

How to rethink poetry with mobile devices and touch screens?

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The digital turn of poetry has started in the eighties and was eventually established from the year 2000, but the recent explosion of mobile devices and touch screens generates a new type of digital poetry, a tactile one that it would be interesting to investigate. The change of device and technology implies new modalities for creation and new possibilities of interaction for the user-reader of a poem as a mobile app. Digital poets and artists explore, among other things, resources and characteristics of haptic device, such as vibrating screen, shaking screen, browser fingerprints, etc., in order to create a new kind of poetic language and an unseen form of expressiveness, based on a multisensory experience (touch, sight, hearing). This renewed approach of the poem in digital context requires studying what are the impacts of such changes on the poetry aesthetics and if there is any difference with its previous form — i.e. electronic poetry for non-touch-screens, which was created to be read and viewed online. On the one hand, we still find the main categories of e-poems, namely the ones made by a generative, a kinetic, a based-sequence or a hypertextual principle (Bootz 2008; Di Rosario 2012). But, on the other hand, we notice new tropes, different practices of reading, another kind of rhythm and renewed semiotic configurations due to the specific aesthetic experience of tactile poetry. We notice that increased sensorimotor activities involved in the prehension of the multimodal, multilinear and multisensory textuality — such as the connection between touching a sign or a word, a vibration and a sound for example, or the relation between shaking the screen and composing the poem — reconfigure the way of thinking about poetry. Tactile poetry for mobile devices and touch screens constitutes a new stage of literature, an epistemological moment in literary history, questioning poetry essence and inviting to think about what makes a poem a poem. The reader's gesture, the poetic intent and the multisensory configuration in a poem as a mobile application renew poetic genres and forms. Although the haptic device technology allows making use of all the hypermedia possibilities, many poetic mobile applications are based on a rediscovery of traditional poetic forms as the sonnet, the haiku, the calligram or the concrete poetry. In other words, the dialogue between the poetic tradition and the tactile revolution of e-poetry leads towards an aesthetic issue. That is why it is relevant to think about what is the poetics or the aesthetics of digital tactile poetry. We would like to propose some elements of definition in order to characterize this specific kind of e-poetry and also observe its continuity/discontinuity compared to e-poetry for non-touch-screens. We will proceed, first, analyzing how poetic code and rules in traditional forms (sonnet, haiku, calligram, typodem) have been altered; then, observing which concerns the rhythm organization and, finally, studying how the sensorimotor dimension creates a poetic sense in e-poems as mobile devices for touch screens. A large corpus of e-poems from American, French, Israeli, Austrian and Mexican electronic writers will be used to realize our study.