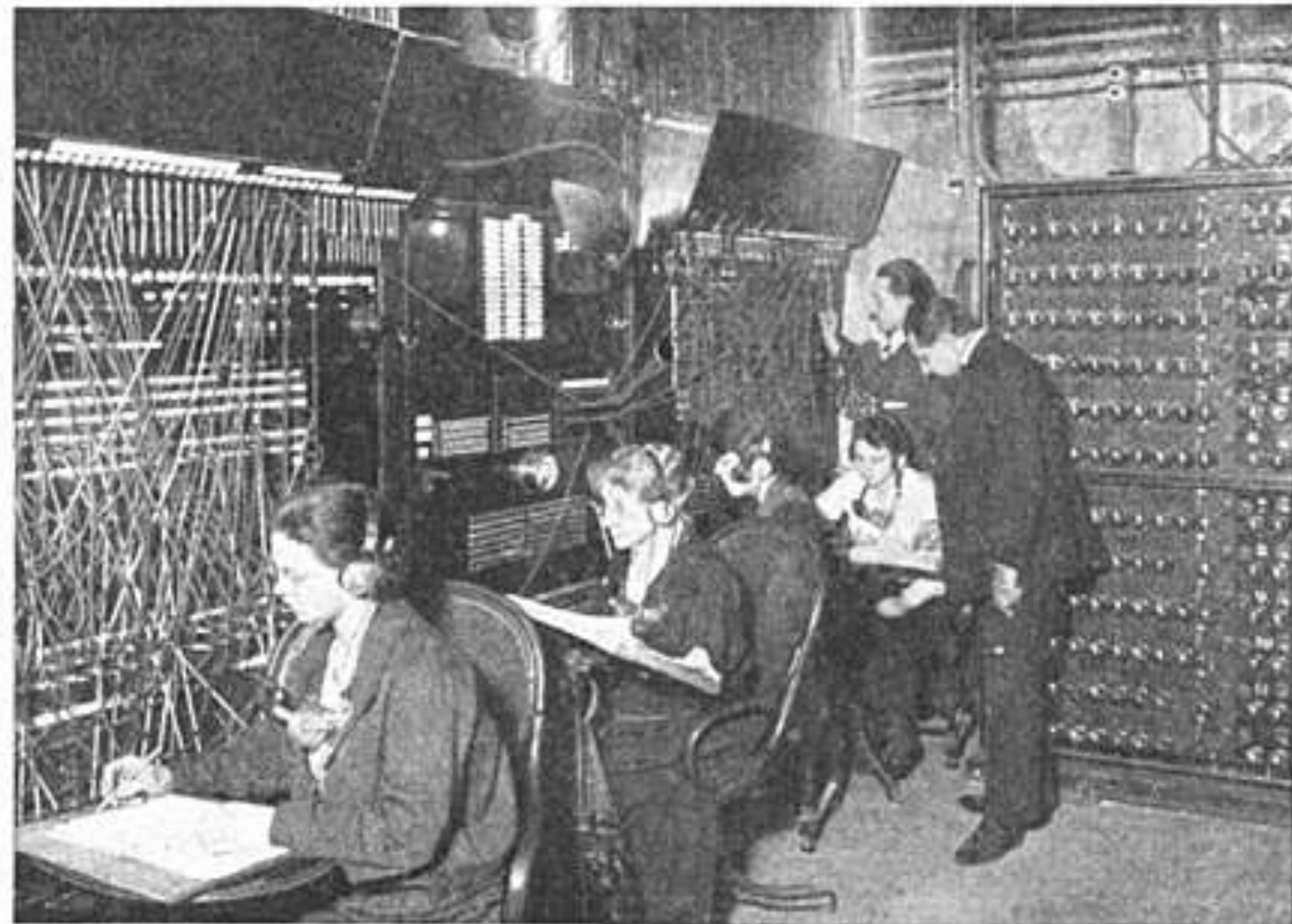
Theatrophone_central_switchboard_(1925)

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CP peuplier et CP
cintrable ignifugé M1

Verre feuilleté + film
miroir cuivré

Structure en acier soudé
et boulonné

ordinateur et téléphone

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In its first version, BOT°PHONE hosts LITTE_BOT, a chatbot that embodies the character of Dom Juan by Molière. It was created for the exhibition "Molière, le jeu du vrai et du faux".

LITTE_BOT proposes to renew the experience of reading and stage performance by allowing the public to dialogue with a character of Molière, an emblematic figure of French literature.

LITTE_BOT transposes a character into a chatbot by means of dramaturgical strategies thanks to an artificial intelligence trained on Molière's corpus in TEI produced by the OBVIL and available on the BnF's digital library Gallica.

A BOT OF DON JUAN

I have been working with the imaginary and the techniques of AI for a few years now, this technology fascinates me, but also all the imaginary and the narratives that it generates. In this technique there is something Dadaist, absurd, extremely poetic, strange, sometimes reflecting the most monstrous part of our contemporary beliefs. The first piece was a dance/theatre performance called Homeostasis, where I staged a dialogue between an AI and myself, the next was IAgotchi, an installation to dialogue with a philosopher AI, Lithosys, an inter-species communication system. In each project, I gave a different identity and status to this technology.

In this project, a pirate character was embodied by Dom Juan, revealing himself to be against order and codes, a rebel, embodying the archetype of seduction.

The figure of the seducer, who uses the generation of desire, as a path to immortality.

That's when I thought that this particular character was very interesting to be interpreted by an AI. I found Molière's Dom Juan to be the archetype of seduction. Archetype, because this figure crosses the centuries, in a different version in each period, according to the morals and social codes of the time.

"Seduction is a script - a stage of language on which everyone appears as an actor in a role written in advance. In De la séduction, in 1979, Jean Baudrillard tried to think of the strange links between seduction and lies, desire and theatre - or rather: seduction and what he called "the artifice of the world" as a "strategy of the devil".

Extracted from: Laurent de Sutter. "Jack Sparrow. Manifesto for a pirate linguistics".

Seduction as an act of piracy, as a thief, as a hoodlum, seduction is to pirate the attention and desire of the other. An effect of mirages and distorted mirrors, stealing the other's gaze, gentle manipulation of language and will, and something of the quest for immortality?

AI feeds on our images, our faces, our words, a distorted, frightening, disturbing and fascinating mirror of what we produce, of what we are?

In the imaginary of AI, I find certain resonances with the archetype of the seducer as pirate. AI today, both in its technical and imaginary aspects, is nothing but a game of mirrors distorted by its models, a giant monster that feeds on our every move on the web, frightening, attractive, is it perhaps another incarnation of the archetype of seduction, the Dom Juan of our time?

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VIDEO AND SOUND OF
THE EXPERIENCE

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PRESS (IN FRENCH)

Interview de Rocio Berenguer sur le webzine L'ADN

Article sur Litté Bot sur l'Eclaireur FNAC

bnf.fr

Interview des acteurs du projet : Carnet de recherche Hypotheses de la BnF

EUR Artec, infolettre d'octobre 2022

Chroniques n°93

BBF Bulletin des Bibliothèques de France

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PARTNERS

The project also includes a historical and linguistic approach to Molière's theatre thanks to the collaboration of Georges Forestier, professor of French literature at the Sorbonne. It also resonates with the collections of the BnF's Performing Arts Department and with the BnF's Molière in 2022 exhibition project, an exhibition produced in partnership with the Comédie-Française.

LITTE-BOT also involves researchers from the University of Paris 8, Anna Pappa, a teacher-researcher in Computer Science at the LIASD laboratory, specialising in AI (human-computer communication) and more particularly in natural language processing, and Samuel Szoniecky, a teacher-researcher at the Paragraphe Laboratory, which explores new methods of knowledge engineering for the development of a collective intelligence centred on stimulating, expressing and sharing individual sensibilities.

This research-creation project is part of the Gallica Studio, a completed project set up by the BnF to stimulate the re-use of Gallica, the digital library of the BnF and its partners, and to widen the circle of its users, carried out in collaboration with the Performing Arts Department (BnF). In particular, the Molière corpus developed by the Labex OBVIL(Sorbonne University) was used.
 The public version of the chatbot was developed with B12 Consulting. The LITTE_BOT project was supported by the l'Ecole de recherche universitaire ArTeC, under the Programme d'investissements d'avenir (ANR-17-EURE-0008), by the Université Paris Lumières and by B12 Consulting.

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INVESTIR L'AVENIR

{BnF

B12
OUTSIDE
THE BOX

anr°

{BnF Gallica

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Universitaire
de Recherche
ArTeC LIASD

UNIVERSITÉ
PARIS 8
VINCENNES-SAINT-DENIS

LABORATOIRE
PARAGRAPHE

UPL
UNIVERSITÉ
PARIS LUMIÈRES

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THE FUTURE

For the future, the BOT°PHONE installation would like to continue to be available to any public, in museums, theaters, libraries or cultural events in France and abroad. The aim is to host various bots trained on various databases that can embody different literary, fictional or real characters. Actually the prototype is installed in SCAI, Sorbonne Center for Artificial Intelligence in Paris, for testing and a collaborative workshop « Hackaton », so the students can Hack the artwork to reinvent the character. After this period of explorations in SCAI , we would like to work in a specific fictional or literary character , like Deleuze or an ORACLE.

CONTACT

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