



BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



SPECIAL SECTION: ABSTRACTS

Carassai, Mauro

SCALABLE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL (RE-)MEDIATIONS: THE CHALLENGE OF HYPER-NONFICTION WRITING IN JOAN DIDION'S THE WHITE ALBUM, ANNIE DILLARD'S PILGRIM AT TINKER CREEK AND SARA SULERI'S MEATLESS DAYS

The paper shows how selected works of pre-internet American autobiographical nonfiction already presupposed forms of cognitive mapping more typical of recent epistemological developments in the field of digital humanities. By means of a renovated focus on the too-often overlooked potentialities of early electronic literature, my analysis sheds light on the possibility of re-envisioning hypertext as a tool able to mediate the reading experience between the impersonal approach of so-called *distant reading* more typical of empirical sciences and the subjective-oriented practice of *close reading* in the humanities. The second half of the paper narrows its focus on highlighting the ways in which these narratives challenge the capabilities of human cognition. As a whole, my study hopefully illustrates how it is mainly the task of the reader – especially the critical reader – to recognize and make visible in traditional printed texts a number of germinal technological features that not only had not been envisioned or conceived of as such by their authors but that allow us to reconfigure our views on the current characterizations of digital technologies used for macroanalysis of large-scale data sets.

Balsamo, Camilla, Hans-Bianchi, Barbara

THE PAGE- BUILDING A PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN THESAURUS THROUGH THE CORRECTION OF OCR ERRORS

The aim of our project is to build an online Thesaurus of Pennsylvania German. This North American minority language has been in contact with American English ever since its emergence around 1800 and is still lacking a received standard, producing thus quite of a linguistic challenge. The research has been carried out on different text-based sources. We opted for Open Source software: firstly, we scanned images of source-text and converted them using an OCR. Errors occur repeatedly, in conversion phase, either due to flecks of the original text, or through the process of machine encoding. Errors might be varying: non-word detection, word-boundary, fails in punctuation, lack of diacritical marks in the output, tokenization errors and misrecognition of part-of-speech (POS). We are processing text through the programming language Python, working on inputs that automatically fix errors without causing further issues. In order to write the algorithms of correction, several techniques have been studied and developed. Some were barely statistical – like minimum edit distance techniques – but most of the work was done relying on linguistics: transition probabilities are quite often language-dependent; they represent the probability that a given character (sequence, or POS) shall or shall not be followed or preceded by some other given character (or sequence, or POS).

Bryant, John



ARCHIVE, EDITION, PROJECT: MAPPING MELVILLE AND NETWORKS OF CORRESPONDENCE

Mapping is a critical process of plotting data, images, and textual objects, in space over time, as a way of representing textuality as a kind of continuously evolving landscape of human interaction. A tool for mapping cultural phenomena, like literary coteries and networks, should include ways for users to interact with what is being mapped. It should allow us to make arguments. Digital solutions to these challenges require placing the problem in the context of collaborative and open source technologies and creating a web design that encompasses three areas of development: Archive, Edition, and Projects. In drawing from the experience of working on the Melville Electronic Library (MEL), this essay discusses the potentials and challenges of “mapping Herman Melville.” Both social and geographic mapping can advance scholarship and interpretation, but if they are to work at all and together, they require a digital infrastructure that enables interoperability. The kind of mapping planned for the Melville Electronic Library (MEL) is sustained by a three-part platform: Archive, Edition, and Project. By exploring limits and anxieties related to critical archiving, this essay discusses the inevitability of digital scholarly editing, and strategies for scholarly interaction with archived and edited materials in projects that generate new data (such as biographical and contextual annotation) and return that scholarship to the archive database. Along the way, the essay examines current technologies such as MEL’s editing and transcription tool TextLab, Hofstra DRC’s mapping and annotation tool Itinerary, IIF image formatting, and Blacklight / Spotlight metadata and content managers.

Donatelli, Michela

I LUOGHI E GLI SPAZI DEL PENSIERO DELLA *SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION*

The paper focuses on the history of the Open Access Movement, from a viewpoint which lets “spaces of thoughts” emerge in the places of the scholarly communication. From this perspective, indeed, the domain of the *Library and Information Science* shows aspects that are proper of the philosophical speculation. The essay analyses the ethical, political and philosophical implications of the Open Access instances that have the same language and the same episteme of postmodernity: this allows a dialogue between technological and digital aspect and humanist wisdom. The Open Access not only represents a technical innovation, but it also takes advantage of digital environment in the field of scientific dissemination, deeply changing the communication of knowledge itself. In this way, it also transforms the professionals of information, as they become researchers placed on the side of “who takes word” for desecrate knowledge and return it to the community.

Mazzilli, Francesca

BOT TALK E APPRENDIMENTO LINGUISTICO. L'USO DEI CHATBOT PER LO SVILUPPO DELLA COMPETENZA COMUNICATIVA NELLA LINGUA STRANIERA

The purpose of this study is to identify the potential of chatbots in the academic foreign language learning. A chatbot is a software which is capable of chatting with other human and non-human



users in a natural language. Even though this technology is mostly used in the business world, its relevance in the field of Digital Humanities has constantly grown recently.

After a brief introduction to the chatbot technology, the study focuses on the main characteristics of human-computer interaction (HCI). Phenomena such as quasi-coherence, computer (or bot) talk, and quasi-alignment play a very important role in HCI, which is shown by several examples of interactions with two chatbots: Elbot and Cleverbot. Starting from these characteristics, the study considers the potential of chatbots in the language learning process by answering the following question: in what way does language education change if chatbots intervene in the learning/teaching process? The study describes the reconfiguration of the relationship student-language-teacher through the intervention of technology as interlocutor. The traditional configuration of the didactic triangle turns into a didactic tetrahedron. In comparison to the triangle, the tetrahedron has three dimensions and is more flexible and multidirectional. At the end, a didactic proposal for enhancing communicative competence by interacting with a chatbot in an academic context is described, also with reference to disabled (especially visually impaired) students.

Salgaro, Massimo

THE DIGITAL HUMANITIES AS A TOOLKIT FOR LITERARY THEORY: THREE CASE STUDIES OF THE OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE CONCEPTS OF “LATE STYLE”, “AUTHORSHIP ATTRIBUTION”, AND “LITERARY MOVEMENT”

Digital Humanities (DH) offers contemporary literary criticism a unique and constantly expandable set of “big data” that can be investigated through statistical analysis. Indeed, computational methods can be viewed as a “toolkit,” a unique array of instruments that allow the generation of new analytical data on literary texts. Through quantitative analysis of digitized texts, DH produces data that literary critics can use in qualitative analysis. Three case studies of computational analysis of “Late Style” (J. W. Goethe, Robert Musil, Franz Kafka), of “attribution of authorship” (Robert Musil) and of “literary movement” (German Romanticism and Heinrich von Kleist) are presented, demonstrating that the DH approach allows concepts in literary theory to be “operationalized,” i.e., translated from a theoretical to an empirical level. The methods exemplified in the three case studies provide a potential model for bridging the gap between literary theory and stylometric analysis.

Trincherò, Cristina, Ulrich, Silvia

STRATEGIE ED ESPERIMENTI-PILOTA PER LA DIDATTICA DELLE LETTERATURE STRANIERE NEL MONDO PUNTOZERO. IL PROGETTO OPEN LITERATURE

The current guidelines as far as education programmes promoted at local, national and European level insist on the necessity to develop strategies and approaches which may benefit from digital resources. Thus, students will develop critical awareness in the use of the Web, exploiting and developing its instruments to access texts and study materials, and to produce innovative forms of written production. The *Open Literature* project (www.openliterature.unito.it, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Turin) carries out experimental initiatives which intertwine



research and teaching, involving both university and high school students. This paper intends to resume and draw a critical balance of the didactic experiments performed so far within the project, all of them concerning the application of digital resources to Italian and foreign literatures as well as to the history of ideas and poetics: digitally annotated texts; written production of new textual forms in Italian and in foreign languages (Twitterature); re-use of literary and paraliterary texts in the public domain through wiki resources.

GENERAL SECTION: ABSTRACTS

Balestrino, Alice

ALTERNATIVE GEOGRAPHIES FOR ALTERNATIVE STORIES. THE DIAGONAL SPACE IN MICHAEL CHABRON'S *THE YIDDISH POLICEMEN'S UNION*

The present paper discusses the construction of fictional spaces with particular focus on their relationship to history by demonstrating how in Michael Chabon's alternate history *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*, a re-configuration of geography corresponds to a re-interpretation of history. My argument is grounded in the postmodernist construction of literature as having an ontological dominant and I hold that the abovementioned cause-effect relationship between history and geography engenders in the novel a fictional "space-time," diagonal to the actual world. The latter represents a third alternative to factuality and fictionality; therefore, it is a diagonal originating from the intersection between the two, a universe where history and geography, as well as factuality and counter-factuality mingle and collide. By resorting to the ubiquitous metaphor of the chess game, I present a reading of the novel as generative literary endeavor and of the narrative as self-sustained space-time, grounded in two main vectors of diagonality: language and history.

Fradegradi, Mauro

IL WESTERN COME "TREMENDISMO". *CRISTO VERSUS ARIZONA* DI CAMILO JOSÉ SELA

This essay aims to analyse one of Camilo José Cela's last novels, *Cristo versus Arizona* (1988) by applying a thematic and formalist approach. It moves from the several terminological debates on the word "tremendismo" and from its pervasiveness within Cela's works to explore the stylistic and thematic choices of the author, focusing in particular on those images that make *Cristo versus Arizona* one of his best works – those of deranged sexuality, violence, cruelty, animalization – and an atypical example of a western novel.

Henson, Nicholas

AN OLD FAITH IN THE WESTWARD VECTOR: THE FRONTIER IN THE WORKS OF THOMAS PYNCHON



The concept of the frontier, as well as quests for freedom from government oversight and the destructive propensities of capitalism have been a near constant throughout Thomas Pynchon's works. This paper traces the use of the western frontier as a motif Pynchon's work and examines its prominence in *Gravity's Rainbow* to posit that the concept of the frontier operates not as a site or promise of freedom but rather as a concept that allows for the questioning of the idea and ideals of freedom. In *Gravity's Rainbow* this motif of a freeing frontier is referenced through the setting of the Zone – the chaotic European warzone at the end of World War II, which momentarily erases former national boundaries. As Pynchon's ready depictions of inequity, poverty, and corporate and governmental control attest, human systems are fallible and they tend towards oppression. However, by presenting an alternative in the form of a frontier Pynchon co-opts a foundational American myth to suggest the opportunity for change towards a more equitable world.

Malandrino, Raffaella

A TURNING POINT. LA SVOLTA CULTURALE DI JHUMPA LAHIRI IN *IN ALTRE PAROLE*

Published before the very recent publication of Jhumpa Lahiri's first narrative work in Italian, *Dove mi trovo* (2018), *In altre parole* (2014) is, according to the Bengali American author, a "linguistic autobiography" that marks a stage of creative transformation in her career. Written exclusively in Italian, and in a context of voluntary exile in Rome, where the writer lived from 2012 to 2014, this collection of essays, personal reflections, and narratives operates as both a linguistic and a literary forge, and explores the creative potentialities emerging along with a new writerly subjectivity, unmoored from the use of the English language and from the literary themes of the South Asian American diasporic experience. A reflection on linguistic renunciation, navigating between the constraints imposed by the fragility of a new language and exploring the vivifying possibilities of a simultaneous disarticulation and re-elaboration of the self, *In altre parole* operates at the interstices between self and language, investigating the links between identity and otherness. Focusing on the analysis of its formal articulation and metatextual awareness, this essay retraces the translinguistic itinerary of this transformation, relocating *In altre parole* (*In Other Words* in its 2016 American translation) and Lahiri's artistic turn in a critical space exploring how the search for expressive freedom negotiates the relationship with the reading community and with the expectations that surround the writer's migrant background.

Anesa, Patrizia

POPULARIZATION AND DEMOCRATIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE THROUGH BLAWGS

The main aim of this study is to investigate the role of blawgs as a source of legal information both within and external to the epistemic law community and as a legitimizing tool for the many different voices which interact on a blawg. To this end, a corpus of twenty influential environmental blawgs has been compiled and analyzed qualitatively. The analysis focuses on how blawgs may contribute to the popularization and dissemination of knowledge in relation to environmental law. In particular, it is observed that explanations are aimed at a heterogeneous public and do not necessarily draw upon an underlying consensus. In this respect, attention is paid to the discursive practices



employed and to how bloggers filter and distill the overwhelming volume of information available. Moreover, the role of metaphors is discussed and defined as having not only an ornamental or aesthetic function, but also a methodological and epistemic one. Within the debate over which blogs are seen as indisputable tools for the democratization of legal information or as threats to traditional legal scholarship, this paper ultimately argues for understanding blawgs as a complementary (rather than substitutive) arena for discussion.

Becce, Nicolangelo

CURRENT GRAPHIC NOVEL ADAPTATIONS OF LITERARY WORKS: A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS

Over the last few years, a growing number of graphic adaptations of literary works have been published, and they seem to differ from comic book adaptations like the Classics Illustrated series or the more recently published Saddleback, Campfire, and Classical Comics in their not being specifically targeted to younger readers as simplified versions of the literary works they derive from (see Tabachnick and Saltzman 2015; see also Pizzino 2016, for a current analysis of the “status problem” of contemporary comics). Recent graphic literary works such as Hyman’s authorized adaptation of Jackson’s “The Lottery” (2016), Duffy and Jennings’ adaptation of Butler’s *Kindred* (2017), and Hamilton’s authorized adaptation of Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451* (2009), offer a unique opportunity to reflect upon how the textual component changes according to the two different media. Through the creation of a corpus made by a selected number of recent graphic novel adaptations and their literary counterparts, this paper aims at understanding the interactions and negotiations in the adaptation process from literature to comics in terms of lexical selection and semantic analysis by using corpus linguistics software such as AntWordProfiler (Anthony 2018) and Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC; Pennebaker et al. 2015).

Beseghi, Micol

DEVELOPING STUDENTS’ TRANSLATION COMPETENCE AND INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH SUBTITLING: A DIDACTIC PROPOSAL

The aim of this paper is to highlight the validity of subtitling as a pedagogic tool which can have a significant impact on the improvement of various skills, ranging from translation to the acquisition of socio-cultural knowledge (Díaz Cintas 2008) and intercultural awareness. Specifically, it describes a didactic proposal based on the integration of interlingual subtitling into university general translation courses. The audiovisual materials used in the project include a variety of films and TV series, with a main focus on multilingual films. The didactic project was carried out with a class of language students who were asked to engage in subtitling activities involving specific translation problems, including the rendering of language diversity and variation (i.e. ethnolects, dialects, sociolects, accents, language varieties, idiolects, etc.), cultural references, slang and taboo language. Such multimodal translation tasks can improve students’ awareness of the role of the translator as a cultural mediator, while fostering the development of strategies related to audiovisual comprehension and audiovisual translation, promoting at the same time students’ intercultural awareness.

Abstracts

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Cacchiani, Silvia

WEBPAGE INSTABILITY AND UTILITY CONTENT: CITIZEN'S RIGHTS AND THE LAW ON GOV.UK

The mission of the *UK Ministry of Justice* is to assist citizens with “making sense of justice,” the law and their rights (<http://open.justice.gov.uk/>). Its website can thus be seen as a seat for asymmetric mediation of knowledge in the legal field (Engberg and Luttermann 2014), intended to deliver good value both to lay users and institution: fast and satisfactory online responses to citizens' queries are handy for the citizens and reinforce their willingness to give credibility to Ministry and the government as the principal organization and institution behind the website (Petitat 1998; 2004; Marková, Linell and Gillespie 2008). In this context, we carry out a qualitative study into knowledge representation (Kastberg 2010; Ditlevsen 2011) on the *Your rights and the law* pages of the UK government (<https://www.gov.uk/browse/justice/rights>) in order to discuss whether and to what extent citizens have quick and easy access to the information they are looking for – or basic support with the knowledge and documentation that they need to behave prosocially and responsibly. To this purpose, we integrate notions from research on website usability, layout arrangements and visual organization of knowledge (Nielsen 1995, inter alios) with notions from research on interdiscursive and interlocutive dialogism (Bres 1985; Bres and Nowakowska 2005; Loffler-Laurian 1983; Jacobi 1987; Adam and Herman 2000).