

# Hyperfiction and Reading, with Examples of Electronic Processing of Grimms' Fairy Tales

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## ABSTRACT

Hyperfiction is suitable for conducting literary experiments. It deconstructs the temporal sequence of narration, and lessens the author's authority. The author of hyperfiction, in some way, loses control over how his or her work influences the reader. On the other hand, the belief that the reader of hyperfiction is at the same time its author, for he or she chooses which way to navigate the text, which hyperlinks to mark and in this manner create a new text, can be challenged. Using as its basis the networked and the non-networked versions of some Grimms' fairy tales, this paper presents the results of the study, which was conducted with the aim of determining whether and how works of hyperfiction will change ways of reading, or even thinking, or, on the contrary, whether traditional ways of thinking and reading, and their sequence (beginning, middle, end) are so deeply rooted in our processing that they cannot be changed.

## KEYWORDS

hyperfiction; reading; narration; author; Grimms' fairy-tales.

## RESUMO

O hipertexto é adequado para levar a cabo experiências literárias, na medida em que desconstrói a sequência temporal da narração e diminui a autoridade do autor. O autor de hiperficção, de alguma forma, perde o controle sobre como a sua obra influencia o leitor. Por outro lado, a crença de que o/a leitor/a de hiperficção é, ao mesmo tempo, seu/sua autor/a, pois escolhe o caminho para percorrer o texto, as ligações a reter e, dessa maneira, cria um novo texto, pode ser questionada. Utilizando como base quer as versões em rede, quer versões não conectadas em rede de alguns contos dos irmãos Grimm, este artigo apresenta os resultados de um estudo realizado com o objetivo de determinar se e como as obras de hiperficção mudam as formas de leitura, ou mesmo de pensar, ou se, pelo contrário, os modos tradicionais de pensar e de ler, e sua sequencialidade (princípio, meio, fim) estão tão profundamente enraizados no nosso processamento que não podem ser alterados.

## PALAVRAS-CHAVE

hiperficção; leitura; narração; autor; contos dos irmãos Grimm.

## I. INTRODUCTION

**H**yperfiction, the literary expression of hypertext, uses the possibilities of hypertext for creative purposes, thus opening numerous questions for scientific observation related to the impact of media on literature, literary theory, and the future of reading. So far, scientists have discovered neither unambiguous ways to interpret these works nor any key determinants by way of which their quality could be appraised. It is a fact that hypertext is suitable for conducting literary experiments. It deconstructs the temporal sequence of narration, and, to some extent, lessens the author's authority. The author of hyperfiction, in some way, loses control over how his or her work influences the reader. On the other hand, the belief that the reader of hypertext/hyperfiction is at the same time its author, for he or she chooses which way to navigate the text or which hyperlinks to mark, and in this manner, creates a new text, can be challenged. Apart from devising the plot and the basic creative idea, hyperfiction authors must consider the structure as well, which is significantly more complex than the structure of conventional texts, as hyperfiction does not rely on a single structure, but multiple ones. Apart from the language of the literary text, hypertext readers are also distanced from the work through the computer language, which distances the reader from the text. Authors and computer experts often reach for well-known literary works, adding to them elements of interactivity and multimedia effects. This way, a known text stops being linear, which gives the reader a certain illusion of freedom. On the other hand, this process of reading becomes, at the same time, less creative compared to the process of reading a classic text, because, regardless of the numerous possible combinations and ways of navigating the text, the number of these combinations is still defined and limited. Although the non-linear structure of the hypertext inspires many critics to debate how the temporal sequence of narration is irrelevant and what differs the reading of a hypertext from the reading of a printed text is space, spatial rather than temporal movement, temporal sequence still plays a major role. Experimental works also rely primarily on the chronological sequence of events, which they deconstruct and branch out in a controlled fashion, giving the reader the illusion of co-authorship. In such a new and unknown medium as the electronic text, which lacks the orientation of a 'material' book, a comprehensible plot with a comprehensible and clear chronology is a signpost in the middle of unexplored territory. Using as its basis the networked versions

of the Grimms' fairy tales, this paper attempts to answer whether and how works of hyperfiction would change our ways of reading, or even thinking, or are traditional ways of thinking and reading, and their sequence — beginning, middle, end — so deeply rooted in our processing that they cannot be changed?

It is our aim to analyse whether interactive texts (Grimms' fairy tales) are a substitute or an addition to the literature in its traditional form, and how young readers experience and evaluate reading classical, i.e. interactive works.

## II. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LITERATURE AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA, HYPERTEXT AND HYPERFICTION THEORY

The relationship between literature and electronic media is continually changing and is therefore constantly arousing interest. However, exactly because of its constant changeability, this relationship could be said to not be quite clarified yet, despite various attempts to analyse and explain it. The prospect of literature in electronic form (or so-called digital literature) and projects of collaborative writing on the Internet have become common. It is for this reason that the question of quality should be raised regarding both this kind of literature and its accompanying theories.

We should mention several of the first American hypertext and hyperfiction theorists: Jay David Bolter (2001), Jane Douglas (1991), Michael Joyce (also a hyperfiction author, e.g. of *Afternoon - A Story*, 1987), George P. Landow (1994, 1997, 2006), and Stuart Moulthrop (1991), who is also a hyperfiction author, e.g. of *Victory Garden*. Their research is primarily based on the same starting hyperfiction texts, networked and non-networked, where they explore the possibilities of hypertext as a textual structure. The familiarity with postmodern literary theories is rather superficial and metaphorical in this group of theorists, i.e. they often literally cite several poststructuralist theorists' statements and conclusions, coming to conclusions without any deeper exploration or understanding of these theories.

For Bolter (2001), hypertext frees the text from the rigidity of a book, leading it back to the associativity and mutability which disappeared along with oral cultures. This way, he believes, digitalisation and networking will finally win over the century-old alienation caused by technological progress. Bolter believes that networking, as well as the fact that the reader can modify a digital text, will finally lead to the disappearance and the redundancy of the author, as already indicated by Roland Barthes (1986) and Michel Foucault (1975). In this regard, the interactivity of digital texts is starting to be perceived as a democratising factor.

Apart from Bolter, the other authors mentioned above also consider digital media and their capabilities as the final accomplishment of the postmodern, i.e. poststructuralist literature, as the translation of these literary works into an electronic form enables their better realisation within the framework of these

media. On one hand, the above-mentioned authors theorise on the possibilities of hypertext, while on the other hand, they analyse its impact on the writing of literary texts. Here we must mention Jane Yellowlees Douglas (1991; 2000), who considers interactive literature an ideal medium for researching reading theories, referring to Iser and his reader as an active participant in the plot. In her later works, she examines how interactive fiction works and discusses the current state of hypertext criticism, as well as how hypertext fiction works as a literary form. Her conclusion is that hyperfiction works and their writers are still not considered part of the canon.

However, we can conclude that the above-mentioned analysis was not conducted to its end, and that a new theory of reading based on the existing ones has not yet been established, partly because hypertext is a new medium and there is still insufficient relevant data on hypertext readers, their expectations, their behaviour and experiences during reading, and partly, perhaps, because of the constant mutability of this medium and new technical possibilities. We have been exchanging experiences on printed literature for centuries, and these personal experiences, related to individual texts, can be, and often are, generalised. For hypertext, this is still impossible, because nobody really knows how it should be read, and what expectations and experiences its readers have. The exact difference between reading from paper and reading from a screen, and to what extent we can compare the two at all, remains an open question. Another problem lies in the fact that users/readers often don't equate reading on paper with the reading on screens, seeing the "reading" from screens as a separate form of interaction with particular forms of content, which we shall explore in the empirical section of this paper. So far, research on this subject was mostly concerned with the correlation of reading (printed texts) and the use of media, i.e. the question whether the medium (the Internet, computer games, etc.) influences the time, quality, and the selection of the read work. All these theorists share a common viewpoint on the computer and look at hypertext as a convenient medium for the realisation of postmodern concepts; there are noticeable instances of almost literal application of the theories of Roland Barthes (1967), Michel Foucault (1970, 1975, 2002), Jacques Derrida (2007) etc.; the reader apparently becomes the author, or at least a co-author, a *Wreader*. The term *wreader* was coined by George P. Landow, as an amalgam of the words *writer* and *reader* (Landow, 1997). Interactivity acts upon the reader as a liberating factor, in the sense that it frees the reader from the finality and the immutability of the printed text, and, in theory, this is stated as the fundamental feature of digital literature.

In European, particularly German works on hypertext theory, the legacy of media theories is evident, as well as the attempt to analyse digital literature using several media theories. We should mention several of the first European hypertext theorists, as well as the ones who have experimented with it, and still do, such as: Martin Auer (the "Lyrikmaschine" Internet portal<sup>1</sup>); the storyweb

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1 [www.lyrikline.org](http://www.lyrikline.org).

project, 1996<sup>2</sup>; Uwe Wirth (2004), Sabrina Ortman (2001), Heiko Idensen *et. al* (2000). The focal point of their discussions is mostly on communication and interactivity as fundamental features of electronic media, but they continue their research, following contemporary trends.

With the advent of e-book readers, smartphones, and tablets, interactive games, as well as many other forms of content, have become more and more available to the public, and have firmly positioned themselves in the centre of the younger audience's interest. The problems of using, i.e. reading the literary text on a tablet, i.e. the problems of designating literary works in non-printed form, as well as the reading preferences of the printed and electronic form, occupy the attention of many contemporary experts as well (Tosca and Pedersen, 2015).

Many other literary theorists and other international experts have continued researching digital literature, for example Bell *et al.* (2014), Tosca and Pedersen (2015), and in Croatia, Dubravka Težak and Marina Gabelica (2015), Vladimira Velički and Damir Velički (2014). A more detailed analysis would exceed the scope of this paper.

Apart from the term digital or electronic literature, we can also encounter the term *literary gaming* – a specific form of digital gameplay that happens when we interact with digital artifacts that combine so-called ludic (from Latin: *ludus*: game or play) and literary (from Latin *littera*: alphabetic letter, or plural *litterae*: piece of writing) elements. This kind of media has both *readerly* and *playerly* characteristics (Ensslin, 2014). This term is, in fact, a continuance of the 'reader as author' idea (the term *wreader*), theoretically supported by George P. Landow.

Script and literature on the computer are electronic pulses which can be manipulated according to wish. Literature is not fixed on paper anymore, as it used to be, but finds itself in a state of constant changeability. At the same time, computer technology enables new ways of working with text. Individual segments of text are connected by hyperlinks, the text is complemented by multimedia elements, and the reader can, so to say, participate in and decide about the making of the literary work. The reader becomes freed of the traditional authority of the writer. The time necessary to 'produce' literature is shortened, as both the reception and the form of the text have changed.

The virtual world sets its own patterns and aesthetics. Works of electronic literature vary greatly regarding the quality of texts, graphic solutions, the way they function, and how they communicate with the user.

### III. MULTIMEDIA OUTLOOKS OR LITERATURE IN A NEW FORM

The title – literature in a new form – has a conditional quality and refers primarily to literature written for new media. Such literature can come in different

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2 [www.martinauer.net](http://www.martinauer.net).

forms, but the basic feature to be distinguished is whether it is networked or not, or, in other words, whether this fiction is written for the World Wide Web and therefore requires connection to the Internet, or whether they function without the Web as separate programs or apps (applications).

In closed, non-networked systems, the author and the reader represent separate entities with different roles. Once published and made available to the reader, the non-networked text resembles a printed book in that the procedure of creating the text has been completed and the reader must accept it as such. Regardless of what changes the reader makes in the text, the next reader will get the mentioned text in its original form, until the author decides to publish a new, changed edition. Collected works in digital form (such as, e.g., the *Classics of World Literature* in Croatia) might be simpler to study than the same works in printed form — since they are not printed on a large quantity of paper, they are easier to search through and cheaper to publish. However, this type of publication does not allow the reader a more purposeful interaction than its printed predecessors. If the initial text is open and contains many ‘empty spaces’ it is easier to transpose into electronic form.

Many electronic literature portals have come up within the last twenty years, thus making platforms of networked literature. One of the first electronic literature portals was *Hyperizons*, where Michael Shumate has been researching hyperfiction and reviewing literature since 1995.<sup>3</sup> He quotes those literary (printed) works regarded to be the predecessors of hypertext and those which lend themselves to publishing in electronic form or have already been published in such a form. Those are, among others, various works by Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortazar, James Joyce, Milorad Pavić and others. Borges is one of the most frequently mentioned analogues predecessors of hypertext. This is probably also due to his popularity — his works have a high readership and translation rating —, but also to the adaptation of his work *Forking Paths* into digital form performed by Stuart Moulthrop, which represents one of the first and most quoted hyperfiction projects.

Further, the ELMCIP Anthology of European Electronic Literature is an output from the ELMCIP researchers based at Blekinge Tekniska Högskola (Blekinge Institute of Technology) in Sweden.<sup>4</sup> The anthology is intended to provide educators, students and the public with a free curricular resource of electronic literary works produced in Europe. The works were selected, after an open call, based on four main criteria:

**European diversity:** to represent a broad cross-section of authors and artists from different European cultures.

**Formal diversity:** to represent a broad sampling of approaches to electronic literature demonstrating the influence of multiple modes of practice and different types of interdisciplinary art practice.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.duke.edu/~mshumate/hyperfic.html>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://elmcip.net>.

**Historical relevance:** works that were deemed historically important to the development of electronic literature communities in Europe.

**Pedagogical relevance:** works that were deemed appropriate for teaching in secondary and university classroom settings.<sup>5</sup>

In Croatia, a noteworthy Web project is *eLektire*,<sup>6</sup> which publishes complete works by Croatian and international authors who are on the school list of required reading. The project *e Lektire* includes both hyperfictional texts and digitised classical texts from Croatian literature. The books are available to pupils and university students, as well as to their teachers and professors, free of charge. In the first phase of the project, about 200 books were published (until 2017), along with abundant multimedia contents such as audio and video clips. The aim of the project is to make the complete primary and secondary school required reading available on the Web — in total, over a thousand of domestic and foreign authors. The project's Editor-in-Chief is Zvonimir Bulaja, whereas CARNet provides technical support and data hosting.

Another noteworthy project is *Free Electronic Books*,<sup>7</sup> active since 2001. The Society for Promoting Literature in New Media (DPKM) started this project in early 2001 and has published 194 books so far. Together with the AGM publishing house, the DPKM has also published the first Croatian multimedia poetry book, entitled *Commedia* in 2002.<sup>8</sup>

Counting and analysing the rest of electronic literature portals would exceed the scope of this paper. The aforementioned portals serve only to illustrate the movement and the publishing of the aforementioned works.

Also, the networked works of children's literature, along with their analysis and research, would exceed the scope of this paper. However, to illustrate and support the thesis of the constant mutability of hyperfiction works, i.e. the constant transcending of the limits of hyperfiction, we can mention the Netflix's "interactive shows" that let viewers decide the story. According to them, this interactive format turns viewers into legitimate storytellers, putting them in charge, and letting them dictate each choice and direction that the story takes. The first two interactive shows that will be available on Netflix are *Puss in Book: Trapped in an Epic Tale* and *Buddy Thunderstruck: The Maybe Pile*.<sup>9</sup>

These are non-linear stories which open new storytelling possibilities, and there will certainly be many discussions in the future on their reception, modes of use, as well as on the future of reading itself and the 'reading' of such works.

#### IV. WORKS OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN MULTIMEDIA AND INTERACTIVE ADAPTATION WITH REGARD TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEXT AND GAME — GENRE DESIGNATION

5 <https://anthology.elmcip.net/about.html>.

6 <http://lektire.skole.hr>.

7 [www.elektronickeknjige.com](http://www.elektronickeknjige.com).

8 [www.kresimirpintaric.com/commedia](http://www.kresimirpintaric.com/commedia).

9 [https://thenextweb.com/apps/2017/06/20/netflix-interactive-show-viewer-story/#.tnw\\_5vb5M0A8](https://thenextweb.com/apps/2017/06/20/netflix-interactive-show-viewer-story/#.tnw_5vb5M0A8).

There are great differences between multimedia and interactive adaptations of literary works, both in the quality of the text or the graphic solutions and in the way such a form of creation communicates with the user/reader. There is a particularly considerable disproportion in the relationship between technology and content. However, the mere change of a literary work into electronic form does not guarantee good quality. If multimedia features and an interactive approach are absent, the text itself and the illustrations on the screen will not bring much. Animations and video effects can complement the title, but a film is still superior because of the complexity of its animation effects. Sound adds a significant dimension to reading, but this can also be achieved through audio files containing stories for children which accompany numerous picture books. Only a combination of these three elements – words, sounds and pictures/animation, added to the magic idea of interactivity, gives power and life to a multimedia presentation.

Many authors or computer experts frequently reach for already complete literary works by famous authors, processing them through multimedia and thus creating texts which can be ‘travelled’ through, which can be recreated and which have lost their linear structure. Many of these works cease to be mere literature, or, in other words, the existing definition of literature does not entirely apply to them any longer.

Having studied the existing production, we came to the conclusion that these works also differ from one another and can be classified in the following way according to the text – game relationship:

1. Original text from a book or a picture book which is read on the screen instead of reading from paper and which does not include any element of interactivity;
2. Original text from a book or a picture book which contains elements of interactivity and game;
3. Shortened text of a work of literature with elements of interactivity and game;
4. Computer game developed on the basis of a famous literary work, but its text is never mentioned in full and not recognisable – adventure;
5. Interactive text founded on a literary work in which the user acts as a co-creator/co-author.

In order to analyse the preferences and attitudes on reading in both printed and electronic forms, we shall analyse the final (Nr. 5) type of multimedia adaptation of children’s literature.

Such a classification shows the diverse forms that literary works can take in multimedia adaptation and suggests that the term *multimedia adaptation* is not unequivocal.

Multimedia titles provide an opportunity to encourage children who do not like reading to read. The titles which are regarded to be successful and of good quality are not necessarily based on a famous literary model. On the contrary, they can be shaped according to less famous models or according to a new text,

specially written for that purpose. There is no formula for a starting point of a good interactive title for children. Whichever source of ideas and whatever content is used as the starting point, it must be adequate for the interactive title, its form and content should match, and the resulting product should be appropriate for the child's age and the technical conditions. The technical characteristics and conditions must not destroy the content, which must remain fresh and does not need to be interactive at any cost.

V. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH OF THE EVALUATION AND THE EXPERIENCE OF THE INTERACTIVE CHILDREN'S STORYBOOK FOR KIDS *SNOW WHITE APP*, AMAY KIDS, BELGIUM, IN EIGHT-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN

This research was conducted in 2017 in Zagreb, Croatia. In the *Snow White* app, the child can read the fairy tale and also be part of the plot, for example, help to dress up a little princess, find the dwarves' house, or wake Snow White from her sleep.

Features of the *Interactive Children's Storybook for Kids: Snow White* app (Amay Kids, Belgium):

- Interactive games during the story;
- 'Read to me' automatically reads each page of the story to you;
- 'Read it Myself' – allows control of reading;
- Illustrations joined with the narrative on every page.

### 5.1. The problem of the research

What is the difference in experiencing a literary work in its printed form and the same work in the form of an interactive children's story among eight-year-old children?

### 5.2. Hypothesis

It is presumed that there are no significant differences in assessing the experience of a literary work in its printed form and the same work in an interactive form.

### 5.3. Aims of the research

The aim of the research was to improve our understanding of the child's experience of a literary work (fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm), i.e., their reception in printed and electronic form.

### 5.4. Methodology

#### 5.4.1. Participants

Assessment of the reading experience of 120 eight-year-old children from Zagreb, with a good command of English (pupils of two primary schools in Zagreb).

#### 5.4.2. Material

Literary text: The Brothers Grimm, “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs”

Application: Interactive Children’s Storybook for Kids: *Snow White*, Amay Kids, Belgium

#### 5.4.3. Instruments:

Experience assessment scale — 8 questions.

#### 5.5. Process

Using assessment scales, eight-year-old children will evaluate their experience. Sixty children will first read the literary text and then use/read the same text in its electronic, interactive form, whereas the other sixty children will do the same but in reverse.

The statistical processing was done using the SPSS computer program, with descriptive statistics.

#### 5.6 Results of the research

Based on statistical processing, we have come to the following conclusion:

The first group of questions (1. *How do you feel when reading the story from the book?* 2. *When you use the same story on a tablet — how do you feel?* 3. *What was it like to read?* 4. *What was it like to use the story on a tablet?*)

The work was less pleasant, more boring, and harder to read in printed form than in electronic form. There was no significant difference in assessing the feeling of tiredness during reading the book in its printed or electronic form.

Question 5. *What took longer?*

58.3% of the participants believe that using/reading the story in its electronic form took longer, 11.7% believe that reading the book in its printed form took longer, and 30% of the participants believe both took an equal amount of time.

Questions 6. *What would you like to do again?* and 7. *Why?*

61% of the participants would like to repeat using/reading the story in its electronic form, and only 9% of the participants would like to repeat reading the book in its printed form. 10.7% of the participants would like to repeat both experiences, and 19.3 none of the above.

Question 8. *What did you learn the most from?*

66.6% of the participants believe they have learned more from the electronic form of the story, and 10% believe they have learned more from the printed book. 23.4% of the participants believe they have learned an equal amount from both forms of the story.

### 5.7 Analysis of the results and discussion

Based on the study results we can conclude that the feeling of tiredness in participants was equal during reading/using the work in its electronic form and reading the printed story. However, the work was less pleasant, more boring, and harder to read in its printed form than to use it in its electronic form.

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61% of the participants would like to repeat using/reading the story in its electronic form, and only 9% of the participants would like to repeat reading the book in its printed form. 10.7% of the participants would like to repeat both experiences, and 19.3% would like none of the above.

As for their reasons for wanting to repeat using/reading the story in its electronic form, participants most frequently mention the possibility of creative action and co-creation of the text: "It's more interesting. I can make a new story," "I get surprised and I create a new fairy-tale." Apart from these reasons, participants also mention the presence of humour as a positive quality: "It's funny," "The characters are funnier," as well as the appeal of new media: "I love the tablet," "I like to play on the tablet." Only one participant said that the reason for his choice was that he didn't like reading. The reasons for which they would repeat reading the printed book are related to the way of reading a book: "Nothing annoys me, I like reading," "Reading isn't interrupted," "Nothing comes out suddenly."

The reasons for which they would not repeat any of the story forms are related to content saturation: "I'm bored.," "I already know everything.," "There are better games out there, and I know these fairy-tales by heart already."

The reasons for which they would like to repeat both experiences was the same for all participants: "Each one is interesting in its own way."

66.6% of the participants believe they have learned more from the multimedia version of the story, and 10% believe they have learned more from the printed book. 23.4% of the participants believe they have learned an equal amount from both forms of the story.

If we compare the assessment of feelings of pleasure, boredom, and reading difficulty in the printed text and the electronic text, we can see that while using the electronic interactive *Snow White* story the level of boredom and difficulty was lower than while reading the printed form. However, the feeling of pleasure while using this interactive work was very strong.

We could seek the reasons for such assessment in the familiarity with the content, i.e., the participants have known the content of Grimms' fairy tales since early childhood so reading itself brings nothing new to them, whereas using an interactive work brings new challenges and complements this (high-quality) work of literature.

This interactive piece also causes a very small feeling of tiredness during use.

The reading difficulty of this work in its printed form is average, but the work itself has been assessed as very easy to use.

We can conclude that the reasons for the strong feeling of pleasure during the use of the interactive work are primarily in the enabling of the active part of the participant, personal activity, and the co-creation of the text. It is evident that participants recognise these qualities as essential and important for the acceptance and evaluation of an interactive work. It follows that during the assessment of the interactive work, participants employ different criteria (therefore, the known criteria for assessing the quality of a literary work in printed form do not apply). For children, such adaptations represent a new medium, the use of which they do not identify with reading in a classical way, i.e., they almost intuitively recognise that hyperfiction interactive works are ruled by other laws.

In their clarification on why they would like to repeat using, i.e. reading this work, and which form they had learned more from, it is evident that the young participants can recognise the quality emanating from the possibility of creative action, as well as great possibilities of knowledge transfer that an interactive work possesses.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In the end, we can conclude that a quality electronic/multimedia adaptation of a literary work must also contain quality content, i.e., a plot which includes elements of interactivity and multimedia effects in the way that they enrich and complement the existing works they are based on. Young users expect the original text to be complemented and upgraded, not just transferred into an electronic form. Interactive works of literature are a new medium, the use of which does not equal reading. Interactive works of hyperfiction use different criteria and laws, based on which these works must be evaluated.

Children find such adaptations attractive, not only, or to a lesser extent, because of the stories they offer, but rather because they give them an opportunity to try out the technical possibilities of new media and game elements. Nevertheless, this exact attraction should be used by offering children quality educational software. A multimedia adaptation of the original text must take into consideration the original. Certain differences are inevitable but the final

product should not become sheer entertainment. In addition, a literary work requires identification with the lives of the characters, which can be yet another way of achieving excitement.

The future of reading and the development of both theoretical and empirical research in this area are susceptible to sudden and quick changes, so the idea of establishing hypertext and hyperfiction theories comparable to traditional literature theories is unsustainable. Printed literature has been developing much slower, new genres had to wait to be published and evaluated by both critics and the literary audience. New media enable a much faster production of works, with the lack of time for critical checking and analysis, which results in a near-impossibility of theoretical stability and analysis. In any case, the new technical possibilities should be used to further our understanding of the existing literary works. It is known that no medium has ever managed to supersede the previous (e.g., films did not supersede theatre, television did not supersede radio...), but that all media function as separate arts, mutually complementing and enriching one another. It is to be expected that the same will happen to electronic literature.

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