Diffusion, Analysis and Discussion of Electronic Literature in Italy (DADELI)

GRUPPO GIADA

Independent Scholars

Abstract

The present paper introduces a new project whose aim is to disseminate, analyse and discuss electronic literature in Italy. In the first section a general overview of the state of art of Italian electronic literature is given. We show that efforts both within academic research institutions and the publishing industry are hindered by a lack of interest and a misconception about what electronic literature is, particularly in Italy. The second section discusses two twin projects designed by Gruppo Giada, an independent research group founded in 2014: the first one is an *Anthology of the History of Electronic Literature (1945-2015)* (section 2.1), and the second one is an online platform (section 2.2). Finally, the conclusion underlines the goals of Gruppo Giada's projects, given the current global landscape of the field of electronic literature. **Keywords:** Italian literary anthology; electronic literature; history of new media writing.

Resumo

Este artigo apresenta um novo projeto, cujo objetivo é divulgar e analisar a literatura eletrónica em Itália. A primeira secção contém uma visão geral do estado da arte da literatura eletrónica italiana. Mostramos que os esforços, quer das instituições de investigação académica, quer da indústria editorial têm sido prejudicados pela falta de interesse e por um equívoco sobre o que é a literatura eletrónica, particularmente em Itália. A segunda secção aborda dois projetos gémeos concebidos pelo Gruppo Giada, um grupo de pesquisa independente fundado em 2014: o primeiro é uma *Antologia da História da Literatura Eletrónica (1945-2015)* (secção 2.1), e o segundo é uma plataforma em linha (secção 2.2). Finalmente, a conclusão sublinha os objetivos dos projetos do Gruppo Giada considerando o cenário global atual do campo da literatura eletrónica. **Palavras-chave:** antologia de literatura italiana; literatura electrónica; história da escrita digital.

1. Electronic Literature in Italy: What will it be?

Five decades have passed since *Tapemark I*, the generative-combinatorial experiment by Nanni Balestrini, received recognition as the first Italian example—and as one of the first in the world—of 'computer-aided literature'. Since then, electronic literature—which became properly digital in the early nineties—has experienced a significant growth and spread all over Europe in number of authors, events and projects, among which the European conferences of the ELO Electronic Literature Organiza-

tion,[1] founded in 1999, the research group Hermeneia,[2] founded around the year 2000, and the collaborative research project ELMCIP Electronic Literature as Model of Creativity and Innovation in Practice,[3] founded in 2010.

On the contrary in Italy—home of Marinetti, Calvino, Pignotti and Toti—electronic literature still seems to be little known and practiced, apart from a small circle of academic scholars and authors (including, amongst others: Caterina Davinio, Lello Masucci, Giovanna di Rosario, Lisa Somma, Marco Maria Gazzano, Matteo D'Ambrosio, Mario Costa, Roberto Gilli, Daniela Calisi and Fabio de Vivo) who deal with the specifics of electronic literature. The lack of experts and activities in this field is confirmed by data retrieved from the online databases and in the anthologies of the organizations and projects mentioned above: in the ELMCIP database, for example, the section "Creative Works"[4] features only 31 works in Italian, from a total of 2,559 works; the section "Critical Writings"[5] contains only 40 Italian works from a total of 2,896 works; and finally in the "Teaching Resources"[6] only one Italian work, from a total of 83 works, was completed. In the two volumes of the *ELO Collection*[7] and the *Anthology of European Electronic Literature*[8] published by ELMCIP, there are no Italian works at all. Italy is not even mentioned in the sections dedicated to University courses,[9] initiatives, Festivals or online resources.[10]

From the point of view of authorship, the potential of the available resources are still largely unexplored, so that Tommaso Lisa says that "since Nanni Balestrini's *Tapemark I* not much more has been done to develop creative synergies between poetry and computer" (2006). In fact, you can hardly disagree with Alessio Di Lella, who says "to date, the common capability is that of a hybrid expertise: writers in the network are using computer applications essentially to transpose texts into digital form that they would still have written with paper and ink" (2007). The main causes for this lack of dissemination of Italian digital works are inscrutable and may be traced back,

---

[1] http://eliterature.org/elo-history/.
[2] http://www.hermeneia.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=87&Itemid=511.
[3] http://elmcip.net/page/elmcip-project-publications.
[4] http://elmcip.net/work.
[5] http://elmcip.net/critical_writing.
[6] http://elmcip.net/teaching_resource.
[7] http://collection.eliterature.org/1/aux/authors.html.
http://collection.eliterature.org/2/extra/authors.html.
[8] http://anthology.elmcip.net/works.html.
[9] The only course that currently exists in Italy, "Electronic Literature in English" directed by Prof. Paola Carbone, is planned for the academic year 2015/16 at the IULM University in Milan.
[10] We can mention blogs by Daniela Calisi (http://contentodesign.org/), Roberto Gilli (http://www.robertogilli.it/), Daniele Giampà (http://labirintexto.blogspot.pt/), Lello Masucci (http://www.elettroletteratura.org/) and the online platform eLitRPro (https://eliteratures.wordpress.com/) by Fabio De Vivo.

on one hand, to certain general aspects of electronic literature and, on the other hand, to certain characteristics of the Italian economic-cultural system.

Regarding this last point, Paola Carbone points out the limited knowledge of the English language of the Italian audience in general and the lack of a "culture of electronic literature", due to the absence of proper approaches and training for the audience, adequate distribution channels and the small number of artists and writers working in the field."[11] Therefore, it is no surprise that, as Carbone states, "apart from some experiments of collaborative writing especially in social media, electronic literature is undoubtedly a niche genre everywhere";[12] that argument is put forward also by the artist Andy Campbell who states that "the work is little known I believe because it is difficult to define and practiced/appreciated only mainly in academic circles".[13]

New media have brought about radical changes to print-based concepts of reading and writing: the role of the reader, for example, has become a narrative variable, which can take on new functions (downloading, browsing, interacting, writing, etc.) by virtue of the 'ergodicity' of which Espen J. Aarseth spoke of (1997: 1); the writer no longer plays the mere role of the author of a work, but of the programmer of the device that generates it; finally the hybrid and innovative nature of electronic literature in general is in constant evolution towards new terrain for experiments that clash with the conservative ideologies of Italian literary culture.

As Di Rosario said at her presentation during the Electronic Literature Communities Seminar in Bergen (2010),[14] the first reason for the failure of electronic literature to disseminate is to be found in the weight of the humanist tradition that still identifies poetry with Dante and mostly associates electronic literature with Visual Art—a fate that electronic literature shares with its distant predecessor, Futurism. According to Di Rosario, all these points explain why "most of the scholars of electronic literature in Italy are not from literary fields."[15] Di Rosario concluded her analysis mentioning the economic factor as the primary cause for the lack of interest: "Universities and publishers are simply not interested in new forms of experimentation." Her thesis is shared by Thomas Zandergiacomo, who said: "I think not so many Italian artists and poets are interested in electronic literature as in Austria, Germany or the US".[16] From this cursory overview, it seems evident that electronic literature is a cultural phenomenon of the modern digital age which has not received much attention in Italy.

---

[11] Statements made during a private interview in May 2014.

[12] Statements made during a private interview in May 2014.

[13] Statements made during a private interview in May 2014.

[14] http://heranet.info/elmcip/news/bergen-seminar-electronic-literature-communities-sept-20-21-2010.

[15] https://vimeo.com/album/1338243/video/15736633.

[16] Statements made during a private interview in May 2014.

Despite the fact that in the last two decades an increasing number of literary and artistic works have been created and some research projects have been run by a relatively small group of authors and academic scholars, electronic literature is still unknown to a large audience and the publishing houses. Instead, an identification between electronic literature and eBooks has been largely broadcasted and discussed to the detriment of digital-born works.[17]

This is a regrettable development which cannot be justified with economics and the rule of the market, as mentioned above. As a matter of fact, the works and the theories of electronic literature can be applied in the increasingly-valued corporate storytelling to adapt marketing strategies to new media tools. There is a considerable inconsistency between the pressing concern to find new models of communication and the disregard for electronic literature. Yet again this type of cultural discourse does not get translated into economic discourse. The skills, the working methods, the experiments and new discoveries deriving from the field of electronic literature are not fully embraced or they are misconceived by the publishing industry.

Furthermore not much has been done in the cultural sector either. In Italy only two events specifically related to electronic literature have been organized, namely: Officina di Letteratura Elettronica (OLE) Conference in 2011 at PAN and OLE 0.1 Festival Internazionale della Letteratura Elettronica in 2014, both promoted by Lello Masucci, president of OLE, together with Di Rosario, for the Conference of 2011, and Roberta Iadevaia, for the Festival of 2014.

In both events, despite good media coverage and the participation of distinguished artists from various parts of the world, audience turnout was not very significant. Visitors' feedback confirmed the lack of information: most people admitted that they had never heard of electronic literature before and almost all associated it with eBooks. Nevertheless, visitors seemed to be curious and eager to know more about electronic literature, but only after hearing the explanation of the works and the way they 'work' (as was the case, for example, of interactive works presented by Philippe Bootz and Olivier Auber[18]).

There is clearly a cultural gap and a great backlog of research work to be completed. Only through the diffusion, analysis and discussion of works and critical studies of electronic literature can there be an increase in the number of people interested in this subject, an improvement in the understanding of what electronic literature is, and finally a new generation of authors and artists who will create new works of electronic literature.

This problem is rooted in the obstinate one-sided view of experts from the different disciplines and professional branches that are linked to the

---

[17] Cf. Fabio De Vivo, 2011: 2.
[18] http://www.olefestival.it/organization/.

creation, diffusion and study of electronic literature. In a period of transition from printed media to digital multimedia content, it is inappropriate to adapt the latter to the older methods of editing and publishing or to copyright, when, instead, everything about electronic literature, be it the technology or the paradigmatic shift in the role of the reader, suggests that the old ways of editing and publishing should be adapted to the new media. Equally ineffective and incoherent seems to be the use of canonical-literary concepts for the comparative study between digitally-born literature and printed literature (i.e. Historic novel, Bildungsroman, construction of fictional characters, etc.).

The paradigmatic shifts in the three instances of the system of communication imply a renewal of the very concept and terminology of the field of study.

2. Gruppo Giada's Projects

The unexplored terrain of Italian electronic literature is the playground for Gruppo Giada, an independent research group founded in 2014 for the analysis, dissemination and discussion of electronic literature in Italy. This research team runs two twin projects: an *Anthology of the History of Electronic Literature (1945-2015)* and an online platform. Both projects will be written in Italian language as the target audience will be students, professors and new authors all around Italy.

2.1 The Anthology of the History of Electronic Literature

The Anthology will be a collection of around 300 works of electronic literature created and written between 1945 and 2015 and it will include data sheets about authors, literary genre and current literary topoi. The historical Anthology should be the most effective tool to reach a greater number of readers interested in the different branches of electronic literature. The historical method allows, on one hand, an overview of the relations between IT and literature through works of digital literature and experimental literature of the print literature tradition or digital literature and digital art. On the other hand, the historic overview provides the basis for an interdisciplinary discourse amongst scholars of IT, literature and art, but also amongst publishers, jurists and librarians for topics regarding copyright or archiving.

The analysis starts in the year 1945 because it is the publishing date of Vannevar Bush's "As We May Think" in *The Atlantic Monthly* magazine, a seminal essay that envisions hypertext and the structure of what a network of linked documents through reader-generated trails might become. Bush's essay can be seen as a valid example of a time when computer technology began to develop. In fact, only three years after Bush's essay, the first stored-

program electronic computer was implemented (the 'Small-Scale Experimental Machine') and Norbert Wiener laid the foundations of cybernetics with his essay *Cybernetics or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*. In 1950, the famous essays "Computing machinery and intelligence" by Alan Turing, and "Literaturmetaphysik" by Max Bense were published.

The literary works will be selected from the main online sources of the field, including those mentioned above (ELMCIP, *Electronic Literature Collection* Volume 1 and Volume 2, OLE Officina di Letteratura Elettronica, Hermeneia, Electronic Literature Directory) and from reputable online journals, blogs of the authors, books and essays dedicated to the genre. The Anthology is conceived as a reference book for the study of works of electronic literature. Also it stands in total coherence with the digital culture it emerges from, for which reason, the Anthology will be exclusively released as an eBook and not as a printed book. For the realization of the eBook specific software developed by an Italian software house PubCoder will be used and it will be published by the Italian publishing house Quintadicopertina. Finally, the Anthology will analyse and quote works which were created under a creative commons license. If any explicit permission to quote the work is required, the author(s) will be asked to give authorization. In any case the Anthology will follow the Italian legislation for Anthologies (Art. 70, Legge 22 aprile 1941, n. 633).[19]

The study of the history of electronic literature brings into view the tight relationship between IT and literature. This fact, as obvious as it may seem, should make the reader aware that, on one side, electronic literature is created by communication tools known and used on a daily basis by a wide range of people and therefore it is meant to bring works of electronic literature into the technological reality of the reader. On the other side, the reader should be sensitised to the fact that the aesthetics of some works is bound to the limitations of digital devices and software tools used for their creation.

The whole historical period from 1945-2015 is divided by major innovations in the field of IT which brought about the creation of new kinds of literary works along with critical studies. Following these innovations and taking into account the periodizations identified by Katherine Hayles (2007), the eBook will be divided into four sections.

The first section will be dedicated to the so-called 'predecessors' of electronic literature. It will start with the *I-Ching* (Book of Mutations), considered unanimously by all experts to be the very first hypertextual work of literature of ancient times and will continue with some examples of multimedia work created between 4th century BC and 4th century AD. The first part will end with the year 1985 when the very first work of hypertext literature was released by the Publishing House Eastgate Systems: Michael Joyce's *afternoon, a story*. Interestingly, the 1980s witnessed an increase in the publication of

---

[19] http://www.interlex.it/testi/l41_633.htm#70.

'Game Books', a literary genre of the printed tradition which deserves its rightful place in the Anthology for the distinguishing game features and multilinear narration so common in electronic literature.

The works of print literature included in the collection present some interesting similarities with the works of electronic literature in regard to the way of writing and reading. These works can be labelled as experimental print literature, but from a retrospective point of view they can be seen as predecessors of electronic literature. One of the basic and implied ideas of the Anthology is that electronic literature is not absolutely different from print nor a revolutionary innovation which uproots the traditional paradigms of literature, but rather a continuation of experimental literary practices. As a matter of fact, many attempts and forms of experimental literature which could not be, or at least not fully be, accomplished in print literature, find their implementation in the electronic context.

The second section goes from 1985 to 1995, the so-called 'classical age' (Hayles, 2007) of electronic literature dedicated to hypertext novels (mainly those published by Eastgate System, which was founded in 1982) and the first experiments of animated poetry and multimedia works. It was in this period that the World Wide Web was invented and eventually made publicly available, but not before 1995 when the first commercial browsers were created. For this reason the second section ends with the advent of the so called 'First' and 'Second War of the Browsers'[20] which marks the beginning and the end of the third section.

The third period (1995-2004), which Hayles called the 'postmodern or contemporary age' (2007) is very interesting because it sees the rise of the web (the so-called 'Web 1.0'): online communities begin to be formed and to expand as well as websites and magazines devoted to electronic literature (especially webpoetry and generative poetry); works previously distributed on CD and floppy disks are now made available online. Above all there is a shift, as Philippe Bootz said (2006b) from the so-called 'computer-aided literature' (that is to say an artistic practice based on the use of computing as a simple auxiliary tool) to properly digital literature (that is to say to an artistic practice in which the works embody the aesthetics of its medium).

The fourth and last section, from 2004 to the present, coincides with the rise of social networks and the so-called 'Web 2.0', which differs from the Web 1.0 for modes of sharing, discussion and distribution (user-generated content, microblogging, clouds, locative and transmedia narratives). These innovations bring electronic literature to a complete new level, not only for what regards the creation of the works but also the involvement of a broader audience.

---

[20] A browser war is competition for dominance in the usage share of web browsers (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Usage_share_of_web_browsers).

The Anthology will contain essays, charts, articles and data sheets. A short essay will introduce each of the above-mentioned historical sections, providing a general overview of the historical and cultural situation of the given period and the development in the field of IT, the innovations and issues in the field of electronic literature. These essays will also refer to some of the literary and critical works which are considered important, but not analysed in depth in the articles, which will contain the analysis of the works. In-depth charts will be present in each section in order to give insights into the biography and bibliography of the author, and these will be linked to the individual works analysed. Every part of the Anthology will be conceived as a hypertextual and interactive text provided with internal and external links.

There will also be data sheets, which are short articles dealing with specific topics and explanations of literary genres. These data sheets are meant to give a deeper insight into the characteristics of a literary genre in regard of the electronic or digital tools applied or the form of the literary text. Finally there will be topic-related articles, which will subsume numerous literary works united by the same topic, as for example the semantic field of 'sea' and 'fairy tale' or the use of a 'cube' and a 'map'.

The project of the Anthology is supported by the software house Pub-Coder and the publishing house Quintadicopertina, both based in Turin, Italy. The software house PubCoder is a start-up founded in 2013 by Paolo Giovine and Paolo Albert and developed at H-Farm, an Italian incubator for digital start-ups. Thanks to its software called PubCoder, a desktop application for creating and publishing digital, multimedia and interactive eBooks, it was among the selected start-ups at the prestigious Salone Internazionale del Libro di Torino 2014. Pubcoder allows non-experts in graphics or in programming to create interactive multimedia books. It provides EPUB eBooks for Apple iBooks, Readium, Kobo, Google Play Books, KF8 for Amazon Kindle and native App for iOS and Android devices thanks to its standards (EPUB3) and multi-platform functions. In 2014 PubCoder was included on the shortlist of recommended software by DBW (the Digital Book World conference in New York); the same year Apple iTunes officially recommended it as an authoring tool.[21] PubCoder was chosen for the creation of the Anthology because, in addition to the features mentioned above (ease of use, multi-platform outputs, use of standards, multimediality, interactivity and hypertext) it allows the user to explore the full potential of IT devices (computers, tablets, smartphones, browsers).

The digital publishing house Quintadicopertina was founded in 2010 by Fabrizio Venerandi and Maria Cecilia Averame. Quintadicopertina—which is a word-play alluding to everything that lies beyond the boundaries of the printed book (the Italian term 'quarta di copertina' means 'back cover')—is

---

[21] http://itunesconnect.apple.com/WebObjects/iTunesConnect.woa/wa/displayEncodingHouses?ccTypeId=1.

known for being the first Italian publisher to invest in digital publishing; in fact it released the first hypertextual and interactive novel published as an eBook in Italy, *Chi ha ucciso David Crane?* written by Venerandi himself in 2010. Quintadicopertina was chosen for the production and distribution of the Anthology because of the shared belief in the potential of electronic literature and the concept of eBooks, seen not so much as something spectacular or a simple copy of a printed text, but as something else: "not something 'more', but something different", as it is stated on the website.[22]

The history of electronic literature is, as mentioned above, better understood and appreciated when the development of both the constituent dimensions, that is of IT and literature, are taken into account. Literary experiments in print literature, as for example hypertextual and non-linear works written by Raymond Queneau,[23] Theo Lutz[24] or Julio Cortázar,[25] have been realized and implemented with software in current computer environments.

Some works of electronic literature are more strictly bound to IT—in addition to the mouse or the webcam and, in more recent times, personal profiles on social network sites—as is the case of automatic text generators or multimedia devices. In order to highlight this interplay between IT and literature, the first criterion of the selection of works will be the presence of innovative and original features and technologies for the period in which they were created.

A more practical criterion for the selection will be the availability of the works. The Anthology will only feature works which can be found and played by the reader in order to facilitate theoretical learning. For this very reason, performances and installations will not be analysed in the Anthology, but only in the online platform (2.2).

Another important criterion will be the status of digitally born work. These kinds of works can't be printed on paper without losing their basic and characteristic features, as for example multimediality, or at least altering the work in a significant way. This criterion is based on one very crucial aspect of electronic literature which concerns its 'digital' nature. The possibility or impossibility of printing a work is indeed a valid and useful aspect for the understanding of this new literary genre. It immediately shows, for instance, why eBooks in pdf will not be considered at all in the Anthology, whereas the hypertextual and interactive eBooks created by Quintadicopertina and Pub-

---

[22] http://www.quintadicopertina.com/index.php?option=com_
content&view=article&id=55:cosa-e-uintadicopertina&catid=34:mission&Itemid=83.
[23] Raymond Queneau's *100,000,000,000,000 Sonnets*' Web version by Bev Rowe http://www.growndodo.com/wordplay/oulipo/10%5E14sonnets.html.
[24] Lutz's *Stochastische Texte*'s Web version by Johannes Auer
http://auer.netzliteratur.net/0_lutz/lutz_original.html and by Nick Montfort and Helen MacCormack http://nickm.com/memslam/stochastic_texts.html.
[25] Julio Cortázar's *Rayuela*'s Web version by Jennifer Piñero
http://www.literaberinto.com/CORTAZAR/rayuela.htm.

Coder will be presented as innovative and interesting works and used, respectively, for the publication and the production of the Anthology.

The fourth criterion will be the value of exemplarity, as the work should feature characteristics and technologies typical of the genre or sub-genre it belongs to.

The last criterion will concern the quality and quantity of the works of single authors. If an author has created a relatively large number of works with the same techniques (i.e. poetic generator), then only the most cited or the first in chronological order will be chosen. On the other hand, if an author wrote a single work, which is representative of a particular cultural or national tradition, it will be analysed in the Anthology.

The choice of theories and methods of analysis is again correlated to the double nature of the works of electronic literature. The computer, the software and the new media substitute the printed book and cause at the same time a paradigmatic shift in the roles of the author and the reader. It is therefore useful to analyse these three instances of the basic communication system as it is presented in the theories of structuralism: author, medium and receptor.

Moreover the specifics of digital materiality, the multiple functions of the medium itself and the modalities of perception, require additional theoretical and aesthetical approaches, including poststructuralist concepts and new media poetics. For these reasons, the method of triangulation will be applied, since it allows the combination of three different points of view, which in this case are philology, IT and aesthetics.

According to the structuralist theory, the three elements of the system of communication are separately described and analysed. Firstly, great importance will be given to the new role of the author. Creating literary works with electronic or digital tools also requires knowledge and skills of programming. At the same time, it eludes the professional editor, printer and publisher. In fact, many works are published under creative commons licensing and rules of the market or methods of distribution are very different from print editing. These are all new functions added to the paradigmatic level of the traditional author or group of authors which require special attention to fully understand the changes caused by the union of IT and literature.

Secondly, there will be a deep analysis of the technical aspects of the work, i.e. an insight into the working tools, the media environment and the author's way of working. This approach will provide electronic literature with a sense of familiarity and contemporaneity by showing that authors have used computers, software and other tools that most people use on a daily basis. The technical part of the analysis is crucial for the understanding of the steady evolution of electronic literature and the creative aspects of the literary works.

Lastly, the new status of the receptor will be analyzed. The reader of traditional print books is subjected to very interesting changes due to the

implementation of multiple tools offered by new media. If we look at the process of communication as an experiment, we can say that the choices of an author in manipulating the medium of communication have a direct influence on the reader. The receptor therefore becomes a user who navigates through the text guided by signs and hints on the screen, direct indications of the author or by simple individual choice and intuition. From the very beginning, the reader gets involved in the creation of the literary work, when asked to download software or to use a webcam. The reading process itself depends on the selection of chapters or images. Besides that, the digital devices have combined text with audio-visual effects. This innovation results in the new way of reading defined as multiliteracy or multimedia literacy. This is one more reason why electronic literature needs to be examined more carefully.

Each of the anthologized works will be analysed under the consideration of the theories proposed by experts and academic scholars. In particular, for each work the following aspects will be studied: historic context, structural elements (i. e. links), operating systems and browser, support and source code. Furthermore the works will be distinguished by the category of time (Ryan, 2005), by behaviour[26] and by literary practice (Di Rosario, 2011: 100).

Other key topics that will be taken under consideration in the analysis of the works would be the following: the user's position (Eskelinen, 2009: 41) along with reproducibility, duration and speed of reading (Eskelinen, 2009: 155); the concept of 'entax'[27] (Di Rosario, 2011: 115); and finally 'new rhetoric media figures' generated by electronic mutable texts (Saemmer, 2008).

It is important to note that, following the concept of 'taxonomadism' taken by Talan Memmott, works will be studied as a whole in order to understand "how digital works are made, how technology, code, media, and intent play together in the formation of poetic hypermedia" (Memmott, 2006: 305). This approach therefore doesn't regard the function of author and reader as simple semiotic processes, but considers it as a process affecting the notion of interactivity as it questions the specific aesthetics of digital media. This interactivity is not just about the way words and other signs are integrated in poetry and interact with each other. Analysing interactivity also implies considering the way in which it most deeply affects the role of the reader who can actively participate in the construction of content and meaning.

Large attention will also be given to the concept of 'ergodic literature' proposed by Aarseth in his seminal essay *Cybertext: Explorations of Ergodic Literature* as well as the model suggested by Markku Eskelinen in "Six Problems in Search of a Solution: The challenge of cybertext theory and ludology to literary theory" where, proposing changes in Genette's narratological cate-

---

[26] http://iloveepoetry.com/?page_id=2593.
[27] Giovanna Di Rosario uses the semiotic term 'entax' to analyse form, structure and typography of electronic poetry, in order to build a syntax of the electronic space: unlike syntax—which refers to grammar rules of linguistic signs, entax considers the relation between letters in the space.

gories, he shows how to use Aarseth's typology to expand narratology so as to be more useful for ergodic works in general. These suggestions will be used during the analysis of the works in order to highlight issues such as: how we should extend literary narratology beyond its print heritage; the ludological approach to literary issues; the role of the reader in a situation where there is still a lack of conventions; the changed relations among texts and the relation of text to itself.

In general, all the works will be seen as 'multilevel systems'. These levels include data (textual context), process (computational interactions) and presentations (narrative rendering on screen) based on the method called 'electronic literature as an information system' proposed by Juan B. Gutierrez, Mark C. Marino, Pablo Gervás, Laura Borràs Castanyer (2009)—each in turn taken from the 'expressive processing' based on operational logics known as 'Tale-Spin-Effect' first proposed by Noah Wardrip-Fruin (2012: 115-163). Consequently, data (images, sounds, words), processes (algorithms), the surface and the possibility of interaction will be analysed, along with their inter-relations and the *operating logics* or the representative strategies which effectively enable the possibilities of action of the author.

The tripartition of the system of communication is repeated in the articles—which are linked to single essays about the individual authors, the literary genre and the reception of the literary works as well as its aesthetics (see 2.1.1).

The topics regarding the perception of the readers will be examined in the data sheets of 'Aesthetics' with special attention to multi-literacy. The first meaning of the word refers to the author's effort to trigger a specific emotion in the reader and the way in which these visual effects are generated. The second meaning directs attention in the opposite direction: from the interface to the sight of the reader. The combination of text and visuals alter the perception and therefore the senses of the reader. Reading process mix with learning process, and the theories of aesthetics can bring light to the pedagogic functions of certain visual and sensorial effects.

Regarding aesthetics, ample space will be given to the 'aesthetics of the flow' (Guilet, Gervais, 2011: 89-100), to the 'aesthetics of the sensual' (Darley, 2000), 'aesthetics of visual noise' and 'sonic noise' (Engberg, 2008), 'aesthetics of frustration' (Bootz, 2006a), and 'aesthetics of the media' (Costa, 1999). The rigorous use of theories and methods (Structuralism, Poststructuralism, Constructivism, Media Specific Analysis) aims towards an accurate and coherent analysis throughout the whole analytical work of the Anthology and goes beyond merely descriptive account.

2.2 Gruppo Giada's Online Project

The online project will be both an extension of the Anthology and a platform for the creation of a new online community. The reasons for such a choice are essentially three.

First, the desire to be a bridge between the world of Academia and those who are the actual readers of the works of electronic literature. Towards this purpose, the blog format will be used, to meet with the readers' demands or questions and to go out from the often elitist academic milieu and extend the debate to the widest possible audience.

Second, the desire to create and sustain a network, which means to create a heterogeneous community of scholars, artists, enthusiasts or curious others, because, as Hayles writes, "exploring and understanding the full implications of what the transition from page to screen entails must necessarily be a community effort, a momentous task that calls for enlightened thinking, visionary planning and a deep critical consideration" (Hayles, 2007). In fact, only through community dialogue is it possible to overcome important issues such as sustainability and preservation of works of electronic literature or prejudices that still remain, especially in Italy, and thus to foster the dissemination of the field. This is also the reason why the website, as the Anthology, will be in Italian.

Finally, the web allows a continuous updating of content and the possibility to build on and expand aspects that could not find place in the ebook. The online platform is conceived as an extension of the eBook and the main reference for the diffusion, the study and the discussion of digital literature and digital humanities in Italy.

The online platform will contain a page where the Anthology can be downloaded as well as a page with its description, index and bibliography; an interactive and continuously updated chronology of the literary and critical works of electronic literature included in the Anthology along with various inventions, discoveries and events related to the world of IT relevant to the field.

The forum will be open to all registered users. It is meant to become an important meeting point for the exchange of information, insights and the building of new projects. There will also be a permanent call reserved for new works by Italian artists and a permanent and evolving list of Italian electronic artists.

For topics that don't strictly concern the Anthology, there will be sections dedicated to articles of different kinds, from the reporting of new publications to the analysis of issues and already-published works, as well as interviews with artists, scholars and experts and reporting of events related to electronic literature (festivals, conferences, contests, workshops).

Furthermore, the blog will be connected with social media channels (Google+, Facebook, Twitter) and provided with a newsletter service.

Last, there will be a section dedicated to academic essays translated for the first time from English into Italian, which cannot be sold with the eBook for copyright issues. A non-exhaustive list will include: "As We May Think" by Bush; "Six Problems in Search of a Solution by Eskelinen"; "Acid-Free Bits" by Nick Montfort and Wardrip-Fruin; "Born-Again Bits" by Alan Liu, David Durand, Montfort, Merrilee Proffitt Liam R. E. Quin, Jean-Hugues Réty and Wardrip-Fruin; "Electronic Literature: What is it?" by Hayles and Dene Grigar's response to Hayles' essay "Electronic Literature: Where is it?".

The translations will be made available to help those who are new to electronic literature to better understand the scientific analyses that have been conducted in the past as well as the issues and main theories currently affecting the field. The work of translation is, of course, a way in which to overcome the linguistic problems and to bring the Italian general audience as well as the scholars closer to electronic literature.

The online platform, unlike the Anthology, is designed to be not a simple reference website, but an 'organism' marked by collaboration and dialogue. For this reason, structure and style will move away from the academic rules while maintaining precision and accuracy. The language will therefore be understandable for non-experts, and the articles will be enriched by interactive and multimedia content.

In the same way, the website will try to go beyond the categories usually recognized by academia, including, for example, works that were created within disciplines related to electronic literature (i. e. electronic music, video games, interactive comics). Finally, as mentioned above (2.1.3), the online project will host analyses of categories that are excluded from the Anthology, namely performances and installations.

Conclusions

The two projects run by Gruppo Giada result from a constant demand for more scholarship, more works and more diffusion in the Italian editorial industry. The release of the Anthology and the creation of the website will be an attempt to build a bridge between the academic field and a wider reading audience. Our challenge lies in finding a suitable mode of communication to reach the audience and, at the same time, in gathering an online community where literary works and theories are presented and discussed. The projects developed by Gruppo Giada are broad and, in many ways, ambitious. Their breadth and complexity characterize them as the first example of their kind in Italy and in the Italian language.

However, the projects can rely on an already existing group of Italian researchers and authors (mentioned in section 1) who could make a significant contribution to the diffusion, analysis and discussion of electronic literature in Italy. Furthermore, the existence of similar projects such as the Spanish

research group called Ciberia Project,[28] demonstrates not only that such projects are achievable, but also that new communities are being formed from which Italy would risk being excluded. The audience, it is hoped, will adhere to the community: after all, the effort of the two projects for the diffusion, analysis and discussion cannot be put forward in absence of the so-much-theorized-and-often-neglected role of the reader.

Ultimately, the projects are also intended to reach young readers who would follow the examples of the authors and the works of electronic literature and set a new path towards a new Italian Digital Humanism.

References

BENSE, Max (1950). *Literaturmetaphysik. Der Schriftsteller in der technischen Welt*. Stuttgart: Verlags-Anstalt.

BOOTZ, Philippe (2006a). "Digital Poetry: From Cybertext to Programmed Forms." *Leonardo Electronic Almanac* 14.5-6. 30 Jul. 2015. http://www.leoalmanac.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/04Digital-Poetry-From-Cybertext-to-Programmed-Forms-by-Phillipe-Bootz-Vol-14-No-5-6-September-2006-Leonardo-Electronic-Almanac.pdf.

——————— (2006b). "Comment les nouvelles technologies ont-elles été introduites en littérature?" *Les Basiques: La littérature numérique. Leonardo/OLATS – Observatoire Leonardo des arts et des technosciences*. http://www.olats.org/livresetudes/basiques/litteraturenumerique/6_basiquesLN.php.

BORRÀS, Laura *et. al.*, eds. (2011). *Electronic Literature Collection*. 2. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Electronic Literature Organization. 26 Apr. 2016. http://collection.eliterature.org/2/extra/about.html.

BUSH, Vannevar (1945). "As We May Think." *The Atlantic Monthly*. 30 Jul. 2015. http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1945/07/as-we-may-think/303881/.

CALISI, Daniela. *Contentodesign*. 26 Apr. 2016. http://contentodesign.org/.

Ciberia Project. 26 Apr. 2016. http://www.ciberiaproject.com/.

COSTA, Mario (1999). *L'estetica dei media. Avanguardie e tecnologia*. Roma: Castelvecchi.

DARLEY, Andrew (2000). *Visual Digital Culture: Surface Play and Spectacle in New Media Genres*. London: Routledge.

DE VIVO, Fabio (2011). "eLiterature questa (s)conosciuta." *Testo & Senso* 12.2. 30 Jul. 2015. www.testoesenso.it.

DI LELLA, Alessio (2007). "Lo scrittore nella Rete. L'alfa e l'omega dell'essere cibernauti." *Reti di dedalus*. 30 Jul. 2015. http://www.retididedalus.it/Archivi/2007/estate/PRIMO_PIANO/Lo_scrittore.pdf.

---

[28] http://www.ciberiaproject.com/.

DI ROSARIO, Giovanna (2010). "Electronic Literature Publishing in Europe: Sample Cases from Italy." Presented at *Electronic Literature Communities Seminar* in Bergen, Norway. September 21, 2010. 30 Jul. 2015. http://vimeo.com/15736633.

Electronic Literature Directory. 26 Apr. 2016. http://directory.eliterature.org/.

Electronic Literaure Organization PAD Project. 26 Apr. 2016. http://eliterature.org/programs/pad/.

ElitRPro. 26 Apr. 2016. https://eliteratures.wordpress.com/.

ELMCIP Electronic Literature as a Model of Creativity and Innovation in Practice. 26 Apr. 2016. http://elmcip.net/

ENGBERG, Maria (2008). "Aesthetic of Noise in Digital Literary Arts." Presented at *Electronic Literature in Europe*, Bergen, September 11-13.

ESKELINEN, Markku (2004). "Six Problems in Search of a Solution: The challenge of cybertext theory and ludology to literary theory." *Dichtung Digital*. 2004/3. 30 Jul. 2015. http://www.dichtung-digital.org/2004/3/Eskelinen/index.htm

ESPEN, J. Aarseth (1997). *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University.

FLORES, Leonardo (2016). *I LOVE E_POETRY*. 26 Apr. 2016. http://iloveepoetry.com/.

GENETTE, Gérard (1972). *Figures III*, Collection Poétique. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

GIAMPÀ, Daniele. *Labirintexto*. 26 Apr. 2016. http://labirintexto.blogspot.ch/.

GILLI, Roberto. *Roberto Gilli Poesia Digitale*. 26 Apr. 2016. http://www.robertogilli.it/.

GRIGAR, Dene (2008). "Electronic Literature: Where is it?" *Electronic Book Review*. 30 Jul. 2015. http://www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/technocapitalism/invigorating.

GUILET Anaïs, Bertrand Gervais (2011). "Esthétique et fiction du flux. Éléments de description." *Protée* 39.1: 89-100. 30 Jul. 2015. http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1006730ar.

GUTIERREZ, B. Juan *et.al.* (2009). "Electronic Literature as an Information System." *Hyperrhiz* 06. Special Issue: Visionary Landscapes. 30 Jul. 2015. http://hyperrhiz.io/hyperrhiz06/essays/electronic-literature-as-an-information-system.html.

HAYLES, N. Katherine (2002). *Writing Machines*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

———————— (2007) "Electronic Literature: What is it?." *Eliterature* v1.0. 30 Jul. 2015. http://eliterature.org/pad/elp.html.

———————— *et. al.*, eds. (2006). *Electronic Literature Collection*. 1. College Park, Maryland: Electronic Literature Organization. 26 Apr. 2016. http://collection.eliterature.org/1/aux/about.html.

Hermeneia. 26 April 2016. http://www.hermeneia.net.

Interlex (2009). 26 Apr. 2016. http://www.interlex.it/testi/l41_633.htm#70.

LISA, Tommaso (2006). "Sei punti sulla rete." *Absolutepoetry.* 30 Jul. 2015. http://www.absolutepoetry.org/IMG/doc/SEI_PUNTI_SULLA_RET E.doc.

LIU Alan *et. al.* (2005). "Born-Again Bits: A Framework for Migrating Electronic Literature." *Eliterature* 1.1. 30 Jul. 2015. http://eliterature.org/pad/bab.html.

MASUCCI Raffaele, Giovanna di Rosario (2010). *OLE Officina di Letteratura Elettronica.* Lavori del Convegno. Napoli: Atelier Multimediale Edizioni.

MEMMOTT, Talan (2006). "Beyond Taxonomy: Digital Poetics and the Problem of Reading." *New Media Poetics: Contexts, Technotexts, and Theories.* Eds. Adalaide Morris and Thomas Swiss. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. 293-306.

MONTFORT Nick, Noah Wardip-Fruin (2004). "Acid-Free Bits: Recommendations for Long-Lasting Electronic Literature." *Eliterature* 1.0. 30 Jul. 2015. http://www.eliterature.org/pad/afb.html.

OLE Officina di Letteratura Elettronica. 26 April 2016. http://www.elettroletteratura.org/.

PubCoder. 26 Apr. 2016. https://www.pubcoder.com/.

Quintadicopertina. 26 Apr. 2016. http://www.quintadicopertina.com/.

RYAN, Marie-Laure (2005). "Narrative and the Split Condition of Digital Textuality." *Dichtung Digital.* 2005/1. 26 Apr. 2016. http://www.dichtung-digital.de/2005/1/Ryan/.

SAEMMER, Alexandra (2008). "Some Stylistic Devices on Media Interface." Presented at *The Network as a Space and Medium for Collaborative Interdisciplinary Art Practice* 8-10 November. University of Bergen.

TURING, Alan M. (1950). "Computing Machinery and Intelligence." *Mind* 59: 433-460.

VENERANDI, Fabrizio (2010). *Chi ha ucciso David Crane?.* Quintadicopertina.

WARDIP-FRUIN, Noah (2012). *Expressive Processing: Digital Fictions, Computer Games and Software Studies.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

WIENER, Norbert (1948). *Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.