

The Metamorphosis of the Reader in Virtual and Augmented Reality Story Worlds: Reconstructing Narrative Consciousness

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Abstract

Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, and Immersive Media enable users to experience literature and mass media content through digital interfaces that go beyond conventional interfaces. This paper outlines how these technologies create new narrative consciousness through active reader interactions and engagement with story worlds and the environment rather than passive observation. Through the lens of virtual and augmented reality, immersive renditions of Alice in Wonderland and Frankenstein are used to examine and create sensory-based reading experiences through digital narratology and reader-response theory. An immersive reader acts as a posthuman messenger who navigates a digital environment, eliminating the traditional borders between authors and readers for a common understanding of the written text. Immersive literary media development allows authors to create new storytelling methods that enable readers to experience an interactive shared reading experience. This paper explores how readers become immersed in and experience so-called 'immersive literary environments' and how these environments are changing the traditional concept of solitary reading. Immersive environments in literature can change reading from a passive act to an interactive, even embodied and participatory experience, in which the reader is actively involved in shaping the meaning of the narrative within the constructed environment of the story world. The paper draws upon established methods from literary studies and the digital humanities, including digital narratology, reader-response, and posthuman studies, with a particular emphasis on how immersive environments provide new insights into and forms of narrative and narrative consciousness. This conceptual paper identifies areas for subsequent empirical and interdisciplinary studies, including a full reader-reception study of immersive environments, potential uses of immersive environments in formal education, issues of accessibility, and significant ethical concerns. Finally, this paper identifies the developing field of AI-supported immersive environments for literary purposes and the potential and implications of this developing space.

Keywords: Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, Digital Humanities, Digital Narratology, Storytelling, Immersive Storytelling.

Introduction

Reading has always been a process linked to linearity, textuality, and imaginative interiority. Print literature puts the reader in the position of a spectator who creates meaning in the mind using the language, symbolism, and the structure of the narration. Nevertheless, the emergence of Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and immersive media technologies has shaken this paradigm, proposing sensory, spatial, and bodily ways of interacting. These technologies enable readers to access narrative spaces, in contrast to decoding them, and render reading an experiential, participatory, and immersive. Immersive storytelling is increasingly prevalent in Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality environments. Environments have moved from a tool to enhance written stories to an additional medium for storytelling, where the reader is part of the story, aware of the spatial setting, and actively participating within it (Kim & Khajavi, 2024). Thus, the reader is moved from

being a passive observer of a story to a more experiential reader of the story as they experience it (Kim & Khajavi, 2024).

Immersive media redefines literature and weaves stories together with simulation, interaction, and presence. According to Ryan (2015), digital stories do not depend on linguistic representation only but create story worlds in which readers can revisit their perceptions and actions (Chang & Suh, 2025). In this setting, textual meaning is created through interaction rather than premature textual interpretation. This transformation is a turn in the direction of the representational narrative toward experiential narrative consciousness. Not only does immersive digital storytelling increase users' sense of presence, engagement with a story, and emotions evoked by it, it also enables new ways of experiencing and processing a story; thus, the meaning of a literary work is experienced more and more through interaction with the digital environment in which the story is told (Chang & Suh, 2025).

This study explores the role of immersive media in changing the literary experience with VR and AR versions of the canonical works (Kim & Khajavi, 2024), *Alice in Wonderland* (Carroll, 1993) and *Frankenstein* (Shelley, 2012). Related issues of embodiment, perception, and otherness, these texts provide an opportune place to discuss how immersive technologies re-establish narrative authority, reader agency, and interpretive limits. Combining digital narratology, reader-response theory, and the theory of mass media communication, this paper asserts that immersive literature has the potential to facilitate the posthuman mode of reading, wherein the author and the reader become active participants in the creation of meaning within a shared digital space.

This paper investigates unresearched fields from a literary-theoretical perspective. Although Digital Humanities deal with gaming environments and virtual simulations as part of the more recently discussed immersive literary experiences, there is a lack of analyses with respect to how canonical literary texts can be changed by their questions of this paper are:

- How do VR and AR technologies affect reading a literary text?
- How do immersive adaptations of literary texts

affect reader-response and change the narrative consciousness?

- How do immersive literary environments generate new, posthuman forms of interpretation and participation?

This paper shall open up the ever-growing field of research between literature, digital media and immersive storytelling. Studies of immersive storytelling are increasingly becoming part of mainstream study areas in Media Studies, Communication, Animation, as well as in Human-Computer Interaction. However, a lack of approaches is emerging from literary studies, in particular a combination of digital narratology, reader-response theory, and posthumanism to account for the experiential reading of immersive narratives in digital environments (Kim & Khajavi, 2024).

The current knowledge base regarding Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality, digital humanities, and immersive media is greatly lacking in relation to reader-response theory. Studies that follow classical works of literature through their transformation into immersive stories are greatly needed, and a close analysis of the changes in a narrative that tells a story and its representation of the story's consciousness could be the focus of such studies. Such an analysis could be rooted in the fields of digital narratology, reader-response theory, and mass media communication. This study seeks to fill this gap by establishing a literary framework for the analysis of immersive stories, by means of an interpretation of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Frankenstein*.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are mentioned below:

- How Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality can change the reading of literary texts into an immersive experience.
- Analyse immersive adaptations of the classical literary works 'Alice in Wonderland' and 'Frankenstein' by means of the theoretical perspectives of digital narratology, reader-response theory, as well as mass media communication.
- How do the immersive environments of Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality influence reader agency, the physical and mental experience of

the reader (embodiment) and the perception of the story (narration)

Expected Contributions

This study contributes by:

- Extending reader-response theory into immersive literary environments
- Extending reader-response theory to the context of immersive literary environments.
- Offering a conceptual framework for analysis of virtual reality and augmented reality literary adaptations within the Digital Humanities. identify future interdisciplinary research opportunities.

Literature Review

New and modern technologies for digital media have recently developed to allow most literary works to also exist in the digital media environment in interactive form. Thus, besides many other new media forms, interactive digital media have recently become another medium to experience. A reader who wants to be able to fully experience a virtual environment of an immersive kind has to be able to interact with the narrative in a more physical and cognitive way (Murray, 2017). Literary works are read in many different ways by means of digital technologies which develop rapidly, so that literary works are not read as static texts in print or on digital screens only but in virtual, interactive spaces of a very different kind. The majority of the research that has been conducted on digital literature to date attempts to uncover new ways in which the basic written word can be extended, much in the same way that print extended oral literature.

The majority of the first wave of digital literature is static. It comprises words on a surface, and the reader can only imagine the narrative provided by the text. There are many different types of narratives that can be found in digital literature, the most common of which are hypertexts. Hypertexts are non-linear, and the reader can choose to read the different parts of the story in any order that he or she wishes (Landow 2006).

However, when the narrative is translated into an immersive medium, the story gains space, and the reader can experience the story more directly than

when reading a printed book. In addition, the reader is able to interact with the story in a more physical and cognitive way than before (Murray 2017; Ryan 2015). Recent literary theories have taken a turn in the direction of other research on how people read novels, rather than that of long-standing research in this field. Most of these researchers have been influenced by other scholars in literary studies such as Rosenblatt (1978). In her work on how people read, Rosenblatt set up a model of how any given person would have a very personal experience of the space of the novel they were reading.

There have been enough examples of immersive literary environments and ‘virtual spaces’ of novels that this model can be put into practice in the greatest depth possible, allowing for the greatest possible experience by any given reader of any novel. New forms of communication are emerging through computer-based digital interactive media and the Internet. In addition to text, the medium can take many forms and be used to create new forms of narrative that are not restricted to the printed page. Information that is presented in printed form in a linear sequence can be distributed throughout the virtual environment, and the reader can explore the environment and derive the meaning of the narrative from his/her experiences within it. Environmental storytelling is a term used by Jenkins (2008) to describe this type of narratives. Reading environmental stories in literature, which are no longer just represented virtually but have become part of physical and digital spaces to be explored, interacted with, and experienced in their respective contexts, leads to a multisensory story experience (Zhang et al., 2025).

To analyze literary works in immersive environments within the framework of literary studies, posthumanist theories must be applied. As new information and communication media fundamentally change the relationship between humans and machines, the classical terms of embodiment and identity must be reconsidered (Hayles, 1999). The reader of an immersive story not only experiences a story via the interface of a computer, but also experiences the story via the avatar, a virtual figure representing the reader. Thus, the reader becomes part of the story, which leads to a

blurring of the borders between the reader, narrator, and medium of communication. In immersive environments, the classical terms of authorship, reader agency, and interpretation of literary texts are challenged (Braidotti, 2013). Immersive media and literature offer great potential for application to most works of literature, particularly those novels set in entirely fictional worlds.

In an immersive version of a novel, the reader can experience the space of the novel and the story in it in a direct and interactive way, without diminishing the symbolic and thematic content of the literature itself. A full and interactive version of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, for example, would be an extremely complex and rich work of literature, while an immersive literary version of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* would bring new life to a classic work of literature and allow the reader to experience the consequences of the new science of the day for individuals and society, as well as the many facets of the human condition that its chief creation exposes.

Immersive media have recently gained interest in the digital humanities. Environmental and immersive storytelling has been increasingly employed in cultural heritage, digital humanities and cross-disciplinary studies. These studies support in-depth narrative experiences by embedding users within virtual environments that represent cultural, historical, and literary sources of knowledge (Yu et al., 2025). Initial studies mainly investigated the application of immersive media to support teaching and learning, as well as stories and user experiences. An in-depth analysis of the impact of immersive media on literary experiences, that is, on the way people read stories and attribute meaning to them, can be achieved by combining insights from literary studies, digital humanities, and immersive media studies (Ryan, 2015; Murray, 2017).

Media research on immersive media is shifting from a mainly theoretical discipline to an interdisciplinary, application-oriented research field. In addition to studying user experience, narrative immersion, and presence in interactive narratives, new approaches and methods for studying stories and narratives have emerged. These new approaches to studying stories and narratives are increasingly

relevant to the fields of literary and communication studies as immersive media become more prevalent (Jin et al., 2024). In addition to computer science, environments for Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and extended reality (XR) are also being studied in an interdisciplinary fashion in areas such as education, communication, cultural heritage studies, and the humanities. As opposed to the mainly theoretical approach of immersive storytelling according to Murray and Ryan (immersion, presence, multisensory, user participation), new digital media experiences are being discussed and analyzed in more detail.

Research on immersive storytelling has recently become more interdisciplinary and includes new areas of application for literary studies, human-computer interaction, educational technology, and digital humanities. Recently, research on immersive narratives has shifted from issues related to the implementation of immersive technologies to issues of narrative design, user participation, and interpretation in immersive environments. There is a lot of progress that has been made in recent years, but more importantly, there is a great need for theoretical work that attempts to explain how meaning is being made in immersive narratives (He et al., 2024). However, most studies on immersive technologies do not explore the interpretation of canonical literary works through digital narratology, reader-response theory, or mass media communication. This study aims to address this gap.

Methodology

The research approach adopted in this study is qualitative, interpretive research based on literary theory, media studies, and digital humanities. Instead of using empirical experimentation or data collection based on users, the paper takes an analytical and theoretical approach to examine immersive literary media to comprehend the way Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) alter narrative experience, user engagement and sense-making procedures.

The Paper in this issue explores fundamental features of human identity, relations between human and non-human entities, spatial and temporal changes, and otherness. This issue presents a

comparative study of two classical novels, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Frankenstein, which have been reinterpreted and published in a variety of digital formats. From the perspective of posthumanism and new media communication studies, the paper investigates how new spatial immersive interfaces change our perception of such classics in virtual reality environments, interactive stories and immersive exhibitions. Further applies digital narratology and reader-response theory to better understand literature (Wang, 2026).

The study concentrates on four aspects to be analysed: spatial storytelling, sensory experience, reader's agency and narrative embodiment. As already mentioned, by comparing these aspects of a text with its immersive environment, we want to delve more into how a story is developed over time (temporality), into the perspectives offered to the reader to experience a story (perspective), into the reader's emotional experience when immersed in a story (emotional experience) and into the reader's involvement with the reading process (interpretation). As the paper is of a primarily theoretical or conceptual nature, it does not include any data of quantitative nature obtained from an audience's reception of immersive literary media. What is offered, instead, is a critical humanities-based interpretation of such media within today's digital culture.

The Immersive Media and the Evolution of the Form of Narratives

Immersive media are digital technologies that provide a presence by addressing more than one of the five modalities of perception: vision, sound, movement, and spatial awareness (Lombard & Ditton, 1997). In VR and AR, as opposed to the usual screen media, the user is placed in a three-dimensional virtual world that reacts to the movements and engagement of the body (Slater and Sanchez-Vives, 2010). This embodiment of engagement turns reception of narrative into experience rather than cognition.

Digital narratology deals with the adaptation of narrative structures to such interactive conditions. Murray (2017) claims that immersive narratives are procedural and participatory because they demand users to undertake actions that determine

the flow of the narrative. Unlike linear storytelling, immersive narratives function via branching storytelling, through space, and also environmental storytelling. Meaning, as the conveyors of meaning are not restricted to dialogue or plot, but also include architecture, soundscapes, and objects of interaction.

Narrative temporality and focalization in immersive literary experiences are destabilised. Readers can experience events out of order, access multiple viewpoints, or have the option of choice and motion alter the narrative consequences (Kim & Khajavi, 2024). This questions the traditional narratological concepts of authorial control and closed narrative conclusion (Ryan, 2015). Consequently, immersive media makes possible new narratives of consciousness based on proximity and action rather than writing.

The study of digital media within the domains of digital humanities and game studies has lately found support in these trends. Texts or other media are characterised by their need for non-trivial participation by their readers. Ergodic literature (Aarseth, 1997), be it in the form of digital Manovich (2001), outlined the impact that digital media have upon the narrative potential of a medium. Thus, reading digital literature turns into an interaction with the medium instead of mere reception of a message. New media tell stories from databases and allow the user to navigate through an interface to experience the story and spatiality. The result of this is that stories are experienced by the user not only in an interactive fashion. This media thus can offer a wider scope for literature, such as traditional proceduralism, textual way, but also with a physical, embodied presence in a computer-mediated world.

The Immersive Environment Reader-Response Theory

The reader response theory focuses on the part that the reader plays in the building of meaning of the text. Iser (1978) states that literary texts have gaps that the reader is active in filling them with interpretations and imagination. The Immersive media takes this concept to a new level by making interpretation gaps interactive. Narrative worlds are not simply imagined by the readers, but they are navigated, manipulated and co-created.

In literature in VR and AR, the body of a reader is turned into an interpretation tool (Kaplan-Rakowski et al., 2024). Gestures, stares, and movement are treated as narrative input, which determines story development. This embodied interaction is consistent with the transactional theory of Rosenblatt (1978) that sees reading as a process created between the text and the reader in a dynamic way. This transaction also becomes materialised in digital interfaces in immersive settings.

The immersive reader thereby ceases to be a decoder of meaning and is instead a participant in the narrative system. The emotional involvement escalates where the readers get to perceive narrative events in a spatial and sensorially relevant way, and this has a sense of empathy and the feeling of resonance. Immersive research indicates that present-based narratives could be used to increase emotional awareness by placing users in an experience as opposed to describing the experience (Nonny de la Peña et al., 2010). This form of interaction, when applied to literature, transforms the meaning of reading into an experiential and moral experience.

Full Bodied Receptions of Alice in Wonderland

The story of Alice, adventure of Wonderland by Lewis Carroll, has long been known with distorted perception, spatial distortion, and loss of identity. These themes are quite close to immersive media, and the text is especially appropriate to be adapted in VR and AR. Embodied experiences of scale changes, non-logicity, and surreal spaces are presented by the immersive performances of Alice to enable the reader to feel the change.

In VR adaptations, the user can become smaller or larger, learn to move through maze-like environments, and be placed in three-dimensional physical space with characters. These experiences alienate the mental disorientation that Alice is going through to space and sensory objects. The theory of remediation by Bolter and Grusin (1999) suggests that the immersive adaptations re-process the literary content by creating new media forms without discontinuing the themes. The immersive Alice thereby reevaluates the narrative of Carroll in the form of sensory imminence instead of language play.

In terms of reader-response, transforming interpretive ambiguity into experiential uncertainty, immersive Alice does so. There is no longer speculation on the part of the reader regarding the confusion that Alice is in; they experience it through the disorienting settings and challenges with interaction. This tactile reading predicts the importance of perception and embodiment to meaning-making, which is in line with posthuman theories that decentre human cognition as the sole point of interpretation (Hayles, 1999).

A particularly noteworthy aspect of the Immersive Adaptation is the way in which it modifies the work of literature in terms of temporality, through the interface with which the user is interacting. It is a story; it is a work of literature; it is a story to explore, and it is structured by the user's interaction with the interface through which he or she is experiencing it. Users can follow different storylines, reading the different sections of the story in different orders, even solving a number of interactive puzzles that will in some way determine the rest of the story.

Reinterpretation of Frankenstein Via Immersive Media

In Frankenstein, written by Mary Shelley (Shelley, 2012), there is a theme of creation, responsibility, embodiment, and otherness, which are issues that are jeopardising digital and posthuman discourse. Adaptations of Frankenstein frequently place visitors into the world of the creature or in the laboratory of Victor Frankenstein to expose the reader to ethical issues by putting their senses to the test.

Isolation, rejection, and bodily difference may be simulated in VR environments so that the readers can sympathize with the alienation of the creature. This kind of immersive storytelling is similar to the affect theory that stresses the importance of body sensation in the formation of emotional and moral reaction (Massumi, 2002). Immersive Frankenstein attacks anthropocentric ideas of identity and agency by placing the readers in the lived experience of the creature.

There is also a fusion of fictions and realities through these adaptations. Similar to immersive journalism, literary VR narratives combine performative and documentary modes to deliver

ideological content via presence, as opposed to exposition (Nonny de la Peña et al., 2010). What comes out here is a new sort of narrative form that combines literary fantasy with experiential ethics, and that provokes readers to ask questions of the responsible, the creating, and the sympathising.

The immersive adaptations of *Frankenstein* will most likely be mediations of the novel through technology. Immersive performance is often currently mediated through the body in real time using a variety of sensors and vast databases, which allow for real-time behavioral monitoring. Thus, the most cautionary of early science fiction, the novel of the future, will become a site for debate around the ethics of new technologies that are capable of immersing us within experience.

Presence-Based Narratives and the Mass Media Communication Theory

The theory of mass media communication is also a theory that helps shed some light on the way immersive narratives are used to pass a message across. Conventional media paradigms focus on transmission, representation, and receipt of the audience. Nonetheless, immersive media works on the basis of presence, the psychological feeling of being there in a mediated space (Lombard and Ditton).

Presence-based narratives reduce the importance of the delivery of messages and give more emphasis on experience. Instead of convincing viewers with rhetoric or image, immersive stories promote ideological and emotional perception with situated experience. This is in line with the claim by McLuhan (1964) when he states that the forms of the media ultimately determine perception and consciousness, and not the contents.

To achieve immersive literary media, the narrative control is spread among system design, user interaction, and the environment. Authors become designers of experience and not exclusive narrators, and readers are engaged in the process of making meanings through exploration and choice. This convergence indicates the participatory culture introduced by Jenkins (2008), whereby the audience participates and contributes to the narrative worlds.

Interface theory is closely connected to media studies of human-computer interaction. Traditionally the interface was simply the medium through which a story was read by a reader; in immersive media, however, the interface is a new medium for the story itself. It affects the way the reader perceives the story, how he or she is able to move through it and how he or she feels about it. In this sense the interface influences the reader's consciousness while he or she is reading the story and also influences his or her possibilities of interpretation.

The Immersive Reader, Posthuman Messenger

The immersive reader takes a posthuman stance that goes beyond the conventional humanist patterns of reading. Posthumanism disputes the value attributed to autonomous human subjectivity to favour relationality, embodiment, and technological mediation (Braidotti, 2013). With immersive literature, the reader deals with digital systems that expand cognition and perception beyond the biological body.

The immersive reader also traverses the narrative spaces, constructs meaning using the senses and emerges as a contributor to common ground between the intent of the author and experience of the reader. It dismantles the rigid boundaries between the author, the text and the reader and produces a common ecology of storytelling (Shin et al., 2024).

These changes have ethical and pedagogical implications. Embodied literary experience has the potential to promote empathy, cultural sensitivity, and critical thinking since it puts readers in an alternative mindset. They also make us think again of literacy as such, not as the textual ability, but as the multimodal, embodied and participatory practice.

Yet, as posthuman readers become more immersed in new media, their agency is in no way automatically granted. On the contrary, a host of new algorithmic systems and technologies are being developed to enable readers to access, to use, and to work through immersive media (Senthilkumar et al., 2025). While new ways of immersion are continuously being developed, which in turn offer the reader new paths for the readers to access these media and to interact with them, all of these new ways are shaped by a number of real programs, codes, and

commercial platforms, which in turn delimit them. In this sense, even though it greatly increases the degree (Kaplan-Rakowski & Gruber, 2024).

Findings

Immersive Media changes the reader-text relation drastically in Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) environments. Active readers of Immersive Media stories can explore 3D, highly detailed story environments in a very physical and interactive way. Contrary to print-based literature, where readers interpret 2D surfaces of words on pages.

Based on the conceptual analysis for reading literary works, this paper has furthered the understanding of reader-response theories in literary studies. In print form, readers of literature can be the most immersed in any written material because their imaginations are constructing the most detailed images of all while reading a story and thus can read 'between the lines' of any written material and be very immersed in a story while reading it.

Reader-response theories of literature suggest that, unlike readers of print literature, readers of immersive stories can step into the story-world and so have a deeper involvement with the events of the narrative than is possible when reading print literature and experience a sense of presence while a reader is interacting with a story in an immersive environment. The meaning of an immersive story is found by the reader's interpretation and understanding of a story and their experiential interaction with a story in an immersive environment.

Suggestions

Suggestions for Researchers

From a literary perspective, more research is required - possibly in conjunction with empirical studies into how people read in different situations and contexts (demographic, cultural, educational, etc). A comparative study of the reading of a traditional print-based literary work and a similar work read on a digital device, and in an immersive environment, would be of particular interest.

Suggestions for Educators

Immersive Literary experiences are easy to

integrate into a literature curriculum in schools and into digital humanities courses in higher education. High-quality VR and AR applications can be used in an effective and didactically sound way to promote active learning, stimulate critical interpretation and foster the reader's empathy. Group discussions, which are typically triggered by the reading of printed literary works, can also be stimulated by Immersive Literary experiences.

Suggestions for Publishers

In addition to producing Immersive Literary works of the highest quality, Publishers have great potential in offering canonical and contemporary works in Immersive Literary Editions. These Immersive Literary works are not meant to replace printed books, but rather to offer new reading experiences to part of the reading public that is already used to reading from screens.

Suggestions for Digital Content Developers

Designing platforms and applications for the reading of immersive narratives needs to take four aspects into account: narrative coherence, accessibility, inclusivity and user-centred design. Innovatively using the latest technology and representing the main themes, characters, depth and hermeneutical complexity of a work are important goals for high-quality Immersive Literary adaptations.

Limitation

The study is of a conceptual and theoretical nature; therefore, the results are presented in a structured manner and are based on an interpretation between disciplines. Thus, no readers are observed in the process of reading, and no use is made of any behavioural data. The two classical literary works that were analysed in the study are the only two examples of immersive reading in literary form; therefore, the results of this study are not necessarily applicable to other forms of reading immersive literary texts. In addition, technologies of Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality are presently in a state of very rapid development; therefore, the results obtained in earlier stages of their development might be questionable from a methodological point of

view. In addition to potential uses for later empirical studies, there are also potential uses for comparative studies

Future scope for research

There is a need for further research on the impact of media on the literary experience of the reader. This could be investigated by conducting research on a group of readers following a fixed reading sequence (i.e. a story in print, on screen, etc.) who are reading the same story in different media, and by measuring their perception of the story, the emotions that they experience whilst reading the story and the degree of agency that the reader experiences whilst reading the story.

Investigations of future developments of immersive storytelling will be conducted by employing the full variety of methods and approaches used to study a wide array of literary traditions in the framework of the digital humanities. The two major objectives of literary studies in the context of new media are the preservation of our cultural heritage and the prompt dissemination of all literature of the world to all people everywhere. To these ends, novel applications of established media as well as an inter- and transdisciplinary approach are required.

Media of information and communication in the future will be the new medium for telling new kinds of stories that are more participative than books. Research into these stories is wide open and already a lot of work is being done on so-called adaptive narratives, which in the course of reading change into another story. A number of problems must be tackled in relation to the integrity of a story, the authorship of stories, truth, privacy and user autonomy (Braidotti, 2013).

In order to fully grasp the potential for education in these new forms of storytelling, further research is needed in the many different forms of stories that are or will be offered by the new media of information and communication. Stories can be designed in order to elicit critical thinking and increase empathy in readers. There are many learning situations in which it is helpful to have learners work in groups towards their individual learning goals. Immersive environments are highly suitable for these kind of learning situations.

More research is needed in the vast new territory for the study of literature opened up by the new technologies for immersion. Research is already going on into the literary value of stories presented in an immersive manner, and into the new forms of interaction between the reader of a story and the narrative of that story. However, much more research is needed into the changes in the relations between author and text and reader, that the stories and their environments bring about. New ways of studying narrative and participation will be needed.

Conclusion

The ontology of literature and reading is being changed through Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, and immersive media technologies. These platforms foster a sense of novel narrative awareness grounded in embodiment and participation because they facilitate sensory, interactive, and presence experiences of narratives. As this study has shown, the intersection of digital narratology, reader-response theory, and mass media communication theory revives literary engagement as an experience of immersion in the tales of Alice in Wonderland and Frankenstein.

The immersive reader is born as a posthuman actor traversing through digital story worlds, constructing meaning together, and blurring the boundaries between author and audience. Immersive literary media opens up, therefore, novel possibilities of sharing, empathetic, and direct-experience storytelling. With the continued merging of literature with digital technologies, the immersive stories are calling for both scholars and creators to begin rethinking reading as an embodied, ethical, and participatory act.

The results obtained from this study also support the main argument of this paper, i.e. that literary environments of immersion greatly change reading from a predominantly interpretative activity to a more embodied, participative and interactive activity of meaning construction. The paper, therefore, also attempts to develop a literary theoretical framework which could account for the changes that new immersive technologies are bringing about in narrative, in the reader and in literary interaction. To this end, the paper draws on digital narratology,

reader response theory, posthumanism and the digital humanities in order to present a fresh overview of the changes that are taking place in story worlds which are increasingly being mediated by digital technology and in which literary interaction is taking place.

Despite the study's scope, there are limitations to the study. The study is a conceptual study or an interpretative study. It is based on literary theory and uses methods and approaches of the digital humanities. The results therefore are based on a theoretical study and not on the experiences of readers of literary works who are immersed in their reading. The two canonical literary works discussed in this study are just two examples of studies of immersive literary experiences that are currently available in the literary marketplace. Therefore, the results of this study are not representative of all studies that have been conducted on this topic. However, there are many opportunities for further studies, such as empirical studies.

Further, the study contributes to the field of digital humanities in several ways. It presents new ways of literary study through immersion and participation in interactive stories. Immersive storytelling is more than a new medium; it changes the philosophy and aspects of reading. Future studies on immersive literary systems could, for example, investigate readers' reception, possible uses in educational settings, problems of accessibility, and ethical issues. With increasing amounts of literature being published in digital environments, immersive media will continue to change reading into an experience that is an ethical and technologically mediated cultural practice. This can be studied using empirical and interdisciplinary research methods.

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Informed Consent

The authors declare that informed consent was not required as there were no human participants involved.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest.

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