

Literature between Paper and Pixels

Conference arranged by Centre for Literature Between Media
Aarhus University, 19-20 May 2016

The literary field is in a state of transition. Radical developments in the media ecology throughout the last decades (not least the digital revolution) have resulted in new possibilities and challenges for authors, readers and publishers. Through centuries, literature's status as a written and book-borne art form has been taken for granted, but the emergence of new media has severed the natural bond between literature, writing and books.

The ongoing transition from print to digital – from paper to pixels – has given rise to a wide array of strategies and reactions within the literary field. Some publishing houses cling to business models from the reign of print, while others forge ahead into the brave new world of digital publishing. In reality, however, most publishers (with various luck) attempt to straddle the divide between print and the digital.

The transition also affects the aesthetic dimensions of literature. Many writers warmly embrace the inspiration and new possibilities inherent in digital media, while others consciously turn their back on digital technologies, seeking instead to revitalize the medium of the paper book. Still others attempt to rethink literature in a postdigital integration of printed and digital media forms. The decision to publish a work of literature as a printed book used to be a non-decision, but the book is no longer literature's default medium, and this denaturalization of the book medium has resulted in a number of aesthetic experiments in the intersection between paper and pixels.

The tension between print and the digital thus affects both the economical and the aesthetic aspects of literature. These aspects are often studied in isolation, but the aim of the conference is to establish a dialogue between the aesthetic and the business/industry perspectives of this transition and to discuss how they are inextricably interrelated. We therefore invite papers that focus on the relation between print and the digital within these two areas. Possible topics include (but are not limited to): The publishing industry's reaction to the digitization of culture; the status of the traditional paper book and its relation to new digital formats such as e-books, apps or audiobooks; aesthetic experiments combining (ideas of) the paper book and (ideas of) the digital; the emergence of new forms of reading.

Keynote speakers

Michael Bhaskar, Cofounder and Publishing Director at Canelo Publishing
Angus Phillips, Director, Oxford International Centre for Publishing Studies
Claire Squires, Director, Stirling Centre for International Publishing and Communication
Ted Striphas, University of Colorado-Boulder

The conference is organized by Aarhus University's Centre for Literature Between Media
<http://projekter.au.dk/en/lmm/>

Proposals for papers should take the form of a 300 word abstract. The deadline for submission of abstracts has been extended to January 15 2016. Please send to one of the conference organizers:

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