

SOCIAL MEDIA LITERATURE AND EPHEMERALITY

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*Shifts in language and culture:
computational approaches to variation and change*

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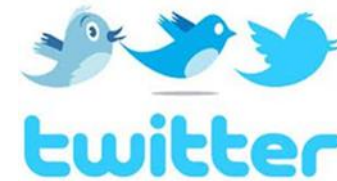
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SOCIAL MEDIA LITERATURE

- A subgenre of digital literature, widespread since about 2007.
- Linked with the development and spread of social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc) and smart gadgets.
- Social media content also includes user-generated literary content.
- Twitterature (short poems, texts)
- Facebook poetry and sequel stories
- The poetry on Instagram or Instapoetry
- Tumblr Poetry
- Stories written on Wattpad
- Literary blogs, etc.



SOCIAL MEDIA LITERATURE

- Social media literature is characterized by the ease of use of technological applications
- It is not necessary to have knowledge of programming or other specific computer skills.
- Available for everyone with a computer/smartphone and Internet connection



CONCEPTS WITHIN WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA LITERATURE CAN BE AND HAS BEEN DISCUSSED

- Democratization of literature
- Participatory culture
- Multimodality
- Ephemerality



DEMOCRATIZATION OF LITERATURE

- Hierarchy-free instant publishing.
- The author does not depend on the decisions of publishing houses or magazines, whether his work can be reproduced and brought to readers.
- The democratic right of decision rests with the author himself.
- Free and unmediated communication with the reader.
- Many Estonian authors also used the opportunity:
- Kaur Riismaa, Veronika Kivisilla, Janar Ala, Mart Juur, Liina Tammiste, Keiti Vilms and others.



DEMOCRATIZATION OF LITERATURE

- The downside of the democratization of literature.
- The paradox of professionalism and amateurism.
- Unfortunately, the lack of institutional control in social media also means that there is no quality control.
- In addition to high-quality works, social media is also full of hobby and amateur literature.
- At the same time, such a free and democratic publishing opportunity opens the door for young, beginning authors.



SOCIAL MEDIA LITERATURE AND PARTICIPATORY CULTURE

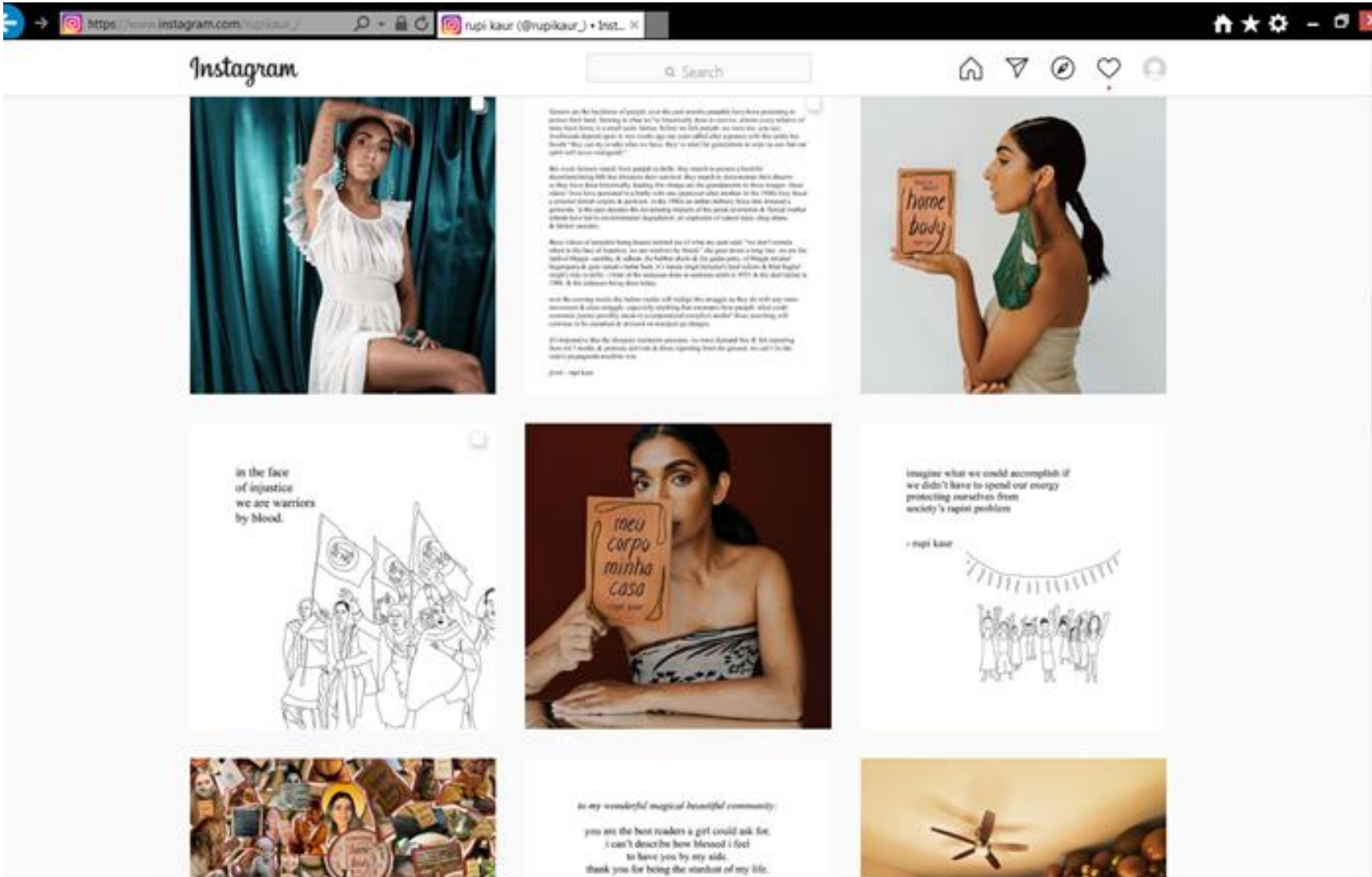
- Participatory culture - a culture in which users are expected to actively participate in the creation of culture and its circulation (Henry Jenkins 2006).
- One of the important manifestations of participatory culture characterizing social media literature is interactivity, the dynamics of the relationship between the author and the reader.
- Readers participate in commenting on the works, expressing their opinion or in the creation process of the work.
- Pressing the *Like*-button on a poem shared on Facebook.
- Readers switch to the author's creative process
- Collective authorship



SOCIAL MEDIA LITERATURE AND MULTIMODALITY

- Tumblr and Instagram poetry in particular has been characterized by the concept of multimodality.
- Combining multiple media
- Mostly text and image are combined, but also audio and video.





SOCIAL MEDIA LITERATURE AND EPHEMERALITY

- The concept of ephemerality has recently been actively used in the description and analysis of various manifestations of digital culture, their creation and reception.
- Ephemerality is characteristic of the digital world – digital cultural phenomena could be characterized as short-lived, temporary and vanishing, having a short lifespan and expecting inevitable oblivion.
- An important role is also played by the materiality of digital culture, which is intrinsically linked to continuous technological innovations.



SOCIAL MEDIA LITERATURE AND EPHEMERALITY

- Alexandra Saemmer has even called digital cultural practices the “aesthetics of the ephemeral”, arguing that:
- “the artist is fully aware of the unstable environment in which his digital creation will be updated; he even considers the ephemeral and uncontrollable nature of his work as its fundamental aesthetic principle.”

(Saemmer 2009: 479).



SOCIAL MEDIA LITERATURE AND EPHEMERALITY

- The literature of social media also gives us a reason to talk about ephemerality.
- Temporality and perishability of posts have already been incoded into the social media environments.
- On Facebook, the newsfeed will disappear from the readers' field of vision as quickly as older news are replaced by more recent ones.
- The whole logic of Snapchat embraces the temporality and disappearance of posts.
- Disappearing of tweets on Twitter depends on the tempo of the appearance of new tweets.



SOCIAL MEDIA LITERATURE AND EPHEMERALITY

- On social media, poets are facing the challenge of need to capture the attention of their readers as quickly and massively as possible.
- Alan Hammond has noted that in social media, the “best-known practitioners tend to be those who spend the most time online” (Hammond 2016: 144).
- The constant posting of texts means that the amount of text on social media platforms is unfathomable, disappearing quickly and finding your reader can be difficult, if not impossible.



SOCIAL MEDIA LITERATURE AND EPHEMERALITY

- Paradox: the poems of several Estonian authors who write and have written on social media (e.g. Keiti Vilms, Liina Tammiste, Kaur Riismaa, etc.) are available to readers primarily through published paper books.
- Instead of valuing ephemerality of their social media poetry– „the aesthetics of the ephemeral” (Saemmer 2009: 479) - the authors seek a solution and hope that their works would persist and would be accessible for their readers for a long time.
- A paper book has value - it shows professionalism and elitism and it will last.



CONCLUSIONS I

- The main reason for the ephemerization of these works of literature is related to the digital apparatus, which is material, technical and depends on the platform and the software of the time of its creation.
- Thus it can be said that ephemerality is one of the essential notions which can be used in analyzing social media literature.
- At the same time the printed books have still value for the authors, because they guarantee longtime preservation and existence instead of temporariness and short life-span of social media literature.



CONCLUSIONS II

- Social media literature is located at the intersection of different research fields.
- Internet studies, literary studies, media studies, popular culture studies are combined.
- It is important to follow the evolution of the social media literature.
- Thus expanding the boundaries of both literary research and literature itself.



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THANK YOU!

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