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## Is There a Literature in this Class?

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Kultura Popularna nr 4 (38), 42-56

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2013

Artykuł został zdigitalizowany i opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej [bazhum.muzhp.pl](http://bazhum.muzhp.pl), gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

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# Is There a Litera- ture *in This Class?*<sup>1</sup>

DOI: 10.5604/16448340.1109978

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<sup>1</sup> This work was funded by The National Science Centre, Grant Number 103 398340.

The literary work called *Electronic Literature*, by Roman Bromboszcz (Bromboszcz, 2008: 33–35), from the *digital.prayer* volume, without any doubt is to be categorized as poetry, considering, among others, the verse form of the text, its vividness, repeatability, metaphorical nature or rhythmicity. Paradoxically, this poem presents the process of formulating poetry, determined by Bromboszcz as cybernetic, and popularized by the Perfokarta group (Perfokarta, n.d). The artist defined it as follows: “I meant the poetry which puts inspiration in brackets and attempts to create texts, which could be referred to as machines, the poetry which embarks on problems associated with technology, particularly artificial intelligence, automated technology, robotics, as well as knowledge–power issues, censorship etc” (Bromboszcz, 2010: 99). In *Electronic Literature*, he presents the method of generating cybernetic works which is not based on awaiting the inspiration, but rather on the transfer, as he remarks himself: “In the cybernetic poetry that I compose, either I reset myself completely and write like an automaton, trying not to correct anything, or I have a dictionary, a database and I look for connections” (Pawlicka, 2010a). Automatism and randomization of cybernetic poetry put a question mark over its classification as part of literature, of which the above properties are largely untypical. Although literariness of the quoted work is beyond doubt, the projects of Perfokarta group problematize the issue even more.

The presentations of *Wariacje na Kwadrat Magiczny* by Bromboszcz, or *rozstrzelam\_krew* by Łukasz Podgórní immediately result in the question whether they still constitute poetry. Following the emotional impulse, to use the category introduced by Edward Balcerzan and discussed further in this essay (Balcerzan, 2013: 12–27), to classify it as poetry comes across as adequate. But whenever I am asked about the literariness of digital works, I invoke Stanley Fish in my heart of hearts, particularly his famous anecdote on the lecture during which a female student asked him: “Is there a text in this class?” Inspired by this event, in his own article Fish describes the process of bringing meanings of words into life, and their function in social communication, which “takes place only within some such a system (as well as context, situation or interpretative community), and that the agreement reached by two or more persons is appropriate for this system and is applicable only in the framework of its restrictions” (Fish, 2003: 194). Fish’s question: “How communication is possible at all, if not by relating it to some public and stable norm?” (Fish, 2003: 209) makes one aware that the recipient who embraces digital literature will use the acquired knowledge in the field of literature and the entire accumulated experience related to its perception. Further, the same recipient will place digital literature solely within the area of literature, as a result of which any attempt to interpret it with the existing research tools will be in vain. The emotional impulse must be accompanied by the scientific impulse which systematically defines that there is digital literature in these classes.

Katherine Hayles, who writes about the necessity to explain literariness, claims that: “electronic literature arrives on the scene after five hundred years of print literature (and, of course, even longer manuscript and oral traditions). Readers come to digital work with expectations formed by print, including extensive and deep tacit knowledge of letter forms, print conventions, and print literary modes. Of necessity, electronic literature must build on these expectations even as it modifies and transforms them” (Hayles, 2011). According to the quoted statement, digital literature is supposed to explain its literariness, or rather specify in what way it is handled and, further down, redefine literariness at the time of digital, multimedia and convergent culture.

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The phenomenon of “interlacing realms” in literature under the influence of different media, was pointed out by Agnieszka Fulińska, who sums it up as follows: “in this way, the ultimate interlacing of realms takes place, which once used to be separate, cultural worlds: of documentary and fiction, of continuity of events and of fragmentariness, of the word and the image. Obviously, the constituents of such means might be found in the bygone days, from before the revolution of new media, however the total freedom to join all forms of communicativeness and taking its institutional literariness (artistry) or colloquialism (documentarism) for granted, is a distinctive feature of the modern times, in which not only *medium is message*, but also the way that we receive the message, is certainly dependent on the medium through which it is transmitted to us” (Fulińska, 2012: 468–469).

The purpose of this article is to present the way in which digital literature announces its literariness. The first part includes a definition of digital literature, followed by reflection questions, which, however, do not necessarily require unequivocal answers. The second part mentions current methods of defining literariness and its inclusion criteria. The third part focuses on reasons why the term literariness is being blurred, with reference to digital literature, and presents a number of notions from within the artistic and literary culture which indicate that the borders between media and those domains are being erased. The final part determines the factors that identify digital works as pieces of literature.

## Defining Digital Literature

“Electronic literature, or e-lit, refers to works of highly vital literary aspects that take advantage of the capabilities and contexts provided by a stand-alone or networked computer” (ELO, n.d.). This definition, found on the official site of Electronic Literature Organization, rather than providing a clear explanation arouses further doubts. The authors do not specify which ones among the “vital literary aspects” they refer to or how the relation between literary attributes and properties of the computer occurs. Their explanation of the definition denotes areas classified as belonging to electronic literature, and these are: hypertext fiction and poetry, kinetic poetry, interactive fiction, computer art, novels that take the form of emails, SMS messages, or blogs, poems and stories that are generated by computers, collaborative writing projects and online literary performances which develop new ways of writing. The authors’ main objective, according to Hayles, was “to include both the works performed in digital media and work created on a computer but published in print” (Hayles, 2007).

The controversial nature of the above description was noticed not only by Hayles, but also by Roberto Simanowski, who claims that the explanation concentrates more on the digital area which literature entered, rather than on the very nature of electronic literature (Simanowski, 2011: 27). Although further in the definition there appears a statement ensuring that art of word is the central reference point for electronic literature, the authors do not explain the correlation between this statement and the following one, which assumes that literature is not associated with any medium or institution, since it moves freely between different spaces (ELO, n.d.).

The sheer number of summoned implementations included in digital literature, exposes it to charges of losing its literary aspects in favor of the artistic

ones. Andrew Gallix in the article “Is literature just one big anti-climax?” (Gallix, 2008) critically describes digital literature, stating, among others, that it is losing its literary character. In the concluding remarks, he recalls the words of Mark Amerika, an artist who believed that “we are witnessing the emergence of a «digitally-processed intermedia art», in which literature and all the other genres of art are «remixed into yet other forms still not fully developed»” (Gallix, 2008). Gallix concludes that the number of similarities between “other forms” and literature is constantly decreasing. Dene Grigar, in her notable publication *Electronic Literature: Where Is It?* (Grigar, 2008) enters a polemic with Gallix’s theories and tries to supersede his charges. Grigar states that the allegations in question stem from a wrong diagnosis of digital literature, which, admittedly, requires a constant process of description and explanation. The researcher admits that the hybrid form and technological innovations exploited by artists, might, as a result, blur the literary content. Grigar, moreover, points out that perceptual processes in case of traditional literature differ greatly from the ones involved in the cognition of digital literature. The latter is definitely more sense-oriented, thus the recipient is more willing to categorize the work as a work of art, rather than a piece of literature. Grigar is convinced that “the more ubiquitous computing becomes, the more we interact with media in electronic environments, the more we experience electronic writing, the easier it will be to expand our sensibility about literature created and distributed in mediums beyond print” (Grigar, 2008).

Multimedia, kinesthetic, technological innovations, interactivity, multimodal perception, these are only some properties of digital literature and its nature, which is not as much interdisciplinary as transdisciplinary. In a publication devoted to the borderlands of arts, Seweryna Wyślouch introduces a list of important questions which, in the light of incessant development of the new media, keep updating themselves and require dynamic interpretation. “What is literariness? Are there any indicators of literariness?”, “What relations are there between literature and the non-literary discourse?”, “Is utterance segmentation supposed to account for the literariness of text exclusively?” (Wyślouch, 2009: 7–25). In fact, further questions emerge, parallel to the ones posed by Wyślouch, such as: should literariness be redefined? Is there a demand for establishing clear criteria of literariness for electronic literature? Is leaning towards categorization wise in the times of “interlacing realms”?

Here, the transdisciplinary approach, mentioned before, seems to be the right solution, also according to Wyślouch who claims that “in contrast with the interdisciplinary research – these do not exhibit the borders and do not concentrate only on border phenomena, but through «action across» neutralize these borders completely” (Wyślouch, 2009: 22). Fluent transitions require not only flexible descriptions, on account of the dizzying pace of technological development, but also expressive descriptions, which emphasize and reinforce the identity of a given domain, in order not to decline literature completely as a result of (dangerous) transfers.

## Comprehending Literariness: from Linguistic Conceptualization to Communication

Sławiński's dictionary of literary terms explains literariness as "a category implemented by the Russian formal school to indicate the set of properties specific for literature, perceived as the art of word, which decide about its irreducibility to any other ways of speaking a language for cognitive, expressive or coaxing purposes" (Sławiński, 2002a: 283). In the first part of his definition, Sławiński emphasizes the meaning of systemness, which in other words signifies the introduction of a certain system of rules, by a group of researchers, which must be fulfilled in order to rank the work among pieces of literature. In the following passage, the author abandons the description of the structural conceptualization, shifting towards the communicative aspect. He claims that "literariness is a set of conditions, which in frames of the given social-literary awareness are to be fulfilled in a verbal statement so that it is classified among the works of literature" (Sławiński, 2002a: 283). This short sentence contains categories which perform an important function of determining the nature of literariness.

Sławiński's points out the following indicators of literariness: systemness, social-literary awareness and literary canon. Therefore, the concept of literariness on one hand might be imposed by the brain trust, whereas on the other, it is established intuitively by community, assuming that this intuition can be located within the framework of the on-going canon to which the recipient is appealing, in order to identify literariness of the work. Accordingly, the criteria of literariness are "historically and socially relative" (Sławiński, 2002a: 283) and each time shaped by literary communication, characterized through "the dominant way, in the given time and the environment, of comprehending the individual nature of a literary work in the context of other verbal transmissions, i.e. approaching its conditions of literariness" (Sławiński, 2002b: 256). The communication is formed on the basis of a distinctive literary model, valid in a given community, which at the same time directly influences the process of forming a new way of thinking and defining literariness. The category of literariness is specified on the foundations of the prevailing context of metaliterary statements or literary manifestos, valid for the certain period.

Consequently, literariness was reflected on by Russian structuralists, particularly by Roman Jakobson who enumerated three conditions of its existence: fictionality, vividness and defamiliarization. Wysłouch adds that following the poststructural turn, Jakobson's conception had to be reassessed, because it was not appropriate anymore in the context of hybrid and multimedia literature (Wysłouch, 2009: 13–15).

Marko Juvan, in the article "On Literariness: From Post-Structuralism to Systems Theory" (Juvan, 2000), points out various criteria of literariness. Above all, he underlines that literariness should not be explained by referring exclusively to the text and using preconceived rules, as it was in the case of Russian formalists, but by appealing to the "exterior" conditions, among which he distinguishes: circumstances and the context of reception, literary conventions and literary institutions. These three areas, included in a literary

communication are responsible for shaping literariness, which is historically, socially and culturally conditioned. However, Juvan supports the system approach (established by community) which is the “most convincing reply to literary elaborateness” (Juvan, 2000). Nevertheless, it is essential that the systemic conceptualization utilized such tools and categories, which neither downgrade the meaning of literariness nor deny the fact that a given text should be ranked among pieces of literature.

*Literackość* by Edward Balcerzan plays an important role in the discourse on the matter in question. Balcerzan scrupulously describes conditions in which the given notion is formed, as well as the way of establishing its semantic frames. The author stipulates four impulses (Balcerzan, 2013: 9–44) which, at the same time, are methods of comprehending literariness.

The first, formal-linguistic impulse (or linguistics-related) perceives literariness as a “literature-derived” form; according to the dictionary definition quoted by Balcerzan, literariness is “a synonym of «literary character (typical of literary works)»” (Balcerzan, 2013: 11). Such conceptualization relates literariness exclusively to the encyclopedic description of literature and, within its frames, attempts to specify its meaning without evoking any other research contexts.

The second, emotional impulse, already mentioned above, exploits emotions as means to decide about the literariness of a given work. “The knowledge of literariness of literature much more often manifests itself, following Viktor Shklovsky’s statement, in a «half-understandable» way, and if it happens to be verbalized, the process is temporary, intuitive and semiconscious. Still, its functional being is a fact beyond any doubt: after all, literary texts are distinguished from the non-literary ones almost flawlessly on the base of some undefined and indescribable approach, albeit satisfying for many subjects” (Balcerzan, 2013: 13). Balcerzan discusses the given approach as directed by “literary consciousness and subconsciousness” and a “spontaneous cognition of literariness”. The emotional impulse also appears at the moment of relating the work to the literary tradition: “among the simplest ways of conducting half-conscious identification of linguistic texts as literary texts we may confirm their connection with the palpable tradition, determined as literary, or searching for similarities to the constructions regarded, on the whole, as representative for literature (belonging to the generally accepted on-going canon)” (Balcerzan, 2013: 21). Since different literary, and particularly avant-garde, movements of this kind have defined literariness in different ways, theoreticians describe a work by appealing to particular poetics which functions in the literary tradition. This strategy allows to defend the thesis postulating literariness of a work and, simultaneously, to point at its interpretative contexts. In the attempt to define literariness through emotional approach, Chris Funkhouser mentions digital poetry, which should be characterized according to literary tradition, among others to Dadaism and neo-avantgarde (Funkhouser, 2007a: 24). Another proof is the passage of the manifesto by cybernetic poets, in which they openly recognize references to the history of literature: “the discourse with tradition undertaken by us is regarding: the Futurist poetry, so-called «zaum»; specific poetry, particularly in the area of «identity» and «contradictions», including the kaligram; phonetic and sound poetry; animation and the art-net (computer art)” (Perfokarta, n.d.).

Another two impulses can be defined as ideological, directed by various ideologies, and the scientific. The latter is to be understood as appealing to existing theories and attempts to explain literariness. In this case, literariness of the work

is expressed through reference to on-going research practice, theoretical conceptualizations, and poetics of the author or speech genres. Literariness, in this case, manifests itself on the base of situation; it might be understood and determined depending on the adopted criteria, shaped by the literary communication.

This multitude of conceptualizations leads to a conclusion that literariness cannot be limited to rigid frames of one definition, because every art form heads for the violation of conventions, and therefore, eventually, puts a question mark over the existence of one stable description of literariness – inadequate to changing strategies, aesthetics and artistic styles. Balcerzan concludes: “there is an indefensible thesis which reputedly depicts one universal, unchanging and omnipresent «approach to literariness» in the linguistic substance of the literary work and amongst the components. If we are able to, without much difficulty, distinguish a certain group of works in which some specific, particularly active property is becoming the sign of membership for all copies from a given group to the art of word, we have to consider the high likelihood that the same feature will be marginalized in the neighboring areas of literature, and eventually will probably disappear from view entirely; at the same time some new, competitive attributes of literariness will appear” (Balcerzan, 2013: 61). Every attempt to define literariness proves that it is not possible to clearly and unambiguously specify its principles, since they are incessantly changed and updated depending on the social and cultural space.

## Digital Literature and the “Blurring” of Literariness

Digital literature undermines the definition of literariness expressed in accordance with its current image in the social awareness. It is vital to investigate reasons why its meaning is being blurred in electronic literature.

Firstly, this kind of literature uses non-literal forms and signs, which often dominate over the verbal text. Such examples are reflected in the works of cybernetic poetry, where the word either does not occur at all, or it is supplanted by visual elements or sound. Cybernetic poets appeal to the technology of transcoding, which relies on “scientific and procedural connection of the impressions picked up by one of senses with the impressions picked up by another sense” (Bromboszcz, 2011: 52). According to Bromboszcz, assigning sounds to letters, colors to sounds or colors to letters are all illustrations of transcoding.

Another factor casting a shadow of doubt over this matter involves manifestos and statements of authors, which are likely to contain expressions contrary to the existing image of literature. Cybernetic poets, self-determining their own activity, style and aesthetics, utilize terms from non-literal branches, such as: cybernetics, information technology or computer art. Therefore, such texts make use of, among others, such notions as computer, machine, cyborg, randomization, generativity, noise, entropy or homeostat. In this context, one should also refer to the following statements: “Out of many existent and non-existent (yet) proceedings applied in writing it is possible to highlight: 1. (due to the course of events in the act of creation) machine-based composition – i.e. determining the set of elements which comprise both the randomization and selection factor; 2. (due to the techniques of creation (writing)) «cut-up»; 3. (in the view of the objectives) critical poem” (Perfokarta, n.d.); Bromboszcz:



“In the cybernetic poetry that I compose, I either reset myself completely and write like an automaton, trying not to correct anything, or I have a dictionary, a database and I look for connections” (Pawlicka, 2010a); Podgórní: “«In my poetry» the computer slaves away, replacing organic inspiration, and a man is in charge of it”. (Pawlicka, 2010b).

Second reason why literariness is blurred in digital literature is the incorporation of the sense of sight, as well as the hearing, touch, and even smell into cognitive processes of the poem apprehension (Kac, n.d.). Additionally, perception processes sometimes require bodily movement, in order to stimulate the creation of a text. As Dene Grigar mentions, multimodal perception is more intuitively associated with art rather than with literature.

The active range of digital literature is the third reason making literariness more vague. Literature is not only accessible on the Internet or smartphones, but also displayed in the public sphere (as mapping art) and galleries. The term gallery alone produces artistic, not literary connotations. One example of such a case is the “Głos i fonem” (“Voice and phoneme”) exhibition, which took place on 10 May 2013 in the Gallery Siłownia in Poznań. The organizers wanted to “present a variety of attitudes which go beyond the stereotype of understanding the poetry and literature. It portrays such aesthetic phenomena which indicate the widening of literary devices and lead them beyond literature, in the direction of music, plastic arts and new media. The area can be referred to as processual redefinition of avant-garde experiments in the phonetic, sound and visual poetry” (Editor, n.d.). Connecting poetry, especially, its avant-garde related forms, with artistic implementations and the venue, created a multidimensional picture, to which the current methods of measuring the literary quality of works cannot be applied.

“Głos i fonem” featured not only representatives of cybernetic poetry (Bromboszcz, Podgórní), but also persons associated with artistic activities (Joanna Adamczewska, Małgorzata Dawidek Gryglicka). “Widening the range of literary devices and leading them beyond literature”, one of main intentions of the organizers, leads to a situation, in which all statuses and categorizations are removed. A poet becomes an artist, and an artist becomes a poet. Mark Amerika, Noah Wardrip-Fruin, Roman Bromboszcz, and Zenon Fajfer are only a few figures who perform their activities on the intersection between digital literature and art. In the process of apprehending, the recipient finds it difficult to classify particular projects into the appropriate fields of art. As a consequence, digital works are described by some as examples of digital literature, and by others as conceptualizations of art. *Screen* by Camille Utterback and Romy Achituv is an exemplification of this issue, discussed by one critic in the context of literature (Górska-Olesińska, 2010a: 28–36), and by another located in the field of interactive art (Kluszczyński, 2010: 39). “Linie i krzyki/Lines and crimes”, an installation by Roman Bromboszcz included in the “Ciśnienie” (“Pressure”) exhibition, which took place in Siłownia on 1 June 2012 in Poznań, is another example. The organisers informed, among others, about computer art exhibition, that the recalled “Linie i krzyki/Lines and crime” can be classified as; asked about it, Bromboszcz replied in the following words: “The work consists of cybernetic poetry with projection, sound and physical object as canvas with electronics” (Pawlicka 2012a). Answering the question whether the installation is still a piece of art or already a part of cybernetic poetry, in one of interviews he said that they were “mixed media”, and the applied term was supposed to combine cyberpoetry and computer art safely (Pawlicka 2012a).

Activity in different artistic fields is thus leading to consternation, and makes it difficult to locate particular projects within a certain field explicitly. Academic publications do not solve the problem, on the contrary, they emphasize the fact that the border between digital literature and art is vanishing, however, they do not provide any explanation what the new relation is essentially about. The article *Poezja nomadyczna (Nomadic Poetry)* by Monika Górska-Olesińska which pictures the nomadic nature of digital poetry is only one example (Górska-Olesińska, 2010b: 210–220), published in the book *Sztuki w przestrzeni transmedialnej (Art in The Transmedial Space)* and edited by Tomasz Żałuski. Another one is *Liberatura, e-literatura i... Remiksy, remediacje, redefinicje (Liberature, E-literature and... Remixes, Remediations, Redefinitions)* (Górska-Olesińska ed., 2012) which, as the title seems to indicate, contains an analysis of digital literature and its varieties shaped under the influence of new media. Apart from the chapters concerning literature and electronic literature, the book also discusses multimedia art; however the presence of the latter chapter is not explained by the editor at all.

## Digital Literature and Digital Art

Diverse implementations and varieties of literature, developed under the influence and with the use of new media, may be divided into three groups, depending on the interrelation between digital literature and digital art, i.e. transcoding (semiotic criteria), prosthesis (media convergence criteria) and absorption (criteria of the exhibition space for work).

Transcoding consists in conversion of one sign to another, which entails different perception and involves other senses. Bromboszcz states: “I am going to define transcoding as precise and procedural connection of the impressions picked up by one of senses with the impressions picked up by another sense. I am also going to define transcoding as technological and procedural amalgamation of symbols, which belong to one field or genre of art, with symbols derived from some other kind of art – in accordance with the other existing definitions” (Bromboszcz, 2011: 52). Some of the digital adaptations, which involve the process of adjusting a traditional work to web conditions, are a straightforward implementation of transcoding which exploits the features of new media. The adaptation of formistic poetry by Tytus Czyżewski, edited by Urszula Pawlicka and designed by Łukasz Podgórní, (Pawlicka, Podgórní, 2012b), shows how a traditional text develops kinesthetic nature and takes the form of image or sound.

The term prosthesis, on the other hand, means “linking” or reinforcing the word with a non-literal element, generated under the impact of new media. The notion of “aggregation”, suggested by Bromboszcz, has a similar connotation, though he uses it to emphasize the phenomenon of “putting genres of art, types of art or media together” (Bromboszcz, 2011: 49), referring to the role of all media, not only the digital ones; thus, as an example, he used an illustrated book. “Junction” was another term, introduced by cybernetic poets, close in meaning to prosthesis; it was, however, more related to the formation of relations between a poet and a device (Bromboszcz, n.d.). The prosthesis aims to emphasize the role of new technologies, which act as an amplifier or upgrade for literature; here, the project presents interconnection of those areas, where one empowers the other without touching its core identity. Among the works that exemplify prosthesis are the so called extended or “plugged” books, such as *Elektrobiblioteka (Electrolibrary)* by Waldemar

Węgrzyn (Węgrzyn, n.d.), presented by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Cracow, which allow to connect a custom made paper book to the computer, so that it can be used as an interface.

Absorption refers to literature as being potentially devoured by other forms of digital art, which, as a result, blurs the boundaries between them. Literature “is immersing” in the area so far occupied by art, taking the form of installation or event. Accordingly, a work can be regarded to be both digital literature and digital art. *Text Rain* projects, by Camille Utterback and Romy Achituv are examples of absorption, followed by *Screen* by Noah Wardrip-Fruin, all of them described by Simanowski. Simanowski, in his attempt to determine their character and, in the process, solve the problem of relations between literature and art, reaches a conclusion that it is not the very material which diversifies these fields, but its function (Simanowski, 2011: 28). Hence, if a work is supposed to produce linguistic meaning, it becomes a piece of literature; but if interaction and relation are its main purposes, it is recognized as a work of art. Simanowski, however, supplements this condition with several more detailed observations, emphasizing the role of the author and the attitude of recipients, as – after all – it is their perception that decides whether they aspire to draw meanings, or focus exclusively on interaction (Simanowski, 2011: 40). In a careful analysis of digital artworks, the researcher is made to consider the *Text Rain* installation an example of both digital literature and art (depending on the user’s intentions); whereas *Screen* as an implementation of digital art, because in the latter case we are able to notice a distinctive shift from the role of a listener/reader to an activist, and the from semantic level to the interactive one, which require concentration not on the meaning of words, but on the sign manipulation and reactions to changes in the environment (Simanowski, 2011: 45). *Screen* installation is a proof that interpreting literariness depends on the recipient’s point of view; moreover it is an illustration of how the recognition process is conducted. While Simanowski undermines the status of *Screen* as part of digital literature, its creator, Wardrip-Fruin bestows a title upon it. From that moment on, the so called “instrumental text” is associated with preserving the balance between reading and playing (Simanowski, 2011: 46); in the process the artist locates his handiwork in the area of literature, rather than art.

Distinct opinions of the researcher and the artist prove that treating the project as an implementation of literature is subjective, flexible and relative. The authors are, in particular, the ones who, by defining their own works, decide which area of activity they belong to, together with the context one should analyze them in. As a result, both researchers and artists tend to summon and implement various notions to define their projects, united under one common target: removal of all categorizations.

Apart from hybridity, an omnipresent term in the fields of art and literature, helping to define digital poetry and used by, among others, Górska-Olesińska (Górska-Olesińska, 2010b: 210), new concepts have emerged as well: intermediality and transmediality, conjured, for instance, by Agnieszka Przybyszewska while describing books as interfaces (Przybyszewska, 2012: 37–56). Konrad Chmielecki is attributed with establishing the difference between them, recognizing, that “the subjects of research on the aesthetics of intermediality are media, which established a discourse of mutual interrelation between one another. Moving across the boundaries appointed by individual media systems, however, is out of question” (Chmielecki, 2010: 67). Postmediality, resulting from fluent transitioning between all sorts of media, was discussed in Poland by Piotr Celiński who states: “*Postmedia* and the *postmedial* situation

are the media and the cultural-social communication systems, subjected to digital reconstruction, in which they are losing their current ontological (technical), aesthetic and ideological identity. Their presence in contemporary culture is increasingly based, no longer on their actual, material driving force, but on the cultural spirit and its vitality, being of much greater importance than the permanence of technological solutions which appointed and supported this spirit in analogue conditions of the mass culture" (Celiński, 2013: 11). Postmediality is an intriguing notion indicating that medium is losing its significance, as it is not the storage medium/ hardware that is really essential, but the content/ software of the project.

The transition of content between various types of media is called nomadism, the term itself used by Górska-Olesińska to discuss "nomadic poetry" (Górska-Olesińska, 2010 b: 215). Nomadism, a wandering notion between different fields using herein the Mieke Ball's metaphor (Ball, 2012), should not, however, only refer to one variety of poetry, because it manifests itself within the entire digital literature that can be read on different storage mediums and presented in different dimensions.

The authors from the circle of cybernetic poetry, on the other hand, use a number of terms meant to explain their activity, and each refers to the same feature: integral union of poetry and the new media, development of poetics and aesthetics in contemporary poetry and removal of racial divisions. As a result, the following notions emerge: polipoetry (Bromboszcz, 2010: 93), which links different avant-garde traditions; mixed media, "material mix" (Pawlicka, 2012a), being in fact a synonym of multimedia; junction (Bromboszcz, n.d.); expanded poetry, reinforcement poetry (Editor, n.d.), post-production – a term used by Mark Amerika to determine his own projects which evade the traditional typologies of media (Wójtowicz, 2012: 73–84), this term is also referred to by cyberpoets (Editor, n.d.); postpoetry, derived from the notion of "postpoet" that Piotr Puldzian Płucienniczak used to describe himself, encouraging this way the creation of projects which are "poetry" in name only, as they have nothing in common with the traditional concept; Puldzian's term also contains reflections on depleting poetry and its transformation into other forms; found poetry (Michalska, 2013), a notion used by Ewa Michalska, appealing to the found footage method in the film, refers to the method of formulating works from a specified, accessible range of vocabulary and combines poems with collages.

Apart from those terms, it is worth to mention ones which, although not used in Poland, are active in digital literature discourse: recombination and creative cannibalism. The first term, introduced by Bill Seaman is the recombination of words under the influence of neighboring multimedia elements (Seaman, 2014); as far as creative cannibalism (Funkhouser, 2007b) is concerned, the term should be understood as an absorption, or rather "devouring" of certain forms of expression and the production of the other (absorption of literature through art or art through literature).

## How Digital Literature Indicates its Literariness

Having explained the way of eliciting literariness of work and underlining relations between electronic literature and digital art, it is necessary

to enumerate the factors which determine digital work as piece of literature. An intuitive awareness is the first indicator, it appears when the recipient does not realize that the given work belongs to literature, but intuitively decides about the appropriate affiliation. This could be illustrated by *Mnemotechniki*, a publication by Jarosław Lipszyc, which does not involve any generic expressions, but the structure of remixed entries from Wikipedia signals a poetic form (Lipszyc, 2008).

The poetics of a literary work is the second factor, which is the recognition of the features typical for conventional literature in digital work. The examples here are hypertext novels.

Tradition is the third condition; it consists in finding resemblances between poetics, style or aesthetics to works and the literary tradition. In this way, digital and cybernetic poetry is analyzed by Andrzej Pająk (Pająk, 2008), Mariusz Pisarski (Bromboszcz, Misiak, Podgórn, 2008) and by Urszula Pawlicka (Pawlicka, 2012c).

Ascribing to the work the status of literature is the fourth condition, performed by the very author, who identifies his digital work as part of literature. The fifth one is the process of granting the status of literature to the work by a researcher or a literary critic. The sixth possibility is conferring the status of literature by a publisher. The form of publication and the set ISBN number are evidence that the work is acknowledged as an example of literature. The poetic volume *978-578* by Roman Bromboszcz exemplifies this case (Bromboszcz, 2012), together with the collection of animated poetry *C(n Du It* by Katarzyna Giełżyńska (Giełżyńska, 2012). The last factor engages the recipient, who personally determines the status of literature, as a result of interaction with the work affirms its affiliation to a particular genre.

The last issue, engaged with by Emilia Branny-Jankowska, is interlinked with the category of literary promise; it represents the first effort to describe literariness of digital works (Branny, 2009: 153–162). The process of reading electronic work, according to the researcher, is based on the rendezvous “of the reader’s aspirations towards literature” with “the literary promise of work” (Branny-Jankowska, 2010: 53). The digital work itself conceals literariness, whose desire for freedom is carried out by the very user. “Every premise that the work is a literary work or is able to generate literary works, will be related to as a literary promise. The very promise evokes mental and physical operations of the reader who attempts to create and experience the promised literary texts “ (Branny-Jankowska, 2010: 54). The recipient, knowing that the work is regarded as piece of literature, on the basis of its title or description, intends to generate a work which will be literary in nature. The objective is to form a textual composition (the promise of a poem), discover the structure of a work (structural promise), or to find the concealed meaning (cognitive promise). This way, the category of “literary promise” emphasizes the role of the user in defining literariness of a digital work.

Digital literature consists of diversified conceptualizations: from works imitating conventional features, to projects undermining its literary status. The final resolution concerning literariness takes place in the communicative space, between the artist and his work, the author and the recipient, or the user and digital work. The three areas of relations might be linked to three separate conclusions. The answer to the eponymous question “Is there a literature in this class?” is relative; arguably dependant on the type of classes (ELMCIP, n.d.) and the attitude of the lecturer. There is no one, single, straightforward criteria; there are only factors, on the basis of which it is possible to decide

whether they ought to be attributed literary nature. The main objective of the participants of literary communication, in the light of transmediality and transdisciplinarity, is to create justification for the development and modification of literature, and, simultaneously, to amplify their own literary sensitivity.

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