

BOGUMIŁA SUWARA: Literatúra na rozhraní technológií [Literature in the impact zone of technology]

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Bogumiła Suwara's Slovak-language monograph *Literatúra na rozhraní technológií* (Literature at the interface of technologies, 2022) covers a significant array of research topics related to the widely debated intersection of digital media and literary studies, as well as extending beyond these fields. As stated by the author in the introduction, the publication aims to present her long-term research, supported by various scientific grants as one of "the unified approaches to the research of a broadly understood literature at the interface of the technologization of the word and the technology of the communication media" (8, trans. Z. H.).

Owing to its thematic choices, the book is not only a work of transdisciplinary literary research but can also serve as a valuable resource for academics in art research (especially digital arts and intermedia studies), media studies, communication studies, philosophy, aesthetics, pedagogy, and creative programming. Furthermore, its significance lies in its focus on the Central European perspective, thanks to the referenced material and analyzed works, which offer an alternative to the Western-centric model of literature and art promotion. The range of references includes thinkers from the ancient era, through French structuralism and post-structuralism, to recent and contemporary Polish and Slovak researchers, American media theorists, hypertext specialists, cognitive scientists, and programmers, as well as individuals exploring the latest trends in

electronic literature, techno-aesthetics, post-humanism, and more.

This monograph diverges from the well-established approach in literary-theoretical books of focusing on electronic literature and the mapping of this field. Significant works in electronic literature theory typically introduce new theoretical and/or methodological approaches and then analyze and interpret a selected number of works based on these approaches. Examples of such works include *Electronic Literature: New Horizons for the Literary* by N. Katherine Hayles, *Digital Modernism: Making it New in New Media* by Jessica Pressman, and *Digital Art and Meaning: Reading Kinetic Poetry, Text Machines, Mapping Art, and Interactive Installations* by Robert Simanowski, among others.

Suwará's approach does not adhere to this converging structure of textual architecture, but rather, it is more hybrid, resulting in each chapter having a distinct formation. Her book is structured as a gradual exploration of research issues necessary for understanding the positions presented in the subsequent chapters. It progresses from literary, artistic, and media theoretical problems to various approaches for understanding or analyzing intermedia works and hypermedia artifacts. Additionally, it delves into the practical dimensions of these theoretical issues by examining academic multimedia forms, such as PowerPoint presentations, and by revealing the behind-the-scenes preparation for collaborative liter-

ary projects and the obstacles encountered within them.

The first chapter, “Kríza reprezentácie, hybridizácia, remediácia” (Crisis of representation, hybridization, remediation), focuses on several epistemological concepts related to the interrelational representations of text and image, addresses the issue of denotational diversities inherent in both old and new media, and ends with reflections inspired by the history of photography.

The second chapter, “Fotografia ako nástroj hybridizácie textu a obrazu” (Photography as a tool of hybridization of text and image), directly applies theoretical approaches to analyze the strategies employed by selected Slovak and Polish authors in their intermedial projects, whether collaborative or individual. The works are interpreted through strategies of remediation, media specificity, and discourse-reading, while still employing a thematological approach that allows readers to focus on cultural-historical references as well as visual anthropology and even medicine.

Third and fourth chapters “Hypermediálne artefakty” (Hypermedial artefacts) and “Hypermédium a hypertext” (Hypermedium and hypertext) delve into the theoretical, literary, and artistic implications brought about by digital technologies and their impact on the emergence of entirely new socio-cultural phenomena (such as network culture, netocracy, digital collaborations, information literacy, virtual presence etc.). Quoting Margot Lovejoy’s *Digital Currents: Art in the Electronic Age* (2004), Suwara highlights that “digital simulation has finally shattered the paradigm of representation we have been operating under since the Renaissance” (103).

The transdisciplinary and transcultural methodological framework, which traces significant works in these fields back to the 1980s (including references to the Slovak theoreticians František Miko and Pavol Winczer), elucidates the contributions and addresses the pitfalls of digital culture within the broader media landscape and the artistic,

social, and technological transformations we have been witnessing.

The fifth chapter “Skúmanie literatúry a programovateľné médiá” (Research on literature and programmable media) is more narrowly focused, emphasizing the challenges and possibilities of Espen J. Aarseth’s concept of ergodic literature in the context of research on electronic literature and digital games.

Powerpoint as a cross-medial artistic, presentational and educational tool is methodologically analyzed in the sixth chapter “Archeológia médií alebo Formy hypermediálneho artefaktu” (Media archeology or Forms of hypermedial artefacts). Along with the eighth chapter “Autor verus techné alebo Rozširovanie priestoru tvorivosti (literatúry)” (Author versus techné or Expanding the space of [literary] creativity), it directs the reader’s attention to the practical applications of inter/transmedial research on digital technologies.

The seventh chapter “Programovacie jazyky ako zdroj poézie” (Programming languages as a source of poetry) epistemologically originates from Walter Ong’s premise of the “technologizing of the word” and the “interface of the word,” as formulated in his book *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (1982). It later examines the social implications of electronic textual formats and forms, focusing on the technologization of literature as “equivalent use and abuse of all elements of a specific interface: audiovisual, textual, and finally animation” (264).

The author’s term “hypermedial artifact” can thus be understood as “a phenomenon created based on the unstable, dynamic rules of a virtual environment, where the delineated and differentiated form of post-human consciousness emerges” and “allows the authors to acquire new skills – iteracy” (264–265). Suwara’s proposition to concentrate on the medial strategies of the entire interface (rather than on its individual semiotic systems) and its creation and reception is highly valuable for the entire field of digital arts.

The author connects relatively unrelated theories and methodologies from different fields of research into a transdisciplinary reflection that follows both synchronic and diachronic perspectives. However, as the monograph encompasses a wide range of theories and methodologies, it would have been greatly helpful if it had finished with a conclusion to refresh the reader's memory and summarize the author's fundamental arguments or positions. Additionally, there is no English abstract, which could help promote this monograph abroad.

Suwara's focus on contemporary research in electronic media and the implications it has for entire generations and their approach-

es to acquiring information, education, leisure activities, communication techniques, and even the organization of individual biorhythmic and working environments as well as communal/global living makes this book significant as a historical probe into our techno-social milieu that, through electronic signals, transcends our *hic et nunc*.

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