

# The New Gutenberg Revolution: Literature and Readership after Artificial Intelligence

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## Abstract

This article explores how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping the relationship between literature and readers, proposing the concept of a “New Gutenberg Revolution.” Building upon a presentation delivered at the Complutense University of Madrid in 2024, the study examines the trajectory from digital literary applications—such as the 2012 *Explore Shakespeare* app—to the current possibilities introduced by AI-supported literary experiences. Through comparative readings between Shakespeare and classical Turkish literature (particularly Fuzûlî’s *Layla and Majnun*), the article highlights how AI facilitates creative interaction with texts across cultures. It suggests that AI not only enhances intertextual engagement but also redefines the reader’s role from passive consumer to active co-creator. The theoretical framework draws on the works of Felski, Rancière, Deleuze, and Damrosch to argue for a rhizomatic, user-centered approach to reading in the post-digital era. This study asserts that AI may play a disruptive and democratizing role in literature—similar to that of the printing press—by expanding both access and interpretive agency.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence and Literature, Digital Reading, Comparative Literature, Reader Response Theory, Rhizomatic Reading, New Gutenberg Revolution

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## Introduction

As one of the most important revolutions in human history, the printing press radically changed the way individuals accessed information. By enabling books to reach faster and wider audiences, it transformed the act of reading from the privilege of an elite to a social phenomenon. It brought knowledge, literature and almost everything written to the masses. Today, artificial intelligence has emerged as a new revolution that transforms the act of reading in a way that depends on human imagination and offers people the opportunity to read in ways they have never experienced before.

From the analysis of texts to personalized reading experiences, artificial intelligence can be shaped according to the reader's wishes and can also shape the way individuals read. New ways of reading bring effective solutions in the context of intertextuality, intertextual collage possibilities, active participation of the reader's imagination in the process, the reader's knowledge of the etymological process and interlingual transformations. However, as the relationship between artificial intelligence and literature develops, other unpredictable concepts will come to the fore.

When the concept of comparative literature and the literature offered by this discipline are combined with digital textuality, there are various forms that the relationship between them can take (Landow, 2007). The use of artificial intelligence in the literary context provides an environment that will further enhance the active position of the reader between different texts. Just as the printing press increased the number of people who could “read”, artificial intelligence can open new reading horizons by increasing the types of reading. In this context, it is possible to consider the artificial intelligence revolution as a “reading horizons enabling” revolution.

At the First International Conference “*Literary Recycling for Postdigital Readers*,” organized by the LEETHI Group and held on 26–27 September 2024 at the Complutense University of Madrid, Faculty of Philology, a presentation titled “Reinventing Literature in the Digital Age: Anatomy of an Ideal Literature Application” was delivered. The presentation explored the core characteristics that an ideal digital literature application should feature in the current technological landscape. As a case study, the *Explore Shakespeare* applications developed by the University of Cambridge in 2012—particularly the *Romeo and Juliet* app—were examined, with emphasis on their advanced status for the time and the reasons behind their eventual discontinuation. The session also addressed how the proliferation of artificial intelligence necessitates a rethinking of digital literary platforms and proposed ways in which AI could be effectively incorporated into such applications. The present paper expands on the conference presentation by introducing further research questions and theoretical perspectives.

Although the presentation at the conference focused on a tablet application, the intention was to draw adaptable conclusions regarding the potential forms of websites or other digital literary products in the current landscape. The relationship between the digitalization process and literature appears to have shifted into an entirely new dimension with the advent of artificial intelligence. As a result, any argument concerning the nature of an ideal digital literature application can no longer be formulated independently of artificial intelligence.

Examining literature in conjunction with artificial intelligence suggests that the digitalization efforts of 2012 functioned as a form of preliminary groundwork. In this light, the discontinuation of those early initiatives can be interpreted as a phase in which digitalization

remained dormant—eyes closed—awaiting the next technological breakthrough. That anticipated development has now materialized, initiating what may be termed *the New Gutenberg Revolution*.<sup>1</sup>

This article examines the digital momentum initiated by the Explore Shakespeare applications in 2012 and explores the new forms of interaction that literature can establish with readers in digital environments shaped by artificial intelligence. In support of the concept of the New Gutenberg Revolution, it presents examples in which the integration of artificial intelligence and literature yields optimum outcomes for both the literary field and its readership. These developments are expected to generate new conceptual frameworks. The convergence of digital processes and artificial intelligence with literature—often through bold and unorthodox approaches that readers may not have previously imagined—constitutes a pressing subject for theoretical exploration. Concepts traditionally associated with architecture, such as mixture, integration, collage, and mosaic, are likely to gain increasing relevance in literary discourse.

### ***Explore Shakespeare Apps***

#### **Published by Cambridge University Press in 2012**

The Explore Shakespeare applications were launched in 2012, designed exclusively for iPads. Applications for six of Shakespeare's plays were offered on the app market for £9.99 each. This study focuses specifically on the *Romeo and Juliet* app, which, upon its release, was installed on tablets and remained a highly valued digital literary tool for many years. However, these applications eventually ceased to receive updates and became incompatible with newer devices. Discussing a digital app that is no longer searchable or accessible for contemporary readers serves to underscore a recurring tension in literary history: the inverse relationship between the rapid pace of digitalization and the enduring permanence traditionally associated with literature.

Nevertheless, the innovative character of these applications for their time and their continued relevance to current discussions on digital literature remain significant. In considering the intersection of literature and digital platforms today—and shortly—the Explore Shakespeare initiative warrants renewed attention, as meaningful progress is often grounded in earlier, well-conceived efforts. Accordingly, the first part of this article introduces *Romeo and Juliet*, one of the Explore Shakespeare applications, followed by a series of proposals and reflections concerning the literary landscape in the post-AI context.

In 2012, Cambridge University Press partnered with a private company to develop six of Shakespeare's plays as iPad apps. *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth* were released first, with the next four apps based on their structure. These apps included full texts of the plays, audio performances, photos from professional productions and comprehensive glossary definitions. In addition, interactive features allowed users to gain a deeper understanding of the text. Matt Harvey, the marketing director of Cambridge University Press, stated that these apps aimed to make Shakespeare more accessible to everyone (The Guardian, 2012). John Pettigrew, one of the project's coordinators, emphasized that the focus of the apps was “the play itself” and that they aimed to help users better understand the text without distracting them from it. Dave Addey, the executive director of Agant, added the following on this theme: “The most

important thing we wanted to achieve with these apps was to give people an entry point into the plays, especially for those who hadn't studied Shakespeare before or found it difficult.”

*Explore Shakespeare* apps consist of three main parts: *Experience*, *Explore*, and *Examine*. The first section, *Experience*, allows users to directly experience the play and interact with the text. In this section:

- It is possible to read the play and choose the level of customization. Whether reading in an academic style or for pleasure, the reading experience can be personalized by adjusting the text to the reader's preference.

- The action is supported by visualizations. The app includes photos from productions featuring stars such as Leonardo DiCaprio, Claire Danes and David Tennant. These visuals help to visualize the scenes of the play and the interactions of the characters.

- This section also includes content for a better understanding of Shakespeare's language. Through clear dictionary definitions throughout the text, archaic expressions and complex words can be easily deciphered. This makes the reading experience more fluent.

- This section provides a general summary of events. These summaries help to quickly grasp the flow and main themes of the story.

With all these features, the *Experience* section aims to provide users with a rich and interactive experience. It is possible to gain a deeper understanding of the game not only by reading it, but also by listening to it and supporting it with visuals. One feature that is not included in the *Experience* section, although it is possible, is videos. The app developers explained the reason for not including videos as follows: “*If you include video, people watch the video and don't look at the text; you can't physically watch and read at the same time, but if you have audio with the text, you can analyze the text and understand the words better.*” For this reason, audio performances were preferred in the app to allow users to interact more with the text.

The full audio performance of the play is presented in the voices of famous actors: Michael Sheen as Romeo, Kate Beckinsale as Juliet and Fiona Shaw as the nanny. This makes it possible to better feel the emotional depth of the play and the nuances of the characters. Michael Sheen and Kate Beckinsale's previous collaborations and their strong acting bring a natural depth and sincerity to the love affair of the characters *Romeo and Juliet*. Thanks to their artistic endeavors, they have succeeded in conveying the emotional intensity of the play and the relationship of the characters in a more expressive way.

In the experience of reading the text, the line touched by the reader's fingertips is heard audibly. Explained phrases and words are highlighted with color nuances, and some lines have question marks. Clicking on these marks displays explanations of the relevant words or phrases. Furthermore, the reader is sometimes prompted to compare the relevant passage with other texts. In this way, intertextuality is achieved, and the reader can gain a deeper understanding of the text.

Some activities can be selected as Solo, Pair and Group activities. For example, if group activities are selected, you are expected to prepare your short drama with your group based on the Prologue. This is because the Prologue provides an outline of the play, and you are expected to let yourself be guided by it. This guidance comes from the app's desire to draw attention to the prologue. If the Solo activities option is clicked, a section titled *Write Your Own Sonnet* opens. In this section, the reader is encouraged to write a sonnet based on the importance of the Prologue of the work. This kind of encouragement aims at deepening the

reader's understanding of the work, integrating with it and developing their writing skills. At this point, the reader is directed to the Examine section to feel ready to write. In the Examine section, the reader is given the necessary literary knowledge to write a Prologue.

Now, let's talk about the second part of the app, "Explore", which gives it its name. Explore offers the opportunity to delve deeper into the game and the characters.

- For each scene, the relationships between the characters can be understood through diagrams called Circles. This visual tool makes it easy to understand the interactions and connections between the characters.

- The language structure of each scene and character can be explored through interactive word clouds. This makes it possible to visually analyze the linguistic features and themes of the text.

- One can select a character and see his or her parts in the play separated. This makes it easier to learn lines and analyze a character's story.

The third and final section in the app, Examine, is subtitled "Examine the play, diving deeper into history and analysis". There are fifteen articles in this section. Reflecting authoritative Cambridge sources, these concise essays are designed to provide the reader with in-depth insights into the context, key themes and history of the play.

For example, in the Examine section, under the title "The Language of Romeo and Juliet", there is an article that explores the language Shakespeare uses in the play and offers guidance on how to write a sonnet. This article, with five sub-headings, encourages readers to engage deeply with the text, to understand Shakespeare's linguistic techniques and to apply this understanding by writing their own sonnets.

Having introduced the *Romeo and Juliet* app in this way, we can make some reflections on why the *Explore Shakespeare* Apps have not been updated and are not currently being used, and why this project is not being taken forward. First of all, it should be said that the apps were prepared only for iPads in anticipation of sales. However, the fact that the iPad does not have a large user base has limited its diffusion. In other countries, especially in Turkey and India, Android was more popular. However, the app was not available on Android.

The choice to use only audio performances instead of video in the app was a move in favor of literature, which aims to keep the user's attention on the text. Users were asked to look at the text, not the video. However, this did not attract a wider audience. The apps were costly to develop. The price of the app was set at £9.99, which was considered high by many users.

We can say that *Explore Shakespeare*, with its approaches and techniques, has the potential to add value to literature and enrich the reader's experience in 2012. After all these years, talking about how an actor like artificial intelligence will play a role in this "game" is something that technology has forced us to do today.

## ***Artificial Intelligence and Literature***

### *Transforming from Reader to Writer with AI's Guidance*

The *Explore Shakespeare* app's effort to generate activities based on the play was, for its time, a notably effective approach. However, despite being available for over a decade and providing extensive encouragement and guidance, the app did not succeed in prompting active user engagement in composing a personal sonnet. Only recently did the prompt "Write Your Own Sonnet" result in a completed poetic response—enabled through collaboration with ChatGPT-4o, an advanced artificial intelligence tool. The writing process of the collaboratively

prepared prologue was shaped by the integration of Shakespearean themes, the interpretive framework provided by the researcher, and the generative contributions of artificial intelligence. Drawing upon thematic references to the Sun, Moon, and Venus found in *Romeo and Juliet*, and guided by a particular interest in celestial symbolism, specific narrative roles were assigned to these cosmic figures.

- **The Sun:** Based on Romeo's comparison of Juliet to the Sun in Act Two, Scene Two, we considered the Sun as a symbol of power and light.

- **Moon:** We considered the Moon as a symbol of jealousy and mystery, because Juliet's analogy of the Sun overshadows the Moon.

- **Venus:** Based on Mercutio's mention of Venus in Act Two, Scene One, we identified Venus as a symbol of love and beauty.

In constructing the sonnet, particular attention was paid to preserving Shakespeare's thematic references to celestial bodies, excluding Mars, which is absent from the original play. Additional instructions were provided to ensure that the draft conformed to Shakespeare's 14-line sonnet structure. The resulting prologue successfully reflects the intended structure in both form and content. Key elements included an intensified focus on celestial imagery, fidelity to Shakespearean references, articulation of the familial enmity, and the central theme of the lovers' bond, each integrated through collaboration with artificial intelligence.

### **Shakespeare's Prologue**

Two households, both alike in dignity  
(In fair Verona, where we lay our scene),  
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,  
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.  
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes  
A pair of star-crossed lovers take their lives;  
Whose misadventures piteous overthrows  
Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.  
The fearful passage of their death-marked love  
And the continuance of their parents' rage,  
Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,  
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;  
The which, if you with patient ears attend,  
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

### **Prologue Created With AI (GPT-4)**

Two mighty **orbs**, both bright and proud in space,  
In a constant dance of shadow and of light,  
The **Sun** with strength and courage in its face,  
The **Moon**, pale envy cast into the night.  
**Mars** ignites with fire, fierce and bold,  
**Venus** weaves love's paths, both tender and cold.  
Her son **Cupid** strikes hearts with arrows swift,  
Blind but sure, with love as fate's great gift.  
The stars look down in silence as they see,  
This ancient strife and love's great tragedy.

Two great families locked in endless war,  
 Their children's fate will even the score.  
 A pair of lovers, bound by the stars' decree,  
 Their tale of woe will set the conflict free.

In contrast to the *Explore Shakespeare* app's Write Your Own Sonnet exercise, using artificial intelligence to focus on reading works of literature can take the reader out of the position of a student with homework to do. AI can encourage the reader to approach the work more boldly and effectively, to ask questions, and to create collages with micro-pieces of the work. With artificial intelligence, the transition from being a user and a reader who receives instructions to being a reader who gives instructions is happening rapidly. Therefore, there is a need for guiding elements under the heading of activities for digital literature applications to ensure the integration of the reader and the work. These guiding elements can take place in the application with the support of artificial intelligence.

Throughout the composition of the prologue, artificial intelligence operated as a collaborative guide, at times resembling a seasoned mentor leading a reflective journey through *Romeo and Juliet*, at others functioning as a companion exploring the fertile terrains of literature. In the introduction to *Uses of Literature*, Rita Felski warns that “when a whole accumulation of historical findings is made to speak for the text in advance, the text itself becomes unable to speak” (Felski, 2008, p. 10). In contrast to such obstructive mediation, artificial intelligence acts as a facilitator that does not intervene between the reader and the text. In this respect, it aligns with Jacques Rancière's concept of *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, which enables learners to construct meaning independently rather than imposing authoritative instruction. Accordingly, AI-supported environments can be understood as spaces that foster the transformation of the reader from a passive recipient into an active producer of meaning.

### **The Appeal of Changing the Fate of a Historical or Fictional Character**

Numerous literary and cinematic works have explored the theme of revisiting historical events to alter their outcomes. Stephen King's novel *11/22/63* envisions the prevention of President Kennedy's assassination as a means of rewriting a pivotal moment in American history. In the inaugural episode of *The Time Tunnel* (1966), the protagonists attempt to avert the sinking of the Titanic. Quentin Tarantino's *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* similarly reimagines the tragic murder of Sharon Tate, offering a cathartic alternative to a traumatic episode in social memory. These examples suggest that fiction provides a space in which painful historical experiences can be imaginatively reconfigured, enabling a form of symbolic healing or narrative reparation.

In light of this phenomenon—one that may be understood through the classical concepts of *mimesis* and *catharsis*—an important question arises: If the human imagination is capable of reconfiguring historical destinies, might it also seek to transform the narrative fates within literature? While literary works are often perceived to possess a certain immunity rooted in their cultural and aesthetic dignity, a widespread tendency to alter the destinies of fictional characters through new narratives remains unlikely. Nevertheless, artificial intelligence—unburdened by the conservative impulses that frequently inhibit human reinterpretation—may serve as a provocative and generative companion in rethinking and reimagining literary texts.

An example of how AI can stretch traditional narratives can be applied to Act 3, Scene 1, Line 85 of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*.

In this pivotal moment of Shakespeare's play, Caesar addresses Brutus with the famous line, “Et tu, Brutè?” before succumbing to his wounds. The text offers no response from Brutus, leaving a conspicuous silence. This absence invites the question: What if Brutus were to answer? What might that response be? Imagining such an intervention constitutes a meaningful literary exercise, fostering a dialogic relationship with the text. Artificial intelligence proves to be a valuable collaborator in this process, providing support for speculative literary engagement. The following is the imagined Caesar–Brutus exchange, co-created with ChatGPT 4o:

CAESAR *Et tu, Brutè?* - Then fall, Caesar.

BRUTUS *Amor patriae*<sup>ii</sup>, drives this hand to strike,  
*Nec*<sup>iii</sup> against you, but what you left behind.

The imaginative intervention of placing a response into the mouth of Brutus—thus modifying the dialogue between the characters—emerged only through the affordances of artificial intelligence. Anticipating the support AI could offer enabled the conceptualization of a potential Brutus reply in Latin, in harmony with the Latin tone of Caesar’s original question. This process facilitated a distinctive interpretive experience with the relevant section of Shakespeare’s play, surpassing conventional modes of reading and expanding the boundaries of literary engagement.

In Fuzuli’s *Layla and Majnun*, written by the 16th-century Turkish poet, there is a passage in which Layla delivers a monologue addressed to the moon (Fuzuli, 2004, p. 247). This passage was submitted to the AI along with Juliet’s soliloquy from Act 3, Scene 2 of *Romeo and Juliet*, accompanied by a prompt to transform the former into the style of the latter, as if penned by Shakespeare. Rather than the original poetic form, the modern Turkish equivalent of Layla’s speech was provided, alongside Juliet’s original English text.

#### LAYLA'S CONVERSATION WITH THE MOON AND BURNING IN THE FIRE OF DESIRE LIKE THE SUN:

Oh, one who is sometimes crooked like my height and sometimes full like my eyes! Sometimes appearing to me like my sorrow, disappearing like my lover and companion! This change in your state shows that you are in love with the sun; you are thinned by his separation, you become the wonder of the world... O one who is aware of the trouble of love, see what troubles I am in, for Allah's sake! Take a look at the flame of my pain, and if you have mercy, find a remedy! Travel through the skies of every land, visit all the deserts and mountains; see where is my refuge, my sultan, my moon and my hope... Tell him the state of my heart; for Allah's sake, tell him how you saw me!” Say: He was in such a state that he struggled with troubles until the dawn, and when the bird of dawn began to sing, he would sing a strange lamentation: Alas, the capital of life has run out, the shadow of life has reached the sun! Almost the door of opportunity will be closed, and the expression of desire will become difficult! It is almost as if the enemy will awaken from sleep, and my sorrow and grief will be difficult to explain! I am the star of the sign of desire, the candle of the palace of separation. I am a prisoner by day, I am liberated by night; I die by day, I am resurrected by night. My day has become one with my night... Anyway, troubled lovers do not see the day...

The AI is provided with the above translated fragment of Layla and the following fragment in which Juliet speaks to herself:

JULIET, ACT 3, SCENE 2

Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,  
 Towards Phoebus' lodging. Such a wagoner  
 As Phaëton would whip you to the west  
 And bring in a cloudy night immediately.  
 Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,  
 That runaways' eyes may wink, and Romeo  
 Leap to these arms, untalked of and unseen.  
 Lovers can see to do their amorous rites  
 By their own beauties, or, if love be blind,  
 It best agrees with night. Come, civil night,  
 Thou sober-suited matron all in black,  
 And learn me how to lose a winning match  
 Played for a pair of stainless maidenhoods.  
 Hood my unmanned blood, beating in my cheeks,  
 With thy black mantle till strange love grow bold,  
 Think true love is simple modesty.  
 Come, night. Come, Romeo. Come, thou day in  
 night,  
 For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night  
 Whiter than new snow upon a raven's back.  
 Come, gentle night; come, loving black-browed  
 night,  
 Give me my Romeo, and when I shall die,  
 Take him and cut him out in little stars,  
 And he will make the face of heaven so fine  
 That all the world will be in love with night  
 And pay no worship to the garish sun.  
 Oh, I have bought the mansion of a love  
 But not possessed it, and, though I am sold,  
 Not yet enjoyed. So tedious is this day  
 As is the night before some festival  
 To an impatient child that hath new robes  
 And may not wear them.

As can be seen below, ChatGPT 4o transformed the part of Fuzuli's *Layla and Majnun*, in which Layla talks to the moon, into a Shakespearean text adapted into English in the Shakespearean style by embedding the meaning of Juliet's self-talk in Act 3, Scene 2 of *Romeo and Juliet*:

**JULIET (Alone on stage)**

O thou pale orb, at whiles bent low as my frail shape,  
 And at whiles brimful as these sorrow-laden eyes!  
 Now, like my grief, thou show'st thy face to me;  
 Now vanishest, as doth a cherished friend,  
 Hiding from sight. Thy changeful countenance  
 Betrays a fervent longing for the sun—  
 For in his absence thou dost wane and wander,  
 A marvel lost amidst the watchful sky.  
 If thou dost know love's affliction, then mark  
 The flames of my lament; if mercy lives  
 Within thy silver heart, then lend me aid.  
 Travel the vault of heaven, roam every field,  
 Seek out my sovereign star, my beacon bright,  
 And to him speak of how thou found'st me here:  
 A soul besieged by sighs till break of morn;  
 Whose nights are spent in restless, mournful throes,  
 And when the lark proclaims the day's first light,  
 I cry: "Alas, our slender store of hours  
 Melts like a snowflake in the scorching sun!  
 Soon shall the door of fortune close on me,  
 And sorrow's tale shall choke upon my lips.  
 My star of longing flickers in this gloom;  
 A candle caged within the hall of woe—  
 Condemned by day to silent agony,  
 At night restored to fleeting, tender hope.  
 Day and night converge upon my heart,  
 For hapless lovers ne'er do see the dawn."  
 Ah, gentle orb, shed pity on these tears!  
 Go, carry forth the tidings of my plight;  
 Tell him of one who pines in darkest hours  
 With mind and spirit bound in love's despair.  
 Proclaim how near my joy is to the grave,  
 Lest my foe stir, and all my pleas go lost.  
 So shall we cheat the tyranny of day,  
 And find anew some solace in the night.  
 Return then, silver wanderer, kindly swift,  
 That I might yet behold my Romeo's light.

The emotional expressions of love articulated by Layla and Juliet reflect distinct cultural traditions. The above comparative experience made it possible to observe cultural nuances that might otherwise go unnoticed. If such an exercise—juxtaposing and fusing elements from Turkish and English literary canons—were directed by a scholar proficient in both fields, it would traditionally be considered a structured academic assignment. However, the example demonstrates that, with the support of artificial intelligence, readers can now engage with

literary works from diverse cultures in ways limited only by personal curiosity and imagination. This expanded capacity for intercultural literary interaction represents a significant transformation—perhaps even a revolution—in the history of reading.

### **Artificial Intelligence and the Gutenberg Revolution Analogy**

In the second half of the 15th century, when Gutenberg founded the printing press in Mainz, Constantinople had been conquered by the Turks. To contribute to the war against the Turks, the Church resorted to selling atonement documents, and the printing of these documents created a new business opportunity for Gutenberg. On the other hand, the printing press also printed copies of the biblical texts free of copyist errors, thus reducing human errors in copy production. Martin Luther argued against the church selling penance paper like a peddler, and this work was also translated into German and made available to readers through the printing press. Luther sometimes posed seemingly naïve questions and always wrote in language that the people could understand, in short, concise sentences. Luther created a culture of debate, free from the shadow of traditional institutions, where writers and readers could communicate more effectively than ever before (Puchner, 2018, p. 165). The printing press created both a new readership and a new and powerful literary genre, and sixty years after its invention, it reshaped how books were read and by whom (Puchner, 2018, p. 168).

The acceleration of the process of asking difficult questions that were previously unthinkable to ask with AI and the development of new reading methods can be considered as the main reasons for characterizing this process as the New Gutenberg Revolution. The fact that revolutionary new items will be added to Damrosch's suggestions (Damrosch, 2018), which put forward some methods on how world literature can be read, can be mentioned among the expected situations in this context. AI provides important horizons to the theoretical aspect of literature by providing opportunities to translate, transform, compare, combine and reconstruct texts.

Today, it is natural that the inclusion of artificial intelligence in the processes of reading literary texts brings along many new conceptualizations and problematics. One of these is the preservation of works that have already taken their place in literature. After AI, the issue of postmodern adaptations and interventions that encourage transformations and add character to works will gain momentum.

The rhizome theory developed by Deleuze and Guattari, which conceptualizes textual connections not through hierarchical structures but as expansive networks, has gained increasing scholarly attention following the integration of artificial intelligence into literature and reading practices (Lucy, 1997, p. 184). The rhizomatic model posits that knowledge and meaning do not emerge from a central authority but instead evolve through horizontal, multidirectional linkages. Similarly, AI-supported digital environments facilitate non-linear engagement with texts, enabling readers to draw unexpected connections across different cultural and historical contexts and to construct individualized meaning maps through networked navigation.

To develop a more concrete analogy, we can bring together Stanton's depiction of AI as a toy (Hamilton, 2025, p. 347; Stanton, 2023, p. 9) and Hu's notion of "creative destruction" (Hu, 2023), framed through the metaphor of Lego. As a modular construction toy, Lego provides a highly illustrative example in this context: while each set contains thousands of pieces and offers a limited number of official designs, users frequently combine and dismantle

different sets to build entirely new architectures that surpass the designers' original intentions. This process entails:

- Destruction: Invalidating predefined formulas,
- Rhizomatic Construction: Allowing for unexpected connections within non-hierarchical networks, as Deleuze and Guattari describe,
- Transformation: Evolving the system from within, as advanced user designs are adopted and released as official sets.

At this point, a crucial question arises: Does such radical freedom damage the original design? Just as a child building a personal space station from a Lego City set does not erase the original theme, but rather transforms it into part of a personal mythology, an AI-assisted writer who reshapes traditional genres does not weaken literature. On the contrary, this transformation generates a broader ecosystem of meaning through the active participation of the reader. Much like Lego's embrace of user innovation, literature, too, can emerge stronger from this process of "creative destruction," fueled by the reader-writer's freedom to weave their own map of meaning.

## Conclusion

This study delineates an epistemological rupture in literature triggered by artificial intelligence – a phenomenon termed the "New Gutenberg Revolution." Much like the printing press democratized access to texts, AI:

Transforms the reader: From passive recipient to active *producer* who *deconstructs and recomposes* texts (the Lego metaphor);

Activates rhizomatic networks: Enabling readers to weave "maps of meaning" across cultures and eras through Deleuze and Guattari's non-hierarchical connections;

Channels creative destruction: Aligning with Stanton's framing of AI as a "toy for mucking about" and Hu's theory, it dismantles traditional genres to forge *personal mythologies*.

This process expands literary boundaries via Rancière's "ignorant schoolmaster" dialectic, while provoking debates on authorship and copyright. Yet these tensions signify not a threat, but a digital extension of the Gutenberg legacy: AI, like the press, acts as an engine that transmutes destruction into creativity and *play into epistemological ruptures* – potentially rewriting literary history itself.

## About the Author

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## Statement of Originality

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have been duly acknowledged. The research, analysis, and conclusions presented are the result of the researcher's independent work and are free from plagiarism.

### Declaration of Using AI Contents

The study benefited from the use of the ChatGPT AI generator in refining the content of the study.

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<sup>i</sup> During the finalization of this article, it was noted that the term “The New Gutenberg Revolution” is also employed by Rand J. Spiro to describe the influence of digital and random access media on learning and teaching. The convergence of perspectives was seen as a reinforcing factor for the chosen nomenclature, and therefore, the title was retained.

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- ii Love of country.
  - iii *Not or nor.*