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Electronic publishing models for experimental literature

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The impact of hypertext and hypermedia on scholarly editing of our literary legacy, which is increasingly published in electronic formats, has fostered a conceptual shift from the archive as a classified hierarchical collection of texts to the archive as a decentred and reconfigurable network of texts. Another important set of questions concerns new methods for editing and organizing multimodal textualities resulting from combinations of materials and media (graphic, audio, video, digital). The convergent multimodality of digital textuality opens up a new editing and archival space for multimedia and intermedia forms of writing. In the current technological context, innovative and experimental literary forms become relevant, as many of the operations that the machine provides can be found in previous literary practices: from collages and automatic writing to narrative permutations and intermedia poetry. This issue of the journal addresses problems of representing, archiving, and publishing experimental literary forms in digital spaces.

The fifth volume of *Cibertextualidades* includes research papers about processes and methods for representation, preservation, and dissemination of intermedia and multimedia literary practices using digital archival systems. The general theme of this issue has been structured into three main topics, which we will try to briefly summarize and contextualize here.

The section *Visuality and intermediality in experimental literature* (pp. 17-63) discusses the expressive use of mixed media visual works as well as spatialized and patterned visual text as a signifying feature of poetry and fiction. Visual and intermedia experimentation continued and expanded into electronic media, and multimodality is a crucial material aspect of current online environments. Digital media created the conditions for a new encounter between the

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tradition of intermedia works and new multi-modal, networked, and programmed spaces. Works based on techniques such as calligraphy, photocopy, collage, graffiti, holography, etc.; practices such as installation, happening, and performance; and works based on sound, image, and video recording media, allow us to explore the potential of digital archives for representing and simulating large corpora of non-digital intermedia works. Hybrid forms dependent on verbivocovisual practices challenged the separation of media channels and artistic disciplines. Analysis of the visual, intermedia, and performative materiality of experimental practices is an indispensable step for understanding possibilities and constraints in their digital remediation.

In “Critérios fundadores da poesia tipográfica”, Jorge dos Reis, departing from the concept of marked text in favour of a free use of typography, provides “a constellation of strategies” that result in set of operational criteria for a definition of typographical poetry. The author analyses individual typographical practices, stressing their peculiar graphic dimensions, as well as the different aesthetic positions achieved by each poet. By doing so, not only does he address the concept of notation in the context of experimental practices, but he also explores sound poetry as notation for performance.

“Palavra e pintura em trocas de papéis. Concretismo, experimentalismo e artes plásticas em Portugal”, by Eduardo Paz Barroso, is the second essay published in this section. Paz

Barroso establishes correspondences between the works of some Portuguese artists and visual and concrete poetry. Associating the relation between word and painting to the practice of Portuguese poetry of the 60s, he explains how this dissolution of normative conventions in the arts was produced and received by some authors. The author specifically considers the works of Ana Hatherly and evokes the relevance of the KWY magazine, the international context of its intervention as well as the aesthetic program that animates it. In this scope, the work of João Vieira is scrutinized, focusing on experimental practices where gesture, sign and writing converge.

The second section of this journal, dedicated to *Combination and generativity in cyberliterature* (pp. 65-134), analyzes as cyberliterature those literary texts whose construction is based on computing procedures: combinatory, multimedia, or interactive. Our goal was to include in this section studies about programming languages and software involved in the creation of literary works, as well as archival and preservation issues. We wanted to discuss how the visual and performative materiality of experimental practices is re-coded in the context of cyberliterature. We also wanted to examine the preservation and dissemination of digital texts, particularly of their early forms, which relate to pressing themes such as the translation and interoperability of programming languages used in specific works.

In the article “Vers une ontologie du domaine de la poésie numérique”, Philippe Bootz and Samuel Szoniecky, from the Laboratoire Paragraphe, propose a theoretical model for the creation of an indexing tool for digital poetry. Using Spinoza’s ontology as method and starting point, the authors describe the relational structure of the database and adopt Bootz’s procedural communicative model. Their proposed indexing protocol derives from these two models.

In “A literatura factorial [!]", Álvaro Seiça concentrates on hyperfiction, which he understands as the first genre of electronic literature, justifying his perspective by addressing examples of proto-hyperfictions that use combinatorial processes and permutation. The author calls these procedural practices “factorial literature [!]", arguing that this is a transtemporal concept but that its presence has intensified in the context of digital poetry and new media.

In “Barroquismos digitais”, Otávio Guimarães Tavares searches for baroque aspects implied in contemporary digital poetic creations. Digital creations, he argues, can be defined as baroque because similar explorations of materiality, multimediality, and interactivity can be found in baroque practices in the history of literature.

Finally, the third and last section, *Digital archives and electronic publishing models* (pp. 135-233), targets new possibilities for archiving, displaying, and disseminating mul-

timedia works, addressing taxonomies for organizing, understanding, and classifying the conceptual and material relations in born-digital literature and in electronic versions of pre-digital intermedia works. Methodologies for establishing and maintaining hypermedia digital archives, require contributions from Humanities, Computer Science, and Library Information Science. This section includes articles about the design of electronic space, implementation of digital archives – including data modelling, database structure, indexing systems, preservation protocols, interface design, navigation systems – and editorial and electronic publication models.

In her article “Modelando a funcionalidade: do códice ao livro electrónico”, published in Portuguese for the first time, and previously published in her book *SpecLab: Digital Aesthetics and Projects in Speculative Computing* (2009), Johanna Drucker argues for the importance of modeling e-space in ways that reflect a thorough understanding of the functionalities of book structures, but also in ways that go beyond the structures of the codex and take full advantage of programmable networked media. She highlights the following affordances of digital materiality: continuous reconfiguration of digital artifacts at the level of code, the capacity to mark those reconfigurations, the aggregation of documents and data in integrated environments, and the creation of spaces for collaboration and intersubjective exchange.

In “Entité / identité. Un outil d’indexation des documents relatifs à la poésie numérique”, Philippe Bootz, Samuel Szoniecky and Abderrahim Bargaoui show that the preservation of an electronic work should not try to reproduce a previous identity, but rather should preserve the possibility of reconstructing the work by separating its specific characteristics. Preservation, in that sense, equals indexation, but only if it is an open, procedural sort of indexation. Bootz *et al.* thus demonstrate one of the most important aspects of digital media: its lability, that is, the different manifestations of the work in time and across different processors and platforms. The authors argue that lability attests the necessity of considering preservation from a different perspective, one that is not museological, but rather open and relational.

In “Preservation of digital literature: from stored to reinvented memory”, Serge Bouchardon and Bruno Bachimont describe preservation as the Achilles tendon of the digital age. The authors contend that digital technology forces us to reinvent memory itself, and they use electronic literature as a laboratory to investigate preservation issues.

In “(Un)certain editing”, Isabel Pinto discusses the editing of a collection of more than two hundred theatrical manuscripts from the eighteenth century held at the National Library of Portugal. Electronic editing and publication of this collection will make it available for aggregated analysis, and provide more

detailed knowledge about their intertextual relations and production history.

In “Da imaginação à concretização: representação e leitura em *The William Blake Archive*”, Isabel Lourenço starts by considering *The William Blake Archive* as a form of presenting the materiality and historicity of William Blake’s illuminated printed books which overcomes the division between text and image maintained by the typographical tradition. The digital archive, the author argues, allows the retrieval, simulation, and displaying of distinct modalities of documents. Affordances and constraints of *The William Blake Archive* are analyzed as a complex metatextual critical environment for scholars and readers alike.

“Conhecimento científico em hipermídia: uma proposta de análise metodológica”, by Érica Nering, contains a methodological proposal for the creation and evaluation of scholarly hypermedia. Academic interdisciplinary research works can be displayed as hypermedia, and this, Nering argues, calls for new forms of investigative practice. She moves on to present hypermedia formal elements and aesthetic forms for the production of knowledge, defining interactivity, navigational structure and language hybridization as new expressive possibilities for the dissemination of scientific knowledge.

Finally, Scott Rettberg introduces the ELMCIP Electronic Literature Knowledge Base, of which he is coordinator. ELMCIP focuses on the

particular creative community of electronic literature practitioners, and examines how creative communities of practitioners take form within transnational and transcultural contexts. Electronic literature thus serves as a model for understanding how networked creative communities can evolve.

The use of computers in the humanities raises creative, institutional and intellectual questions, as we can see through (1) analyses of visual, intermedia or factorial literature (from William Blake to typographic poetry, hyperfiction and digital poetry), (2) editing and archival projects, and (3) discussion of preservation methods and databases for electronic literature. In this issue of *Cibertextualidades*, analogue and digital multimodal forms of literature provide a particular domain for exploring some of those questions. Archival remediation, electronic editing, and electronic literature offer different publication models in hypermedia environments.