

Making sense of literary history: the dense associative web of *Orlando*

Susan Brown (University of Guelph), Jeffery Antoniuk, Sharon Farnel, Isobel Grundy, Stan Ruecker, (University of Alberta), Matt Patey, Stéfán Sinclair (McMaster University), Milena Radzikowska (Mount Royal College)

This paper explores ways of visually presenting large, complex sets of interlinkages discerned by the textbase markup of *Orlando: Women's Writing in the British Isles from the Beginnings to the Present* among 6.8 million words with 2.2 million semantic tags. Visual means enable detailed connections to bring out broader, general patterning. Following last year's DHCS presentation on the preliminary investigations of these dense interlinkages, we will now present two prototype web interfaces along with our dilemmas, strategies, and reflections.

One prototype employs graph theory to trace links between people on the model of the six-degrees-of-separation concept [Barabási]: linking not only through other people but also through places, organizations, etc. Since the shortest path between two linked people is usually not single but hugely multiple, the conceptualizing and representing of these paths is highly complex. Another, very different interface offers a different approach to drawing out meaning from these connections too complex for prose to explain: this applies a version of the Mandala XML browser to *Orlando* materials. Each of these prototypes offers a new approach to probing humanistic data through non-verbal tools.