# *Transmedia Practice:*
# *Theorising the Practice of Expressing a Fictional World across Distinct Media and Environments*

by Christy Dena

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

School of Letters, Art and Media
Department of Media and Communications
Digital Cultures Program
University of Sydney
Australia

Supervisor: Professor Gerard Goggin
Associate Supervisor: Dr. Chris Chesher
Associate Supervisor: Dr. Anne Dunn

2009

## Certification of Authorship/Originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text. I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Christy Dena

*Let's study, with objectivity and curiosity,*

*the mutation phenomenon of forms and values in the current world.*

*Let's be conscious of the fact that although tomorrow's world*

*does not have any chance to become more fair than any other,*

*it owns a chance that is linked to the destiny of the current art [...]*

*that of embodying, in their works some forms of new beauty,*

*which will be able to arise only from the meet of all the techniques.*

(Francastel 1956, 274)

Translation by Regina Célia Pinto, emailed to the empyre mailing list,

Jan 2, 2004. Reprinted with permission.

*To the memory of my dear, dear, mum, Hilary.*

*Thank you, for never denying yourself the right to Be.*

# *Abstract*

In the past few years there have been a number of theories emerge in media, film, television, narrative and game studies that detail the rise of what has been variously described as transmedia, cross-media and distributed phenomena. Fundamentally, the phenomenon involves the employment of multiple media platforms for expressing a fictional world. To date, theorists have focused on this phenomenon in mass entertainment, independent arts *or* gaming; and so, consequently the global, transartistic and transhistorical nature of the phenomenon has remained somewhat unrecognised. Theorists have also predominantly defined it according to end-point characteristics—such as the "expansion" trait (a story continues across media). This has resulted in the phenomenon being obscured amongst similar phenomena. Therefore, rather than investigate the phenomenon as it occurs in isolated artistic sectors and with an end-point characteristic, this thesis investigates *all* of these emergences through the lens of transmedia *practice*. That is, this thesis investigates the nature of transmedia practice in general, according to the way practitioners conceive and design a fictional world to be expressed across distinct media and environments.

To do this, this thesis draws on the semiotic theory of "multimodality" and "domains of practice" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001) to illuminate the unique knowledge and skills of practitioners involved in the design of transmedia projects. The industrial and aesthetic implications of the employment of distinct media are discussed, along with their semiotic activation. Related theories such as "hypertextuality" and "transfictionality" are problematised in light of transmedia phenomena. Since the phenomenon involves both narrative and game modes, a new methodology is introduced to study their presence at various stages of design: transmodality. The employment of the actual world in transmedia practices is discussed in light of Aristotle's "dramatic unities" and through "deictic shift theory". Through research questions from media, narrative and game studies as well as semiotics, this thesis aims to explain how transmedia is a peculiar practice that demands its own research area and methodologies.

# *Acknowledgements*

I want to begin these acknowledgements at the beginning: with the people who also explored wide-eyed and with fiery passion these changes happening when no-one believed us. I did discover this area alone, with my own creative writing in 2001. In 2002, I began exploring what a poetics of this form may be at University, at the end of that year I started a website to begin sharing my discoveries, and then in 2004 I started a blog. I designed the website to not only share my thoughts and excitement about this area to the world, but to be a honey-pot to attract like-minded people. These early like-minded people include Monique de Haas and Jak Boumans, my cross-media compatriots in Amsterdam; Max Giovagnoli, the cross-media champion in Italy; Tom Apperley, a fellow transmedia gaming interrogator in Melbourne; Drew Davidson in the USA, who wrote what is perhaps the first PhD on this area (Davidson 2001); and PhD researcher Marc Ruppel, who will be releasing his PhD soon. It was a joy and surprise to find fellow researcher Marc not only deeply engaged with this area, but having very similar insights. I look forward to reading Marc's PhD, as I believe our theses will complement each other well.

To all the practitioners I've been fortunate to converse and work with to varying degrees over these last few years. You have all in your own way enriched my hope, excitement and understanding of this area. In particular, I wish to thank Evan Jones, Jan Libby, Lance Weiler, and Jeff Gomez for some really neat conversations and inspiration. I also want to thank all the creators who have inspired me from afar; and especially to all the alternate reality game designers, theorists and players who have been at the forefront of transmedia-native forms.

To the people in universities, organisations and corporations that I shared and developed my ideas with, through presentations, mentoring, consulting and workshops. Your curiosity, confusion, wonder, excitement and scepticism helped me understand how this phenomenon is perceived by others, and shaped much of this thesis.

~ Transmedia Practice ~

To all of my supervisors which—due to an upgrade from a Masters to PhD, departmental restructures and my transfer interstate (for personal reasons)—have been many! To Peter Morse, Peter Hill, Sally Pryor and Sari Smith at the School of Creative Arts, University of Melbourne, thank you for your crucial guidance at the beginning of my research. In particular, thank you to Peter Morse for believing in and fighting for my research vision. To Gerard Goggin, Chris Chesher, Anne Dunn at the School of Letters, Art and Media at the University of Sydney, thank you for giving me support and for being so patient. Thank you very much to Chris Chesher for encouraging me to come to Sydney University, the place I was meant to end up. But mostly my appreciation is for Gerard Goggin, who has shepherded me through these crucial last stages. Gerard supported my wild ideas and gently guided me towards delivering them in an academic manner. Your unwavering belief kept me sticking at it through many dark times.

Thank you to all my friends, family and colleagues who were so patient and understanding about me being such a hermit for so long. I cannot tell you how many birthdays, launches, dinners, screenings, and so on I have missed over the years. No more! I'm back!

To my father, Peter, and his wife, Maggie: your support in these last few years has been instrumental in ensuring I finished this PhD. Thank you. To my brother, Davo, thank you for cheering for me and making me feel as if I was doing you proud. To my mum, Hilary, who passed away just a few months before this thesis was submitted. Thank you for all the wonderful long phone conversations about mono-polymorphism and rainbows. I imagine you somewhere clapping enthusiastically with pride…like I am for you.

# *Contents*

# *Illustrations*

**Figures**

•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••

## Tables

# *Chapter 1: Introduction*

Telematics does not only generate a new order of art discourse
but demands a new form of criticism and analysis.
(Ascott 2003 [1984], 194)


Artists are no longer interested in digital media alone.
We now wish creatively to explore *moistmedia*: all those info, bio, neuro,
geo, chemico, cogno, nano, astro pharmo, socio and psychic media,
which transit the spectrum of systems wet and dry, natural and artificial,
embodied and distributed, tangible and ephemeral, visible and occult.
Our work is transdisciplinary, transcultural and transentient.
(Ascott 2009)


The theory of *transmedia practice* examines a creative practice that involves the employment of multiple distinct media and environments for expression. What does "distinct media" mean? A television show is no-longer always just television show, it may have specially crafted books and a feature film that are all part of the storytelling, as is the case of David Lynch and Mark Frost's early 1990s work *Twin Peaks*. The website for a feature film can do more than advertise the details of its screenings, it can reveal detail about the characters' lives after the film plot ending, as with Richard Kelly's 2001 *Donnie Darko* website. The arias and childhood visions from a character's memories can be shared with the reader of a book, with specially created illustrations and a music CD, as author Laura Esquivel orchestrated in her 1996 novel *The Law of Love* (Crown Publishers, Inc.). The setting and ideology of an album can burst beyond the music, across fictional websites and anarchic live events, as Nine Inch Nails' Trent Reznor showed with his *Year Zero* alternate reality game (Reznor and 42 Entertainment, 2007). A computer game can bleed outside of its virtual walls, with fictional characters emailing players directly, as with Electronic Art's 2001 alternate reality game *Majestic*. The canvas of a painting can stretch beyond the gallery and onto the Internet, as tonyjohanson.com (he changed his name to a URL) did with his 2005 Archibald Prize entry *GoFigure.Net.au*. An installation can exist in multiple locations and websites, with patrons on the Internet interacting with strangers on the street, as with Susan Collins's *In Conversation* (1997-2001). And players on the Internet can be chased by people running

through the streets with GPS-enabled devices, as with Blast Theory's *Can You See Me Now?* (2001–2005).

To capture these creative practices, media, game, narrative, art and semiotics theorists alike have put forward theories to describe their respective phenomena. Media theorist Henry Jenkins has popularised what he calls "transmedia storytelling," to highlight a new type of franchise exemplified by the Wachowski Brothers' *The Matrix* (Jenkins 2006). "*The Matrix*," Jenkins explains, "is entertainment for the age of media convergence, integrating multiple texts to create a narrative so large that it cannot be contained within a single medium" (Jenkins 2006, 95). Narrative theorist Jill Walker Rettberg[1] explores what she describes as "the emerging form of distributed narratives" (Walker 2004, 100). "Distributed narratives," she explains, "can't be experienced in a single session or in a single space" (Walker 2004, 91). Marc Ruppel observes "new structures that shatter the fixity of narrative as a single-medium endeavor and establish instead a multiply-mediated storyworld," new structures that he describes as "cross-sited narratives" (Ruppel 2006). Glorianna Davenport recognises that "narratives of the future are capable of expanding the social engagement of audiences while offering intensive narrative immersion in a story experience that plays out in multiple public and private venues," and describes them as "very distributed stories" (Davenport et al. 2000). Game theorist Jane McGonigal focuses on "ubiquitous games," games which (among other characteristics) are "distributed experiences: distributed across multiple media, platforms, locations, and times" (McGonigal 2006, 43), and which represent the most "perceptually powerful and socially important vision for future networked play" (McGonigal 2006, 45). Markus Montola explores "pervasive games", games that have "one or more salient features that expand the contractual magic circle of play, spatially, temporally, or socially" (Montola 2009, 12).

Semiotician Jay Lemke interrogates "the distributed franchise as a new kind of inter-medium," and argues "the most interesting new phenomena" is "how ideological effects

---

[1] Jill Walker is now Jill Walker Rettberg. But since the essays I refer to in this thesis are before this name change, the references will remain as Walker, while her name will be referred to as Walker Rettberg in body of this thesis.

are carried by semiotic media" (Lemke 2004). Artist and theorist Peter Hill observes that "over the past two decades there has been an increasing use of fiction and fragmented narrative within contemporary art practice" and calls the phenomenon "superfictions" (Hill 2001). Likewise, artist and theorist Andrea Zapp groups together the practices of "international artists" whose works involve "public installations and dramatic spaces that are linked to the Internet with the aim to integrate the viewer into the artwork" under the term "networked narrative environments" (Zapp 2004, 12). While art theorist and practitioner Roy Ascott's theory of "telematic arts" recognised these emergences a long time ago:

> We search, in short, for what I call, in German, *Gesamtdatenwerk,* or "integrated data work," echoing the *Gesamtkunstwerk,* or "total artwork," conceived by Richard Wagner. Whereas Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* was performed in an opera house, however, the site of the *Gesamtdatenwerk* must be the planet as a whole, its data space, its electronic noosphere.
>
> (Ascott 2003 [1989], 226)

One could easily argue that these theories are observing different phenomena. A franchise engineered by a conglomerate has nothing to do with a collaborative sticker novel initiated by two blokes tinkering with Word. A work manufactured for massive profit is different to a work revealing some highly personal vision, or altruistically endeavouring to change the world. A fiction expressed through the cinema and console games is markedly different to a work expressed across a few websites hosted by mates and a print-on-demand chapbook. Or are they? This thesis argues these are not isolated phenomena. Indeed, the nature (to some extent) and breadth (to a greater degree) of transmedia practice has been obscured because investigations have been specific to certain industries, artistic sectors and forms. The gathering of these all practices in this thesis is not some clumsy taxonomic bundling though, as it reveals an important phenomenon that has emerged in the practices of individuals and companies alike, across artforms, genres, industries, time and countries, with varying aesthetic and economic motivations and skill.

Therefore, throughout this thesis I refer to a range or practices that may be called popular culture and the arts, as well as mass entertainment and independent practices. I have intentionally approached the study this way to explore the range of issues practitioners face, the transhistorical nature of these practices and to test assumptions. Despite the scholarly interest in transmedia practices in mass entertainment, particularly in the USA, these practices are not specific to this area. Transmedia practices are not just the concern of conglomerates who are horizontally organized, but also of individuals with limited resources. It is important, therefore, to recognize the breadth of the phenomenon. Further to this, there are insights to be gained from interrogating the design issues that are sometimes shared and other times not shared between them.

This thesis does not, therefore, focus on a certain type of transmedia practice such pervasive games, ubiquitous games, alternate reality games, augmented reality games, two-screen entertainment, "franchises," networked theatre or installations. Instead, it develops a higher-level approach that seeks to understand the nature of creative practices that utilise more than one distinct media, and environments. Indeed, this study was initiated to interrogate the explicit element that unifies these practices: the employment of distinct media (and environments) for creative expression. This trait is significantly different to what is commonly described as "multimedia". While multimedia is a terribly polysemous term, it is invoked here rhetorically to denote the conventional association with a mix of text, images, video and sound. The problem with this notion of multimedia is that it is often regarded as being representative of all expressive possibilities, yet is oblivious to other medial factors such as the delivery medium (the actual computer or book for example). Therefore, in an attempt to distinguish the phenomenon discussed here from multimedia *within* a media platform, current theorists have referred to these creative works variously as being "distributed across varying media channels (film, web, music, video games, print, live performance, etc.)" (Ruppel 2005b).

However, Walker Rettberg (Walker 2004) and Montola (Montola, Stenros and Waern 2009) also propose theories that are not reliant on the distinct media feature. They credit any work that is distributed in some way beyond perceived boundaries (across multiple

websites for instance) as a higher-order peculiarity. While the design and experience of such works is significant and is often congruent with transmedia, they are not the focus of this thesis. Instead, this thesis interrogates works employing separate and different mediums. An audience member may, for instance, begin their experience by watching an episode on their television in their lounge-room, and then continue by reading a graphic novel, and then continue again by playing a game on their computer.

Unlike the literacy involved in creating and experiencing multimedia within a media platform, these works require a different kind of knowledge and skill. A creator may be well-versed in writing novels and screenplays, but not necessarily skilled in writing stories that begin in a novel and continue in a film, in the rhetoric necessary to guide their reader to become a player, and even in understanding the combined effect these media platforms may have on the experience. Likewise, a person may be familiar with using a computer and reading a book, but unfamiliar with needing to attend to both in order to engage with the entire work. It is this phenomenon that is peculiar in ways that have not been deeply interrogated. The theory of transmedia as a practice discusses the knowledge and skills peculiar to the creation of these works, as this thesis argues these forms demand and reveal a new kind of multimodal practitioner.

At present, however, current theories that describe this area focus on the characteristics of the end-product. Jenkins (Jenkins 2006), Ruppel (Ruppel 2005a), Long (Long 2007) and Smith (Smith 2009) argue the phenomenon is identified by the distribution of unique (different and self-contained) information across media platforms; and both Walker (Walker 2004) and Montola (Montola 2009) describe their respective phenomena through a comparative lens: where the traditional understanding of a story or game being available at a single point in time and space, is now expanded and distributed. Long does "refine" Jenkins's definition by suggesting that "transmedia narratives can be evaluated by how well they set themselves apart from transmedia branding through narrative *cohesion* and *canon*" (Long 2007, 33–34, original emphasis). However, problems arise when one considers the variety of forms being discussed because expansion, cohesion and canon are somewhat specific to mass entertainment. But even in the mass

entertainment arena, the provisions of expansion, cohesion and canon are still too fuzzy to be reliable criteria, and do not sufficiently differentiate the phenomenon.

Furthermore, it could be said that all of the so-called transmedia traits—expansion, coherence, and canon—all lean towards, and in some cases are evidence of, the peculiar knowledge and competences needed to engage in transmedia practice. A transmedia practitioner expands their world across media, treats it as canon, and ensures there is coherence because they are creating a transmedia project. While one can attempt to define and study practices that have any one of these traits, I argue the significant phenomenon lies in what produces these various outcomes. That is, what are the knowledge and skills that are peculiar to transmedia practice, and how do they change the design, nature, and experience of works? But how does one theorise a transmedia *practice*?

## *From Interpreting to Constructing Meaning*

In the preface of their book on multimodality, Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen relate the pains they went through in their efforts to develop a theory of multimodal analysis (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001, vii). Several years and torn up versions later, they "began to see some light at the end of the tunnel" when they started to think of multimodality as a *practice* (ibid., original emphasis). That is, rather than "focus on fixed, stable entities," they focus on representation and communication (ibid., 4). They moved from research questions concerned with "what *is* a mode?" to questions exploring "how do people use the variety of semiotic resources to make signs?" (ibid., vii, original emphasis). Their new practice-oriented approach was articulated with their theory *domains of practice* in their book on multimodality.

Despite the popularity of the term "multimodality" and their book, Kress and van Leeuwen's multimodality is actually polysemous: it refers to a type of practice ("multimodal texts"), as well as a communication methodology ("multimodal communication"). On the former, Kress and van Leeuwen explain that they are concerned with how "people use the variety of semiotic resources to make signs in concrete social

contexts" (ibid.). This *practice* perspective describes multimodality as the:

> use of several different semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event, together with the particular way in which these modes are combined—they may for instance reinforce each other ("say the same thing in different ways"), fulfil complementary roles, […] or be hierarchically ordered.
>
> (ibid., 20)

They did this with the notion of "domains of practice". Instead of viewing meaning as being made once (which is the governing logic of linguistics and, I argue, the end-product approach of current theories), Kress and van Leeuwen view meaning as being made through multiple articulations (ibid., 4). That is, one does not analyse the meaning of all the elements in the creative work, the end-product, but during the various points leading to that end-product as well. Those multiple articulations are "four domains of practice in which meanings are dominantly made" (ibid.). What Kress and van Leeuwen describe with their domains of practice are the different ways in which people and technologies can influence/create meaning at various points in the creation of a product or event. This is a focus on how and when meaning is made by whom. So, instead of analysing the end-product, one can analyse the various ways in which that end-product was created.

They divide the domains practice into a content stratum, which is "further stratified into discourse and design," and an expression stratum, which is "further stratified into production and distribution" (ibid., 20). Discourses "are socially constructed knowledges of (some aspect of) reality" (ibid., 4) and so are not materially-specific. An example they offer is "the 'ethnic conflict' discourse of war" (ibid.). War discourses, they explain, "involve both a certain version of what actually happens in wars, of who is involved, what they do, and where and when, and a set of interpretations, evaluative judgements, critical or justifying arguments and so on" (ibid., 4–5). Such discourses influence and are drawn on when developing content, and can be realised in different ways. Design, on the other hand, "stands midway between content and expression" and is evidenced in the use of script or a blueprint for a house (ibid., 5).

> It is the conceptual side of expression, and the expression side of conception. […] Designs are means to realize discourses in the context of a given communication situation. But designs also add something new: they realize the communication which changes the socially constructed knowledge into social (inter-) action.
>
> (ibid.)

Unlike a discourse, which is draw on but not realized, design realizes discourse. For instance, a practitioner makes decisions about how to present the discourse of war, by designing it as a thriller. The practitioner may then use language and the narrative mode as their resources to realize the war thriller. These design decisions are all part of the meaning-making process. But they are not necessarily involved in the meaning-making of the production—the book or film that they or others may eventually realize the war thriller in. Instead, they may create or use artifacts of design, such as a blueprint, script, flowchart and lists. It is "still separate from the actual material production of the semiotic product or the actual material articulation of the semiotic event" (ibid., 6).

Production, on the other hand, "refers to the organization of the expression, to the actual material articulation of the semiotic event or the actual material production of the semiotic artefact" (ibid.). Practitioners involved in this stage need technical skills that are "related not to semiotic modes, but to semiotic *media*" (ibid., original emphasis). These skills are varied, including the shooting of a scene for instance, performing of a play, writing a blog post, or programming of a website. Sometimes the same person is involved with the design and production, and sometimes not. Irrespective of who is involved, however, all have some role in adding meaning. That is, those involved in production do not merely execute the intentions of those involved in design, and those involved in design influence what occurs in production.

It is important to note here the significance of both design and production practices being seen as potentially equally meaningful. This is in light of ongoing debates that argue on the one hand those involved in production (for instance a director, among other roles) is the sole auteur, and on the other hand argue those involved in the design (for instance, screenwriters) are the ones that control what others merely execute. Kress and van Leeuwen note that the separation of design and production has led to the view (by

linguistics too) that "the expression plane does not add meaning and 'merely' realises what can also be written down, without loss of essential meaning" (ibid., 7). Other complications regarding these issues in the context of transmedia practice will be taken up in chapter three, but the point to note is that Kress and van Leeuwen highlight how each of these domains of practice has a potential role in the meaning-making process.

The last expression stratum is perhaps the least acknowledged in meaning-making discussions: distribution. "Distribution refers to the technical 're-coding' of semiotic products and events, for purposes of recording (e.g. tape recording, digital recording) and/or distribution (e.g. radio and television transmission, telephony)" (ibid., 21). In the past, Kress and van Leeuwen explain, those involved in distribution were not necessarily (or perceived to be) contributing to the meaning of a semiotic product. The people involved, such as the "people who produce the mould for mass production," and the technologies, tend to be seen as "merely facilitating the pragmatic functions of preservation and distribution" (ibid., 7). But, as time moves on, Kress and van Leeuwen explain, "the contribution of the sound engineer may become equal to that of the musician" (ibid.).

A key significance of Kress and van Leeuwen's "domain of practice" is the recognition of the various processes involved in the production of a product or event, and how people's efforts and the technology they utilize influences meaning at every point. This thesis utilizes these insights to theorise not only how meaning is made in the end-product, but at various point of its creation (which do not necessarily happen chronologically, or by different people). While there are many studies that have been (and continue to be) conducted on the ways in which production processes change in the context of what has been described as "convergence" and "cross media production," the theory of domains of practice highlights a relationship between the end-product (which is not necessarily static) and the many processes that may precede or help produce it. Indeed, media theorist Anja Bechmann Petersen describes the two as being entwined tendencies:

> Cross media can be conceptualized from an outward as well as an inward
> perspective: outward towards the users, and inward within the media

> organizations themselves. Cross media towards the users (the outward perspective) includes focuses on creating cross promotion (Dailey, Demo & Spillman 2005) and cross media storylines (Dena 2004; Jenkins 2003). […] Within the media organizations themselves (the inward perspective) cross media involves focusing on cross media facilities in the productions. […] Both tendencies – outward and inward – are termed cross media, and are fundamentally interrelated: cross media communication is facilitated or decelerated by production processes.
>
> (Petersen 2006, 95–96)

This study of transmedia practice does not, however, involve an interrogation of the routines, and technical procedures of a production. While this study does consider the influences and issues different media cultures have, the focus is on the decisions transmedia practitioners face when conceiving and designing a transmedia project. This emphasis does not mean production processes do not have an influence, they do. But since there are so many influences, and transmedia production processes are not as developed as transmedia concepts, this thesis concentrates on what decisions practitioners face in developing a transmedia project. In this thesis, then, there is an emphasis on issues associated with "design". Design, as explained earlier, does not merely refer to a graphical treatment, but to the artifacts involved in documenting a transmedia project: with scripts, flowcharts and the like.

This emphasis on the construction of a transmedia project does not mean the role of the interpreter, indeed the two-way dynamics of communication, is negated. Indeed, there are three issues that need to be discussed regarding a practice-oriented approach of this thesis. The first is the role of interpretation in the meaning-making process. Interpretation is still recognised in a practice-oriented approach in many ways. The first acknowledgement is that meaning is not made purely by the constructors, as there are (often, always?) times when what is intended with a design is not what is interpreted. There are also times when audiences or players actively contribute to the construction of an imagined world.

Likewise, in their discussion of domains of practice, Kress and van Leeuwen are careful to point out that focusing on the study of a practice does not negate the role of

interpretation (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001, 8–9). Communication, they explain, can only take place when there has been both articulation and interpretation. "Interpreters," they continue, "need to supply semiotic knowledge at all four of the levels we have distinguished" (ibid., 8). Even though a practitioner makes an effort to design a particular work, it does not necessarily mean it will be interpreted in the way it was intended. For example, a "story may be written to entertain, but an interpreter may not be entertained because of the story's built-in ethnocentric bias against the interpreter's ethic group" (ibid.). Likewise, the emphasis on the construction of meaning in this thesis is not an argument that meaning is only made by the constructors. Their designs are certainly not a *fait compli.*

There are also times, especially at this stage of the emergence of transmedia practices, when there is a disjunction between the knowledge and skills of a transmedia practitioner and audiences. Jenkins has previously described such situations in the context of the reception of the Wachowski brothers' *The Matrix*, where it was embraced initially but then audiences splintered into fans and critics (Jenkins 2003). Jenkins cites three reasons for the apparent misgivings of the project. It was assessed from a "mono-media" perspective, because film critics are "stuck within a mono-media rather than a trans-media paradigm" (ibid.). A great amount of was effort required to access the work, therefore affecting meaning-formation: "You are always going to feel inadequate before The Matrix because it expects more than any individual spectator can provide" (ibid.). The poetics of transmedia are inchoate as the "aesthetics of transmedia storytelling are still relatively undefined" (ibid.).

Irrespective of the quality or success of *The Matrix,* the point about a "mono-media" approach and the inchoate poetics is still relevant. Indeed, there are times when what the practitioner intends and what the audience interprets do not match. I am not referring to the mere vagaries of interpretation, but the knowledge that is required to recognize a transmedia project. A case in point is the *Terminator* series. James Cameron wrote and directed the first two feature films, *Terminator* (1984) and *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* (1991), while the third film, *Terminator 3: The Rise of the Machines* (2003), was directed

by Johnathan Mostow, without the lead actress Linda Hamilton. But after the production of *Terminator 2,* Cameron worked on a *Terminator* attraction: *T2: 3-D: Breaking The Screen Barrier*™, which is now at Universal Studios Florida, Hollywood and Japan (titled *Terminator 2:3D*™ at Hollywood and Japan). *T2: 3D* opened in Florida in April 1996 but was officially opened with the full pre-show building (a fictional Cyberdyne Systems) in Hollywood on May 6, 1999.

The film component of the attraction was written and directed by James Cameron and includes the original actors (Arnold Schwarzenegger as The Terminator, Linda Hamilton as Sarah Connor, Robert Patrick as T-1000, Edward Furlong as John Connor, Earl Boen as Dr. Peter Silberman) in video sequences. The attraction was described in Wikipedia as a "mini-sequel" (Wikipedia 2005a), and Cameron has indicated the project is a medially-equal expression of the *Terminator* world: the intention was "not just doing a kind of knock-off ride or themed attraction to kind of just be spun out from the film," but "to integrate a film show with a live show" (Cameron 1991). He continues, commenting that audiences will "go in thinking it is some gimmick but they will realise it is actually a *continuation of the storyline, a third Terminator film*" (ibid., my emphasis).

Despite the inclusion of the original creators and actors, the attention to detail and self-proclaimed high status of the project in constructing the fictional world, even ardent science-fiction critic-fan Roz Kaveney considers the themed attraction a pre-production sketch for the primary medium of a feature film:

> The third film [*Terminator 3*] suffers hugely from the absence at its helm of Cameron, who clearly felt that two of these films was enough. His involvement with the Terminator ride at Universal Studios gives us some idea of what a third or later film with him as creator might like—derring-do across time and in the heart of great machines.
>
> (Kaveney 2005, 126)

Why isn't the Terminator attraction at Universal Studios seen as the continuation of the Terminator series, a third film or composition? One could say the semiotic knowledge needed to create and interpret transmedia fictions is, among other factors, the perception

of a variety of distinct media as equally viable expressive forms. So, despite the role of Cameron, the fact that the attraction is *not* an entire feature film makes it a secondary work. Another factor to acknowledge is the lack of paratextual cues indicating the significance of the composition. While Cameron describes the show as a "continuation," it was still called *T2* not *T3*. But perhaps more importantly is the assumption that anything outside of the "main" or "original" medium is not critical to the meaning of the work.

Cameron has since been working for years on a production, *Avatar,* which has been developed as a feature film and digital game (among other media). Cameron has been experimenting transmedia, while his *Terminator* audiences (at the time) did not necessarily share the same attitude. This disjunct between practitioner and interpreter also happens in the reverse, when audiences expect a project to be expressed across mediums, but the practitioner prefers, or is more skilled in, a mono-medium approach. Indeed, there is a great range of transmedia literacies which in turn influences both the design and experience of transmedia projects. This thesis focuses on a point in time in which these literacies are not always shared.

An emphasis on meaning-construction does not negate the role of audiences or players in co-constructing a (fictional) world either. There is not, in other words, a (fictional) world practitioners create completely by themselves. Jenkins has argued extensively about the rise of participatory culture (Jenkins 2006), and media theorist Mark Deuze has transposed these notions to the context of creative industries logics (Deuze 2007). Deuze develops media theorist Richard Caves's (Caves 2000) proposal that integrated multinational companies in creative industries operate with a "market logic," which generally produces the most lucrative content; whereas small businesses operate with an "editorial logic," which results in the most innovative content (Deuze 2007, 99). Inspired by Jenkins's participatory culture, Deuze added to these "logics" a "convergence culture logic": where work done "includes the (intended) consumer in the process of product design and innovation, up to and including the production and marketing process" (ibid.). The various ways in which players contribute to the design (to a lesser degree) and the

production of a fictional world (to a greater degree) will be discussed in the chapter on interactivity (chapter four) of this thesis.

In summary, the focus on practice does not negate the role of the interpreter. Indeed, while meaning is made from of the various decisions practitioners make, meaning continues to be made by many others, including interpreters. The study of transmedia practice simply widens the scope of possible meaning-making points beyond the end-product, and in this case mostly towards the domain of practice of design. While the semiotic theory of multimodality has been utilised here, this thesis will draw on a range of fields to illuminate the nature of transmedia practice.

## *The Disciplinary Methodology of this Thesis*

> An inventive culture requires the
> broadest possible criterion
> of what is relevant.
> (Ulmer 1994, 6)

This thesis draws on theories and research questions from narrative, game, media, art studies and semiotics. Theories from these fields were selected because each of these inquiries provides complementary insights, and since the phenomenon appears to operate with different modes and in various artistic sectors, theories from these areas should be utilised. While many theorists utilise theories from many disciplines, it is important to not just clarify the range of research fields selected, but also what fields this thesis aims to contribute to.

In admittedly simplistic terms, there is research conducted by an individual or group, using the methodologies of one discipline, asking research questions specific to that discipline, and contributing to knowledge in that same discipline. These are, perhaps indisputably, the characteristics of disciplinary research. When the knowledge of more than one discipline is explicitly involved in some way, the research is no-longer disciplinary. Another type of research, by an individual or group, involves more than one discipline being utilized, for the enrichment of a single discipline. Theoretical physicist and transdisciplinarity scholar, Basarab Nicolescu, describes this type as

"multidisciplinarity" (Nicolescu 2002, 42). As an example, "a painting by Giotto can be studied not only within the context of art history, but also within the contexts of the history of religions, European history, or geometry" (ibid.). The key difference, however, is that the knowledge gained from this approach "is always in the exclusive service of the home discipline" (ibid., 43). "In other words," Nicolescu continues, "the multidisciplinary approach overflows disciplinary boundaries while its goal remains limited to the framework of disciplinary research" (ibid.). Another type of research, what may be called interdisciplinarity, "concerns the transfer of methods from one discipline to another" (ibid.).

A further type of research, which may be conducted by an individual or group, always utilizes the research of and contributes to multiple disciplines. It is this latter type of research, which is sometimes termed multidisciplinary or transdisciplinarity, that is the approach of this thesis. This means that this thesis does not interrogate the nature of narrative, game, art, or US mass communications in contemporary projects, for the enrichment of one of these research areas. As German philosopher Jürgen Mittelstrass observes, there are times when "[d]isciplinary thinking" is "not research that is searching for its order, but rather an increasingly rigid order which is already laid out in component systems that is searching for its research" (Mittelstrass 2001, 500). Therefore, this thesis interrogates the nature of transmedia practice (not the nature of narrative, game, art or US mass communication), for the enrichment of all these research areas. But it would be inaccurate to cast existing research areas as entirely isolated fields of inquiry. For instance, to game designer and theorist Gonzalo Frasca, a narratologist is "a researcher who focuses on narrative in any medium, including film, literature or videogames," while a ludologist can study the role of narrative and game in videogames (Frasca 2003a).

This thesis is therefore situated within and influenced by the current academic context. For instance, as will be discussed further in this thesis, media studies has a rising interest in aesthetics; while the role and function of media is becoming more important to narrative studies; game studies is looking at materiality and beyond the (digital) medium to the actual world; and the notion of multimodality is a revived concern in semiotics.

These contemporary lenses influence the analysis of transmedia practice. However, not all of the research questions related to these areas of inquiry are invoked in this thesis. Sometimes it is older theories that are critically discussed because they are relevant or inappropriately applied to this phenomenon. This diverse utilisation of theories and invocation of research questions from different fields demands, among other things, a multidisciplinary address. That is, I have attempted to develop non-field-specific nomenclature, or, more accurately, develop and employ nomenclature that is field-sensitive…as will be explained in the next section.

## The Terminology of Transmedia Practice

The term transmedia practice is introduced in this thesis to encompass a variety practices and existing terms defining the area. These theories—including transmedia storytelling (Jenkins 2006), distributed narratives (Walker 2004), cross-sited narratives (Ruppel 2005a), pervasive games (Montola et al. 2009), ubiquitous gaming (McGonigal 2006), networked narrative environments (Zapp 2004), superfictions (Hill 2001), very distributed storytelling (Davenport 1998)—are subsumed under the term transmedia practice for methodological purposes. There are many other terms that other theorists and practitioners (and I) have employed. Indeed, transmedia is only the most recent term employed to describe this area, but it is the most widely known (in part due to the increasingly pervasive nature of the phenomenon). Since the area is in flux and crosses a wide range of creative sectors, it may be that the term "transmedia" and many like it are placeholders. That is, they may operate like the term "multimedia" or the phrase "radio with pictures"—cobbling together existing terms to explain something new…something that will eventually take on its own identity and not be understood through the lens of the past. That being said, the term transmedia is already in operation in a variety of theories.

Indeed, transmedia is a term that exists in many research areas but to describe different phenomena. It is therefore important to clarify what is meant by transmedia in this thesis, and how it has been employed by others. The terms and research areas to be discussed for this purpose are: transmedial narrative, transmedial game, transmedia storytelling and transmediation. To begin with, what is meant by the term transmedia or transmedial?

Drawing on Irina Rajewsky's narratological theory of transmediality (Rajewsky 2002), Werner Wolf explains the notion:

> Transmedial phenomena are phenomena that are non-specific to individual media. Since they appear in more than one medium, they point to palpable similarities between heteromedial semiotic entities.
>
> (Wolf 2005a, 253)

What that non-medium-specific-phenomena is can vary greatly depending on what discipline is utilizing the term. Indeed despite the repetition of the same core term (transmedia) in narrative, game, media and even education studies, all of these areas of inquiry are referring to different phenomena. Specifically, it is important to clarify that the media studies theory of transmedia storytelling, the use of transmedia in this thesis, and the narrative studies theory of transmedial narrative are not analogous concepts. That is, the transmedial phenomenon being discussed is different. For instance, the area variously described as transmedial narratology, transmedial narrative and narrative media studies interrogates the nature of narrative in light of the relationship between narrative and media (Ryan 2004a). That is: "the question of how the intrinsic properties of the medium shape the form of narrative and affect the narrative experience" (ibid., 1). This recently revived area of research is significant in that it acknowledges and interrogates the nature of narrative beyond its literary roots. Indeed, the spirit of transmedial narratology, narrative theorist David Herman elaborates, is what the Structuralists championed but were unable to achieve: "the study of narratives of all sorts, irrespective of origin, medium, theme, reputation, or genre" (Herman 2004, 47). Research questions include what "properties of a given medium are favourable or detrimental to narrativity," "what can medium x do that y cannot," "narrative genres, devices, or problems that are unique to a medium," and "conditions under which nonverbal media can tell stories" (Ryan 2004a, 35).

The same concern exists in game studies, where games are regarded as transmedial in that there is "no set of equipment or material support common to all games" (Juul 2005, 48). Chess, for instance, can be played on a chess board, on a computer and even with human-

size pieces in a park. Therefore, the nature of *game* is likewise being explored through an interrogation of its medium-specific and medium-independent character (Eskelinen 2005; Juul 2005, 48–52). Furthermore, in both of these narrative and game research areas, the term transmedial also refers to an element that is medium-independent. The rules of chess, for example, are transmedial. So transmedial narrative and transmedial game refers to a research inquiry, and a medium-independent element identified within that inquiry.

The media studies theory of transmedia storytelling, on the other hand, refers to the non-medium-specific nature of a *story* or *stories*, as Jenkins explains:

> A transmedia story unfolds across multiple media platforms with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole. In the ideal form of transmedia storytelling, each medium does what it does best—so that a story might be introduced in a film, expanded through television, novels, and comics; its world might be explored through game play or experienced as an amusement park attraction.
>
> (Jenkins 2006, 95–96)

The transmedial aspect here does not denote the nature of narrative in general, but the nature of a particular story, or many stories within a fictional world. For instance, Jenkins refers to stories of *The Matrix* franchise and how it unfolds across media platforms. The study of transmedia storytelling, therefore, is the study of a storyworld unfolding across media platforms; unlike transmedial narrative or transmedial game, which is concerned with the study of medium-specific and non-medium-specific nature of narrative and game respectively. But the terms transmedia *practice* and *fiction* have been employed in thesis rather than transmedia *storytelling* to highlight the fact that the research inquiry encompasses the utilising any number of modes such as narrative and game expressed across distinct media and environments. This will be elaborated on in the next section. For now, while the study of transmedia practice (and specifically, transmedia fictions) can help illuminate the medium-specific and medium-independent nature of narrative and game, the phenomena being studied under transmedial narrative and game is different.

There is also a pedagogical approach that is utilised by media and narrative studies educators, often to help students understand transmedia storytelling: transmediation. Transmediation was introduced by language educator Charles Suhor to refer to the "translation of content from one sign system into another" (Suhor 1984, 250); and since then has been actively employed in teaching "because learners must invent a connection between the two signs systems" (Siegel 1995, 455). It is a pedagogical technique to illuminate relationships between medium and content, primarily through the adaptation of stories. While some media studies theorists have described transmedia storytelling as a transmediation process, it should be noted that this usage is not synonymous with the pedagogical approach of the same name. These are not the only usages of transmedia and this disparity is a natural occurrence; but a multidisciplinary address requires an interrogation of field-sensitive nomenclature and the research questions associated with them.

## *Fiction*

I employ the term fiction in this thesis for two reasons: to communicate the kinds of projects that will be studied, and to recognise modal complexity. On the first point, it is important to acknowledge that the practice of employing multiple distinct media and environments is and has been occurring in many areas of practice for quite some time. Convergence journalism and integrated marketing communications are two examples of such practices that have received much academic attention. But, while many of the knowledge and skills discussed in this thesis are practiced in and applicable to these sectors and beyond, this thesis focuses on transmedia practice to construct transmedia fictions.

It is noted that not all fictions are *entirely* fiction though. They may refer to real life situations and even have some real life objects, locations and people participate as themselves within the fictional realm. Indeed, narrative theorist Marie-Laure Ryan has, in light of postmodernist attempts to merge fiction and nonfiction, proposed a radical approach to theorizing fiction and nonfiction: "panfictionality" (Ryan 1997). Rather than have a dichotomy of fiction and nonfiction, the "doctrine of panfictionality" treats all

texts as fiction, and delineates them "based on truth conditions and reference world" (ibid., 165). While a certainly more accurate rendering of the complexities of fiction, the definition of fiction I invoke here, for the sake of pith, is narrative theorist Lubomír Dolézel's category of a fictional text being a "*world-constructing text*" and not a "*world-imaging text*":

> The actual world exists prior to, and independently of, textual activity. Imaging texts are representations of the actual world; they provide information about it in reports, pictures, hypotheses, and the like. Constructing texts are prior to worlds; it is textual activity that calls worlds into existence and determines their structures.
>
> (Doležel 1998, 24, original emphasis)

This study, therefore, does not refer to theories or case-studies from journalism for example. While there are a couple of instances that I refer to projects that are more in the non-fiction realm (a serious game for example), this study focuses on world-constructing works, works described here as fictions. The second reason for the choice of fiction is methodological. *Fiction* and *practice* are chosen instead of narrative, storytelling, art, game, or play, as mode-agnostic terms to recognise and facilitate the study of modal complexity in transmedia projects[2]. Many of the creative works cited in this thesis include digital games, books, films, television shows, comics, online elements and live events. To label these practices as being either narrative *or* game phenomena, denies their complex modal character and corrupts the research process. As will be discussed in chapter four of this thesis, it is important to recognise the fact that more than one mode (narrative *and* game for example) is often utilised in transmedia fictions, and transmedia practice in general. It is important to unite these practices rather than perpetuate inaccurate differences. Indeed, Hill termed "the use of fiction and narrative within contemporary visual art practice" superfictions, to "distinguish the practice from pure literary fiction in one camp and installation art in another," to bring them together (Hill 2001, 51). Therefore, this thesis interrogates the ramifications of modal and artistic complexity in

---

[2] To some, however, fiction is synonymous with literariness and narrative. This is not, obviously, intended in thesis. For more information on this conflation, see Ryan's case for distinguishing literary, narrative and fiction (Ryan 1991, 1–3).

the practice of transmedia fictions (the subject of this thesis) and methodologically (the approach of this thesis).

## *Fictional Worlds*

Another important consideration regarding nomenclature in this study is terminology to describe what can elusively be described as content. In transmedia projects, there may be many stories and many games. Since it is inappropriate and at times misleading to describe these phenomena with mode-specific terms, one must look to what unites them. One could say they share the same setting and characters. It is for these reasons that I invoke the term fictional world in this thesis. The term is still problematic though.

Fan fiction utilises the same settings and characters, yet this thesis is not a study of fan fiction. This is not to say fans cannot be transmedia practitioners. If a fan continued a fictional world across multiple distinct media, and possibly environments (for example, they wrote and published a short story on a website and a game for a mobile device), they would be a transmedia practitioner. But in this thesis I am concentrating on content that has a role in defining, in creating, a fictional world. Original or licensed creators, for instance, have a role in defining a fictional world. Players also have a role in defining a fictional world, as has been discussed briefly in this chapter and will be elaborated in chapter four of this thesis. Technically, a fictional world can refer to any elements that share the same recognisable features, but in this thesis I concentrate on more "official" forms of cultural production because there are industrial ramifications to a transmedia approach (as will be discussed in chapters two and three), and the development of transmedia-specific concepts is significant. While there are without doubt congruencies between fan and "official" transmedia practice, this thesis focuses on the approaches and strategies of the latter.

There can also be many stories, games and events that are part of the same fictional world in that they share the same setting and characters, for instance, but which are considered different, outside of the logic of the protoworld. The recent theory of "transfictionality" (Doležel 1998; Saint-Gelais 2005; Ryan 2008) explores just how a variety of practitioners

(both official and apocryphal) can change the internal logic of a fictional world, creating many "worlds". As will be discussed in chapter three, such occurrences are outside the domain of transmedia fictions, as one of the traits of these contemporary practices involves the maintaining of a consistent fictional world.

Where is a fictional world though? Is it in the words, images and sounds on the page, screen, stage or canvas? Is it what those material elements mean? Or is it in the minds of the readers, audiences and players? Many would be familiar with the much utilised distinction between *story* (fabula) and *plot* or *discourse* (sjužet). In his discussion of story, narrative theorist David Herman (Herman 2002) cites a helpful quote by Gerald Prince:

> The content plane of narrative as opposed to its expression plane of discourse; the "what" of narrative as opposed to its "how"; the narrated as opposed to the narrating; the fiction as opposed to the narration (In Ricardou's sense of the terms); the existents and events represented in a narrative […] The fabula (or basic material arranged into a plot) as opposed to the sjužet or plot.
>
> (Prince 1987, 91)

Herman prefers "storyworld" to story, though, because it "better captures what be called the ecology of narrative interpretation" (Herman 2002, 13). That is, interpreters attempt to reconstruct a rich world of information during the reading the process, enacting "processing strategies" (ibid., 14). In order to understand the narrative, interpreters need to determine "how the actions and events recounted relate to what might have happened in the past, what could be happening (alternately) in the present, and what may yet happen as a result of what already has come about" (ibid.). What occurs is a mental process that is triggered by the words, images, sounds and so on. As Doležel illustrates with his schema representing "literary communication as interaction," there is a constant construction and reconstruction process to trigger an imagined fictional in the mind (see Figure 1) (Doležel 1998, 203).
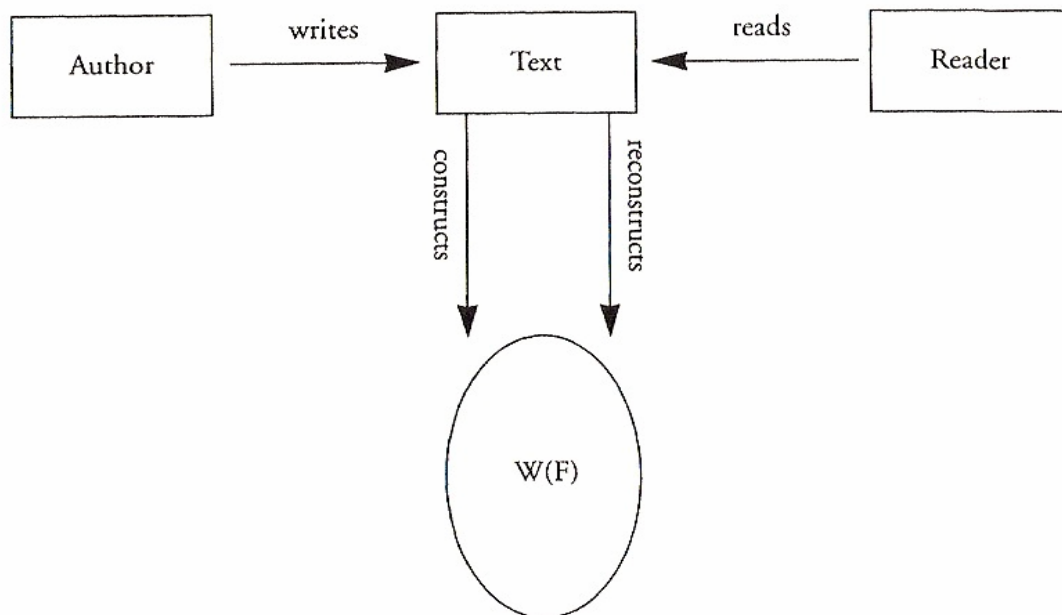
Figure 1. Scan of Doležel's schema representing 'literary communication as interaction'
Image source: (Doležel 1998, 203)

Indeed, a fictional world is the result of joint efforts between what is cued in a text and interpretations of them. The game studies notion of a fictional world correlates with this narrative studies one. Jesper Juul, for instance, notes that a fictional world is the result of both what a game projects (the graphics, sound, rules) and what the player imagines (Juul 2005, 121–122). Since the fictional world of a transmedia fiction can encompass both narrative and game elements, the term storyworld is not employed here. But as noted earlier, transmedia practices in general do not just produce a fictional world. It may be non-fictional. The need for mode-agnostic nomenclature makes describing this element difficult, so a fictional world (while applicable to clearly world-constructing projects) will have to remain a placeholder term for world elements. In summary, the term fictional world is employed to denote the sum of all the content and expressive planes (all compositions) that are constructed to adhere to the same internal logic.

## The Structure of this Thesis

In the next chapter of this thesis, I explore the unique nature of transmedia practice with a discussion about the argument that these practices are differentiated by "artistic vision" and the employment of "multiple media platforms". Specifically, the first part of this

chapter discusses the theoretical background and implications of the artistic vision argument. This leads to a discussion of how both commerce and artistic concerns influence transmedia design. The second part of this chapter delves into the common argument of multiple media platforms, explaining what this means, why I've employed the term to *distinct media*, how a medium may be also *activated* for meaning; and what implications the employment of distinct media has in terms of creative production cultures and aesthetics.

At the end of chapter two I discuss how transmedia practices are not characterised by a material hybridity; instead, the work of integration takes place during production, at the level of discourse, and in the interpreter's head. I then interrogate how practitioners achieve content integration in chapter three, with a discussion of two arguments that have been put forward: transmedia projects are characterised by the expansion, not adaptation, of a story, and that they involve an emphasis on canon and continuity. After discussing the current paradigm of theories concerned with the relations between compositions (transtextuality, media studies intertextuality and transfictionality), I propose ways in which transmedia practices can be see as different to the notion of distinct authors, by the emerging roles, collaborative practices and the move towards *world* or *universe* continuity. I also discuss adaptation as a practice, and how intracompositional practices such as pervasive and ubiquitous games and telematic arts are all significants aspects of the transmedia phenomenon.

Interactivity in the transmedia context is interrogated in chapter four. I discuss the modally complex nature of the phenomenon, and introduce the notion of *transmodal elements* and the practice of transmodal concepts. The various ways transmedia practices are different to mono-medium and digital media interactivity is discussed, focusing on changes to design documentation, and how reactivity is achieved non-computationally. The complexities of the materially fragmented nature of transmedia projects are discussed with the theory of *tiering,* explaining how practitioners address different audiences and players with distinct content.

In chapter five I delve further into the nature of transmedia practices, discussing through the lens of dramatic unity and verisimilitude how transmedia practices can be understood as new kind of unity and dramatic intensity that includes the actual world. As a compliment to existing discussions on the "pervasive" nature of many games, this chapter offers a new perspective on the ways in which the actual world is made part of a fictional world through a variety of strategies from concepts to paratextual elements. The conclusion outlines some of the key insights of this thesis and future directions for this research area.

While these chapters do not discuss all of the implications of this form of practice, this thesis shows this is a unique practice that deserves its own research area. The forthcoming discussions contribute to recent theories attempting to describe the phenomenon, and also teams them with theories that have provided insights to related phenomena for decades. Indeed, this thesis shows that this practice is emerging in many cultural sectors, and has been for a while. It is a practice that challenges many theoretical assumptions, sheds light on blind-spots, and facilitates the understanding of contemporary phenomena and cultures. The following discussion aims to distinguish transmedia practice, and aid in developing methodologies specific to this research inquiry.

# Chapter 2: *Art, Commerce, Media and Environments in Transmedia Practice*

The poet (who may also be dancer, singer,
magician, whatever the event demands of him)
masters a series of techniques that can
fuse the most seemingly contradictory propositions.
(Rothenberg 1985 [1968], xxviii)

The practitioner in this new domain now has to take a multiplicity of decisions,
in relation to a multiplicity of modes and areas of representation which
were previously the domain of discrete professions and their practices.
(Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001, 47)

This chapter makes the important first steps to understanding the peculiar nature, and some of the historical context, of transmedia practice. It begins with the media studies question of how to and why should one differentiate these forms from "franchises" as they have been known. The term franchise is often invoked in a number of different contexts, but usually with the intent of describing the corporate leveraging of intellectual property across a number of different media platforms for financial gain. Film scholar Kristin Thompson explains that in the film industry context it essentially "means a movie that spawns additional revenue streams beyond what it earns from its various forms of distribution, primarily theatrical, video, and television" (Thompson 2007, 4). Those additional revenue streams include those procured from sequels and series and/or from "the production company licensing other firms to make ancillary productions" such as action figures, video games, coffee mugs and T-shirts (ibid.). This definition can be applied to the television and gaming industries as well, rendering the television show and game the center of the franchise and all other media "ancillary".

Thompson notes that franchises are not new of course, citing *Felix the Cat* and Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse in the 1920s. But it was actually in the late 1970s that the "blockbuster franchise" emerged, with Steven Spielberg's *Jaws*. However, *Jaws* "did not generate much of a franchise on the merchandising front"; instead, it was George Lucas's

*Star Wars* that "took the next step" (ibid.). That next step was not planned from the beginning though, as Lucas explains:

> Usually they hand you a boiler-plate contract and say here sign this and they plug those little deal points in. I said I've made these little deal points, but now I want to go back and I want to go through the entire draft of the agreement and I want to change everything to be in my favour. And that's what I got out of it. The studio said "what do we care, if the film's not going to be successful we don't care about the sequel rights". […] Licensing isn't worth anything, nobody's been able to licence anything. There's no money there. I was only going to do it so I could get T-shirts and posters to promote the movie, because I was afraid they weren't going to do it. So they were giving away things that didn't mean anything to them. And in exchange I could of asked for a million dollars for the film and I didn't do it. So, they thought they were getting a good deal. I thought I was getting a chance to get a better shot at getting my second film made, and so we were both happy at the time.
>
> (Lucas 2009)

Lucas "became a rich independent producer/director," *Star Wars* "became the model of how to create a franchise by linking films and related merchandise" (Thompson 2007, 4), and *Star Wars* was a rich fantasy world that many present-day transmedia practitioners grew up with. Indeed, many franchises emerged after *Star Wars*, both in the film and television industries, including *Superman* (1978), which "pioneered the elevation of a familiar superhero from comics books, movie serials, and TV series into a big-budget screen franchise" (ibid.). Thompson cites an influence on the emergence of the blockbuster franchise (in the USA) as what has been described as horizontal convergence or integration, when, among other investments, Hollywood studios were being bought up by large corporations and multinational conglomerates. The process began, Thompson explains, in 1962 when MCA (Music Corporation of America) bought Universal, and continues today. Media theorist Marsha Kinder also observes that the rise of franchises (in the USA) was partly influenced by America's Federal Communication Commission removing its ban on product-based programs (Kinder 1991, 40).

Another factor influencing the rise of the blockbuster franchise is the fact that most big-budget movies were not making money on theatrical release: "[p]rofits came only when ancillaries like home video, television screenings, and licensed products were reckoned

in" (Thompson 2007, 5). "As a result," Thompson explains, "a greater emphasis on the bottom line became central" (ibid.). This is where Jenkins enters, arguing that transmedia storytelling signals a move away from the emphasis on the bottom line to a heightened value of aesthetics. Some large-scale properties are driven now by "artistic vision" as well as "economic logic" (Jenkins 2006, 105). That is, Jenkins observes that economic concerns still figure in decisions, but now aesthetics is *also* a concern.

The first part of this chapter develops this notion of economics and artistic vision being *dual concerns* in practice, and scholarship. I explain how scholarship on franchises has, in media studies, altered over the last couple of decades. Previously, franchises, or any project that involves various media, were analysed according to their function as a commodity. Theorists observed a shift in the way franchises operated though, noticing an increase in the intertextual relations (references) between the texts. An aspect of this intertextuality was the growing importance of content in "other" media; a function they surmised was a new form of commodification. But then other theorists, likewise in response to changing practices, began speaking of "poetics" and "storytelling," arguing that contemporary practices cannot be understood solely through a commodification lens. While there have been some attempts to understand the apparent rising phenomenon through an aesthetic *or* commodification lens, the emerging consensus in recent scholarship and in this thesis is that *both* economic and artistic concerns influence these practices and so should both be analysed.

The next section takes this view seriously and discusses just how both operate in transmedia practices. However, rather than divide economic and aesthetic concerns into distinct categories of influence, I discuss ways in which both can be conceived as part of what may be called a *design ecology*, showing how they both contribute to the growing prevalence and nature of transmedia practice. An important phenomenon to also consider in light of these discussions is the rise of so-called branded entertainment: where creative projects are commissioned to help raise awareness and subsequently sales of a product or service. This is significant in the context of transmedia practices because not only does it

represent the heightened value of experiential approaches (above informational advertising), but it has resulted in the commissioning of many transmedia projects.

The second part of this chapter then explains the peculiar defining trait of transmedia practice: the employment of distinct media and environments. It delves deeper into what current theories briefly describe as "multiple media platforms" and sometimes "environments" or "spaces," explaining why these are important and what this means in terms of practice. The term *distinct media* is introduced to encompass a variety of media beyond the traditional notions of television, cinema, books, and so on; and to likewise differentiate these practices from multimedia *within* a media platform. I explain how this phenomenon is not just characterised by the employment of distinct media, but how some practitioners utilise the actual media as a semiotic resource in the meaning-making process. I discuss the implications of distinct media: how the utilisation of distinct media such as books, feature film, television and interactive formats are complicated in light of their associated creative production cultures. That is, practitioners not only need knowledge and skills specific to each medium, but also need knowledge and skills in negotiating mono-medium production cultures. The employment of *environments* is overtly recognised too, as they may also be invoked as a semiotic resource in the meaning-making process; and signal a growing drive towards live-events and encompassing the actual world of the audience, player, or reader.

After these discussions about media and environments, I further interrogate the greater context of the employment of distinct media. The aim of this section is to help illuminate how transmedia practice has not suddenly appeared in practice and theory in the last few years; how the approach of this thesis is different to previous methodologies; and how transmedia practice has both similarities and differences to related practices. I do this by explaining how the combining of distinct media has been a concern of many practitioners and industries for a while. Rightly so, these theories have concentrated on the peculiar nature of those unique media combinations such as television and the Internet. However, the theory of transmedia practice is not methodologically positioned to observe the specifics of the media combinations, but the employment of distinct media in general.

This renders transmedia a transhistorical and transartistic phenomenon; but the urge to combine emerges in different ways at different times. I therefore highlight how transmedia practices are differentiated from other related practices such as intermedia by their "unmixed" nature. But first, the discussion begins with one of the more crucial arguments in mass communications: the issue of distinguishing the transmedia franchise.

## *Artistic Vision, Commerce and Practice*

Jenkins describes the transmedia phenomenon as a "story [that] unfolds across multiple media platforms with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole" (Jenkins 2006, 95–96). Because Jenkins (being a media theorist) is concerned primarily with mass entertainment, he attempts to differentiate transmedia storytelling from franchises as they have been created and theorised. He explains that while "there are strong economic motives behind transmedia storytelling," and "[f]ranchising a popular film, comic book, or television series is nothing new," there are other motivations and characteristics at play (ibid., 104). These emerging complexities include how, in the context of media (technical) convergence, the "flow of content across multiple media platforms is inevitable" (ibid.); how the paradigm of licensing and peripheral products is giving way to "co-creation," where companies "collaborate from the beginning to create content" (ibid., 105); and how there is now an emphasis on "artistic vision" rather than "economic logic" (ibid.). Projects driven by economic logic, Jenkins argues, result in works that are "redundant," "watered down," or "riddled with sloppy contradictions" (ibid.).

That is, while Jenkins notes there are economic motives behind transmedia storytelling, there is another aspect that is now a priority as well: aesthetics. I affirm this insight but do problematise the polarisation of economics and aesthetics. Such a binary frames the two as distinct and opposing forces when in fact they are not always distinct. Part of the knowledge and skill involved in creating franchises or any creative project that requires funding, sponsorship or payment in some way, is negotiating commerce concerns to varying degrees alongside creative vision. Therefore, while Jenkins's argument recognises that transmedia projects are not just some new form of exploitation and that

they are in fact a new type of practice that involves aesthetic knowledge and skill, it is important to avoid setting up a binary opposition between economic and aesthetic concerns. Indeed, it is important to overtly explore just how economics affects artistic practice.

In what follows I examine the implications of this in theory and practice. That is, depending of the field of study, and relative to the object of investigation, scholarship has tended to focus on one or the other. But more recently, due to changes in the object of investigation and perhaps cross-fertilisation between disciplines, scholarship is now making overt inquiries into the dual and often interdependent connections between commercial and aesthetic concerns. Drawing on these arguments I propose ways these concerns can be analysed in terms of practice. I do this by discussing some of the ways economic concerns influence the attraction to and design of transmedia projects. My intent with these discussions is to provide a historical context to the practice and theory of transmedia practice, to explain changes to the relationship between marketing and entertainment, and to propose ways in which aesthetics and economics can be understood as part of a design ecology.

## Theorising Economics and Aesthetics in Mass Entertainment

In the last few decades, scholarship on franchises related to the rise of transmedia practice has interrogated the area from varying degrees of economic and aesthetic perspectives. Some theorists have recommended a more balanced approach, arguing for greater attention to be paid to aesthetic concerns where they weren't before, and likewise for recognizing economic implications. Both of these moves are efforts to counter-balance existing approaches which privilege one or the other, and reflect changes observed in the object of study.

Media studies has historically been concerned with mass communication, and so by implication given the context of media in the 1950s, commodification. Nick Couldry explains that media studies developed from "at least five distinct currents of work" (Couldry 2004, 116). He summarises the primary theoretical foci of media studies as

follows: focusing on the "problems of large-scale social effects"; "processes of commodification"; "the polysemy of the text'; "the process of interpretation," and "open-ended practices of media production, circulation, and consumption" (ibid.).

In the context of transmedia fictions, the theoretical heritage has been marked by an emphasis on commodification and consumption. A key theorist engaging with this approach is Kinder, who developed a theory of transmedia intertextuality to describe how 1980s franchises operated (Kinder 1991). Those franchises included Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird's *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles,* which first appeared as a cartoon series on American television in 1987 (see Figure 2); a computer game on the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) in 1989 (see Figure 3)[3]; and one year later, a live-action feature film (see Figure 4). The film was mainly based on the plot of the first comic which was released in 1984 (which is the year America's Federal Communication Commission removed its ban on product-based programs (ibid., 40)).



Figure 2. Screen shot from 1987 television series *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (Group W Productions, 1987– 1990) Image source: (Wikipedia 2005b)



Figure 3. Image of 1989 computer game released on Nintendo for *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (Group W Productions, 1987– 1990) Image source: (Wikipedia 2005c)
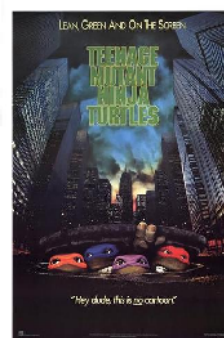


Figure 4.Image of 1990 movie poster for *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (Group W Productions, 1987– 1990) Image source: (Wikipedia 2008)

It was from this franchise, along with other child-targeted franchises such as Mattel's *Masters of the Universe* and Takara and Hasbro's *Transformers*, and watching how her son engaged with these franchises across comics, toys, animated televisions series and

---

[3] Incidentally, the cover art for the computer game was a reproduction of the cover art of one of the previous comics and the game was based on the 1987 television series.

feature films, that Kinder developed her theory of a "super entertainment system" (ibid., 4).

> A supersystem is a network of intertextuality constructed around a figure or group of figures from pop culture who are either fiction [...] or "real" [...]. In order to be a supersystem, the network must cut across several modes of image production; must appeal to diverse generations, classes, and ethnic subcultures, who in turn are targeted with diverse strategies; must foster "collectability" through a proliferation of related products; and must undergo a sudden increase in commodification, the success of which reflexively becomes a "media event" that dramatically accelerates the growth curve of the system's commercial success.
>
> (ibid., 122–123)

For Kinder, a super entertainment system ultimately "construct(s) consumerist subjects" (ibid., 4). Jim Collins's theory of "commodity intertexts" (Collins 1992) and Eileen Meehan's study of the "commercial intertext" of the Batman franchise (Meehan 1991), also cemented the relationship between texts in different media platforms and its economic function in the early 1990s; and P. David Marshall's theory of a "new intertextual commodity" persisted this commodified intertextuality paradigm in the early 2000s (Marshall 2002). Marshall argues that the "industrial strategy of massaging the filmic text into something larger has been inherited from entertainment's Hucksterism," and so while this strategy is therefore nothing new, what has "altered is the intensification and elaboration of the intertextual matrix":

> Film, music, video and computer games, Websites, television documentaries, books and product licensing are elaborately cross-referenced in the contemporary entertainment industry through the usual suspects of magazines, newspapers, entertainment news programmes, industry-related consumer and trade magazines and electronic journals. The audience "learns" about a product through its associations in other cultural forms.
>
> (ibid., 69)

What needs to be highlighted here is that these theories are specific to phenomena in the 1980s and 1990s. Their theories therefore reflect the nature of the object of their study. These franchises were usually commodification machines, and each of the intertextuality linked "secondary" elements was executed by "others". There was synergy, but that

synergy was executed by different practitioners with varying fidelity and creative oversight. For instance, in a 1999 *New York Times* article outlining the "synergistic" marketing approaches employed for franchises such as *Austin Powers*, journalist Nancy Haas reported on the division between the director and the marketing company:

> Jay Roach, who directed both *Austin Powers* films but had previously worked only in independent films, spoke effusively about working with an entertainment conglomerate. […] For Mr. Roach, Time Warner's muscle means one thing: the ability to grab more attention for his film. […] In a telephone interview late last month, Mr. Roach said it came as a surprise when a reporter told him that "Austin Powers" would anchor the Warner stores nationwide Father's Day promotion. "They do their thing and we do ours," he said, sounding a bit shocked.
>
> (Haas 1999)

"They do their thing and we do ours." This is the paradigm that Jenkins describes as shifting: how licensing and peripheral products are giving way to co-creation, where companies "collaborate from the beginning to create content" (Jenkins 2006, 105). These co-creative practices are in stark contrast to the example cited above. Indeed, in a 2006 article about the alternate reality game *The Lost Experience* (ABC, 2006), for instance, journalist Lia Miller reported on the online augmentation to the *Lost* television series:

> The game, of a genre called alternate-reality games, is a multimedia treasure hunt that makes use of e-mail messages, phone calls, commercials, billboards and fake Web sites that are made to seem real. […] What's different about the *Lost Experience*, which will feature new characters, is that it is being devised by the show's writers, not by marketers, according to Michael Benson, a senior vice president at ABC.
>
> (Miller 2006)

"Devised by the show's writers, not by marketers." Indeed, Jenkins cites the example of how with *The Matrix,* the Wachowski brothers "didn't simply license or subcontract and hope for the best," instead, they "personally wrote and directed content for the game, drafted scenarios for some of the animated shorts, and co-wrote a few of the comics" (Jenkins 2006, 111). "There was nothing fringe about these other media" (ibid.). Media theorist and industry practitioner Ivan Askwith further explains this change:

In the past, film directors have had little interest, and even less participation, in the decisions that expand a particular film into other media. By contrast, the Wachowski brothers themselves conceived of both *The Animatrix* and *Enter the Matrix* as integral components of the *Matrix* narrative, rather than spin-off products to be outsourced to third parties.

(Askwith 2003)

Askwith continues, explaining how they even "insisted on handpicking the directors and production teams" (ibid.). The reason I cite these shifts here is to highlight the changes to practice in the mass entertainment realm. These changes denote a different kind of phenomenon that is not captured purely through a commodification lens. This point is particularly evident when one revisits scholarship that applies the commodity lens, even though it was during the period when commodification was the prevalent approach. David Lynch and Mark Frost's *Twin Peaks* involved many other texts beyond the television series. These include a fictionalised print travel guide that Lynch and Frost co-wrote with Richard Saul Wurman (1991); *The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer* (1990) which was written by David Lynch's daughter Jennifer Lynch; and *The Autobiography of F.B.I. Special Agent Dale Cooper: My Life, My Tapes* (1991), which was written by Mark Frost's brother Scott Frost. The project was regarded a critical success, called "television's *Citizen Kane*" (Anonymous quote, cited in Lavery 1995, 2) and described by new media theorist Gregory Ulmer as turning "cult attitude into a poetics, by bringing its 'paratext' […] explicitly into the production process" (Ulmer 1994, 119).

However, *Twin Peaks* was mainly theorised through the lens of commodity intertexts (Collins 1992; Lavery 1995) and new intertextual commodities (Marshall 2002). Other theorists such as Yesim Burul attempted a balance between a commodity and aesthetic lens though, noting how "[a]ccess to these commodity intertexts becomes important in terms of the production of meaning because of the extra information these intertexts provide about the characters and their backgrounds" (Burul 2001). But the rendering of *Twin Peaks* as an example of commodified intertextuality is, when one revisits these practices and studies, inappropriate (and even ironic when you consider Lynch's recent vitriolic attack on product placement in films (Lynch 2007)). Such *Twin Peaks* scholarship is an example of how there can be a discontinuity between the object of

analysis and the theory employed to understand it; how previous paradigms of creation and analysis can creep beyond appropriateness. It was, however, the only lens available at that time, and this critical analysis of the situation has benefited from reflection. Indeed, the approach is understandable, and such tensions helped provoke an aesthetic turn, if you like, that occurred in scholarship, in part triggered by the changing nature of the object of study.

Indeed, Angela Ndalianis took a different approach in her discussion on how the "boundaries of films, computer games, and other entertainment media are expanding ever outward as they intersect with diverse media in a multitude of ways" (Ndalianis 2004, 72). Ndalianis argues "mainstream cinema and other entertainment media are imbued with a neo-baroque poetics," explaining that twenty-first century and seventeenth century aesthetics share "an emphasis on serial narratives and the spectacular," rendering the baroque a transhistorical state (ibid., 5). However, despite the interrogation of poetics Ndalianis argues this neo-baroque logic is the "result of technological, industrial, and economic transformations" rather than some aesthetic urge (ibid.). Given the commodification leaning of some scholarship (and practice), it was significant, then, when Jenkins championed an aesthetic rather than a purely commodity-oriented approach. In fact, Jenkins argues there needs to be a "rethinking [of] media aesthetics," which includes not just a focus on economic implications, but also a monitoring of their "aesthetic implications" (Jenkins 2004, 39–40).

But there has also been a move from the opposite direction, where scholars argue the emphasis on aesthetic concerns needs to be tempered with a consideration of economic implications. In 2003, media theorist John Caldwell introduced the term "second shift aesthetics" to recognise similar transmedia phenomena and to "bridge the unfortunate gap that has widened between academic studies of industry, from a political-economic perspective, and critical studies in the humanities" (Caldwell 2003, 132). Caldwell's approach is different in that he is questioning:

> whether film studies can continue to talk productively about texts, aesthetics, ideology, and identity in new media (all standby analytical perspectives in the

field of film studies) without also talking about the industrial landscape and
marketing practices that animate and fuel new media development on a wide
scale.

(Caldwell 2008, 282)

To actuate this argument, Caldwell outlines the strategic economic function alongside the
aesthetic role of online stories, comics and DVD extras that augment feature films and
television series (Caldwell 2003; Caldwell 2004; Caldwell 2008, 279-282). Game theorist
Espen Aarseth likewise argues that in order to "gain a full perspective on the 'poetics' of
cross-media productions [they] ought to be accompanied by a study of the cross-media
industry: the economy of cross-media financing, licensing, marketing and distribution"
(Aarseth 2005).  To do this, Aarseth highlights the influence of a "financial logic" on the
"crossmedia industry":

1) A single-medium launch is a lost opportunity, a flawed business plan
2) The health and timelines of the overall production and launch is more important
   than the integrity of an individual piece
3) The individual pieces should add to the total franchise/brand awareness
4) Ease of transfer (crossability) becomes a critical aspect of the operation

(ibid.)

From these financial logics of crossmedia, Aarseth concludes that "the somewhat
romantic notion of 'crossmedia content' should be replaced with the more accurate term
'crossmedia branding'" (ibid.). While the point about production timelines being more
important than the quality of the production is an obvious obstacle to artistic integrity, the
rest are, I argue, not necessarily indications of mere "financial logic". Granted, the first in
particular and the others are driven by financial concerns. But, if one steps back and
considers how a transmedia project would be conceived from the beginning, a multi-
medium launch would occur if the project is designed to have audiences move across
distinct media (and so not be launched sequentially one medium at a time). The
individual pieces across media could be units or crucial compositions that all are part of
the meaning-making process. And the ease of transfer would be sensible in a project that
is designed to be remixed or adapted or even expanded in some way across media, as part
of the meaning-making process again.

My point with these reinterpretations of Aarseth's "financial logic" is to illustrate how constraints or logics or principles are not always specific to economic-concerns. They can be design concerns specific to the transmedia form, and they do not always have to result in an inferior end-product. Indeed, a reasonable inference from many of the "financial logic" arguments is that there is a causal relationship between economic concerns and aesthetics. That is, the assumption is economic concerns always diminish aesthetics. As stated earlier, Jenkins argues the difference now is that in transmedia storytelling artistic vision is now governing decisions (or is at least an equal consideration), and so therefore aesthetics increases. These arguments towards aesthetics have been bridge-work, if you like, attempting to differentiate the practice from previous paradigms of commodification. However, by emphasising aesthetics and down-playing commerce, the arguments perpetrate an artificial division.

Great works of art can happen even though they may have been commissioned, have particular constraints on their implementation, and certain expectations regarding their reception. Indeed, it is a rare moment when a creative project isn't influenced in some way by economics at some point. What I wish to decouple from discussions of economics is the inference that commerce automatically antagonises aesthetics. Instead, I propose considering how economic concerns are part of a complex design ecology. The next section does this, interrogating some of the ways economic concerns influence the creation of transmedia projects.

## The Implications of Commerce in Transmedia Practice

A complex design ecology considers the various influences on the design process, what sort of design decisions practitioners face and how they work with or around them. In this section I explore one aspect of a design ecology: the influences of economics on the creation of transmedia projects. I discuss some of the "economic lures" (Hutcheon 2006, 87) that have motivated the creation of some transmedia projects, and how those lures and other commercial constraints influence the design process.

Economic lures include the apparent "safe bet" of developing an existing fictional world

with an existing audience (Hutcheon 2006, 87). Aarseth has noted how "*pre-awareness*

reduces risk" and so accounts for the prevalence of adaptations in Hollywood as opposed

to the development of original intellectual property (Aarseth 2005, original emphasis). Of

course, not all adaptations and expansions of an existing fictional world are automatically

successful. Therefore, practitioners endeavour to discover the right mix of design

elements that may facilitate success. For instance, industry analysts Jason Kraft and Chris

Kwak determined that "the most successful movie-based games are ones that target the

same demographic":

> A movie for children should have a corresponding game that targets children
> (*Finding Nemo*). A movie for adults should have a corresponding game that
> targets adults (*Lord of the Rings*). By this logic, the ideal movie-based game is
> one that appeals to all ages developed on a movie that appeals to all ages. This is
> rare. *Spider-Man* is such a franchise.
>
> (Kraft and Kwak 2005, 2)

But it is all too easy to categorise the utilisation of existing intellectual property as being

peculiar to conglomerates. Indeed, literary theorist Linda Hutcheon warns that these

efforts to capitalize on existing intellectual property and its market are not specific to

franchises (Hutcheon 2006). Hutcheon asks, for instance, how different this is from

Shakespeare who chose to write a play for his theatre based on that familiar story about

two teenage lovers, and Charles Gounod's choice to compose an opera about them (ibid.,

30)? It seems, she explains, "we tend to reserve our negatively judgmental rhetoric for

popular culture, as if it is more tainted with capitalism than is high art" (ibid., 30–31). A

point I affirm here.

Irrespective of the transartistic nature of capitalism, though, the design approach of

remaking or continuing an existing fictional world does have implications in practice. In

fact, in many transmedia projects practitioners start with an existing fictional world—

whether it is their own, or more commonly, another's—and begin their design from there.

With this approach, the characters, interactions, mechanics, events and media that already

exists influences what can and cannot be done. Unlike fan fiction (which can choose to

remain faithful or not), "postmodern rewrites" (Doležel 1998) and Ryan's definition of "transfictionality" (Ryan 2008), many practitioners now endeavour to remain faithful to the existing fictional world. I discuss how this occurs in the next chapter; but for now I can say that projects that begin in this way are constrained by what exists. They therefore create a prequel or sequel, develop a sub-character, explore an alternate version, or, with interactive media, increase or decrease the difficulty. At this stage, the majority of large-scale transmedia projects are designed with this approach. This is because many large-scale transmedia projects are commissioned to expand an existing fictional world; indeed, at this stage, that is how many of them become transmedia.

What this means is that in many cases practitioners are not only creating from what exists, they are attempting to transform a mono-medium project into a transmedia project; and oftentimes this means attempting to transform a non-interactive fictional world into an interactive one. A case in point is the design brief for the alternate reality game *The Beast* (Microsoft Game Studio, 2001). Microsoft Game Studio had secured an "exclusive licensing agreement with Warner Bros. to develop and publish games for the Microsoft® Xbox™ video game system and the PC" for Steven Spielberg's feature film *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence* (McGonigal 2006, 266). But, as McGonigal explains, the film was not conducive to gameplay:

> According to Stewart, the central creative problem Microsoft Games Studio (MGS) faced in developing the *A.I.* license was the film's apocalyptic ending, which did not intuitively suggest any possibility for future play. The MGS team was concerned that the dark plot and sombre tone of the film would not put viewers in a ludic mindset.
>
> (ibid., 268)

Therefore, the design agenda for *The Beast* was "to create an interactive media space in which a licensed apocalyptic fiction would generate the desire to play games—specifically, console videogames" (ibid., 270). What the designers did was "create a context for thinking about the coming, fictional extinction of the species homo sapiens as a highly playable scenario" (ibid., 269). Of course, the designers were priming the potential audience for console games and so had to use a medium other than a console.

So, what they did was create "digital artifacts of an imagined doomed society—the same society that would be wiped out in Spielberg's film," and embedded them across the Internet and other media to facilitate "a collective archeological dig" (ibid.). That transmedia archaeological dig was played out over thousands of webpages, with phone calls, faxes, emails, posters and videos, and resulted in over three million people participating from numerous countries around the world (42 Entertainment).

Here, the designers created a prequel to the film to reframe the mono-medium and non-interactive nature of the film for the purposes of selling console and PC games. The digital games did not end up being released (they were shelved due to the "lackluster summer 2001 box office performance" of the film (McGonigal 2006, 267)), but the alternate reality game was in some cases held in higher regard than the film. Marshall notes that for players of *The Beast,* "the game was much more compelling than the film" (Marshall 2002, 77), and it has been referred to as "the *Citizen Kane* of online interactive entertainment" (Josh Robertson, quoted in McGonigal 2006, 268). In this example the designers had to work with an existing mono-medium project, design a new composition (which was a transmedia project in itself) that would exist within the logic of the existing fictional world with specific marketing goals. What they ended up creating was a project that stood on its own as a creative work, was for some people held in higher regard than the film, facilitated a worldwide audience for this peculiar type of transmedia practice, and a practitioner interest in their creation.

Likewise, the first season of the television series *ReGenesis* (Shaftsbury Films, 2004) and its accompanying "Extended Reality Game" (ERG) (Xenophile Media, 2004)[4] involved the designers constructing an ERG based on the existing television series. This meant the designers began with a fictional world that existed solely as a television series, which they then had to create a mainly web-based interactive experience around. Further to this, that interactive experience was to be played parallel to the television series. The designers

---

[4] Evan Jones, the then Creative Director of Xenophile Media explained in an email to me on 29 January 2007, that the alternate reality game (ARG) was relabelled an extended reality game (ERG) to reassure the television producers that the interactive addition would "extend" the storyworld rather than conflict with it by creating what they believed to be an "alternative" storyworld.

had to retrofit therefore, an interactive experience to a pre-written television series and simulate interactivity with the television series. The next season the two companies worked together to create the transmedia project from the beginning. This meant that although the television series was still pre-shot and so couldn't be changed according to player input, the experience was nevertheless designed to encompass the activities of those online with the plot and characters in the television series. What players did (their mission outcomes) were acknowledged in the series with references to them as an amorphous body ("field agents"). In many situations, therefore, drawing on an existing intellectual property constrains what the designers can and cannot do, and often results in peculiar design issues such as attempting to transform a mono-medium project into a (usually interactive) transmedia one.

There is also the reverse situation, where projects are conceived as transmedia right from the beginning. This situation points to the notion of a concept being amenable to transmedia expression. That is, there is the possibility that some concepts are suited to expression across multiple media platforms; just as some are appropriate for an interactive medium, and some for print, theatre and so on. The notion of a transmedia concept is discussed in the next three chapters from an aesthetic point of view because irrespective of the motivations, there is still knowledge and skill needed to conceive and design a transmedia project. But here I note the relationship between the fictional world conceived and its business model. Indeed, Jenkins notes that "filmmakers are as much in the business of creating licensed goods as they are in telling stories" (Jenkins 2006, 114–115). Caldwell further explains that "any screenplay or project developed in primetime television or feature film today" involves discussions about how the project "will create income-producing properties" that "can be consumed via as many different human sensory channels as possible" (Caldwell 2008, 222).

> That is, at the pitch and script stages, story ideas will be developed as diversified entertainment properties that can be seen (as cinema, television, and pay per view), heard (as soundtracks, CDs, and downloads), played (as videogames), interacted with (as linked online sites), ridden (theme park attractions), touched (cell phones/pod casting), and worn (as merchandize). Nothing gets "green-lighted" unless there are compelling prospects for financial success in several of

these (now integrated) market areas. […] In a sense, the company or network that analyzes and revises pitch and story ideas weaves the "imagined narrative world" of the screenwriter as author together with an "imagined financial world" of the screenwriter as entrepreneur.

(ibid., 222–223)

While Caldwell is focusing on large-scale feature films and primetime television, his use of the term entrepreneur is important to note, as these concerns about potential income-producing elements are certainly not specific to conglomerates. Independent filmmaker Lance Weiler, for instance, describes transmedia practices in both the artistic and economic terms: saying that "story is at the center of it," but "it's not one medium anymore" which creates "exciting opportunities in terms of extending the possibilities of revenue streams for the work that you make" (Weiler 2009g). Whether an independent or conglomerate, it appears financing or income generated from a single medium is not, and has not been for a while, sufficient.

Any practitioner concerned with self-sustainability (even just compensating financiers) considers revenue streams, and at times those revenue streams are considered at the concept development stage of a project. For instance, if a practitioner decides they want their project appeal to as many people as possible, they may consider having an ensemble cast or variety of player-characters, along with what media have the most penetration for their target market and revenue-generating possibilities. The revenue streams also influence decisions about how much activity will be designed for. For instance, Petersen's study of the "cross media practices" in Dutch newspapers found a sports promotion by Nordjyske Medier did not encourage the consumer to cross between platforms (Petersen 2006). This was because of commercial interests: advertising needs to target users, therefore "the ideal strategy is not to have the user crossing platforms but to target the users on different platforms" (anonymous quote from management, quoted in ibid.).

At other times a creative project may not be intended as a revenue source in itself, but as a promotional tool to facilitate revenue for another creative project. What this means in the transmedia context is that some projects become transmedia because a creative

project is created (from a commission or by the original creator) to promote another creative project. I am not referring to advertising in the conventional sense, but a *creative project* that is designed, among other goals, to have a promotional function. The creation of entertainment projects to promote another product or service are variously called "branded entertainment" and "content marketing" among other terms. Marketing practitioner Scott Donaton calls such practices "Madison & Vine": "The name Madison & Vine is a colorful description of the intersection of content (TV shows, films, music CDs, video games, and so on) and commerce (represented by advertising)" (Donaton 2004, 3). Marketing theorists Simon and David Hudson propose the following definition of this practice:

> [B]randed entertainment is defined as the integration of advertising into entertainment content, whereby brands are embedded into storylines of a film, television program, or other entertainment medium. This involves co-creation and collaboration between entertainment, media and brands.
> (Hudson and Hudson 2006, 492, original emphasis removed)

To understand the phenomenon, they reviewed theories and industry rhetoric around product placement, finding recurring themes: the use of more mediums than film and television; marketers creating or commissioning their own entertainment projects; and the increased value of integrated practices (ibid.). Indeed, while there are different types of product placement that exist now and have for decades (for instance, featuring brands in feature films and television shows), the practice I concentrate on here is that of content marketing, branded content or one type branded entertainment: where creative projects are created to promote a product or service. "Advergaming" is one such description of these efforts, "where advertisers create a game around a product rather than place their brands within a well-known title" (ibid., 494).

Before I delve into the influence of such commercial concerns on the design of a project, I wish to note this move towards content marketing was observed in franchise practices by theorists in the 1980s and 1990s. A helpful starting point to this discussion is Fiske's delineation between horizontal and vertical intertextuality:

> Horizontal relations are those between primary texts that are more or less
> explicitly linked, usually along the axes of genre, character, or content. Vertical
> intertextuality is that between a primary text, such as a television program or
> series, and other texts of a different type that refer explicitly to it. These may be
> secondary texts such as studio publicity, journalistic features, or criticism, or
> tertiary texts produced by the viewers themselves in the form of letters to the
> press or, more importantly, of gossip and conversation.
>
> (Fiske 1987, 108)

In Fiske's delineation, a television show would be a primary text and publicity about the
television show, including advertising, merchandise and so on, would be secondary texts.
In light of changes she saw in super entertainment systems, Kinder developed Fiske's
delineation, explaining that a television show can be a 30 minute advertisement, thus
conflating the two textualities (Kinder 1991, 45–46). Likewise, Marshall observed that
the "line between forms of promotion and the cultural product is blended and hybridised
in contemporary production" (Marshall 2002, 71), and media theorists David
Buckingham and Julian Sefton-Green noticed this shift in the context of the *Pokémon*
franchise:

> Cross-media merchandising or "integrated marketing" of this kind has been
> characteristic of children's media culture for many years. [...] However, what is
> increasingly becoming harder to identify here is the "source text": we cannot
> make sense of the phenomena such as *Pokémon* in terms of an original text and a
> collection of "spin offs" that subsequently exploit its success. [...] *Pokémon* was
> planned as a cross-media enterprise from a very early stage.
>
> (Buckingham and Sefton-Green 2004, 19)

There has been a growing emphasis on the role a creative project can play in the
promotion of a tangible good, and subsequently a growing emphasis on the quality of that
creative project and its intertextual relationships with other creative projects. The belief is
that content marketing will enhance the viewers (and therefore advertising sales) or sales
of products or services. This explains why some people choose to commission or create
transmedia projects.

In the case of alternate reality games (which are often transmedia projects themselves),
almost all of the large-scale projects have been a form of branded entertainment to

promote a film, television show, book, game, product, service, or for educational purposes.[5] For instance, *The Beast* was commissioned to promote the digital games that were to follow the release of the feature film *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*; *I Love Bees* (42 Entertainment, 2004) was commissioned to promote the release of the digital game *Halo 2* (Bungie Studios, 2004); *Monster Hunt Club* (ARG Studios, 2007) was commissioned to promote the USA release of Bong Joon-Ho's 2006 feature film *The Host*; *Battle Over Promicin* (Campfire, 2007) was commissioned to promote season four of USA Network's 2007 television show *4400*; *Why So Serious?* (42 Entertainment, 2007-8) was commissioned to promote Christopher Nolan's 2008 feature film *The Dark Knight*; *Tom Tooman/Jericho ARG* (CBS, 2007-8) was created to promote season two of CBS's *Jericho*; and *Hope is Missing* (Lance Weiler, 2007) was created by Lance Weiler to promote the video-on-demand release of his feature film *Head Trauma*. Indeed, the marketing function of many transmedia projects cannot be understated. The majority of large-scale transmedia projects are designed to *precede* a feature film, television season (or episode), event, game, book, product or service for the purpose of promoting them, irrespective of whether a prequel is the most appropriate form of transmedia expansion.

The promotional function of these commissions impose certain constraints on the design process (which are not specific to branded entertainment): including the choice of mediums, the need to appeal to certain demographics, the need to facilitate excitement around and therefore media coverage of the project (a "media event"), the need to direct audiences or players towards a product or service, and the need to integrate the brand(s) and brand message into the fictional world. An illustration of these influences in action is the need to integrate proprietary technologies within a fictional world. For example,

---

[5] I'll reiterate here that I am referring to large-scale alternate reality games. The majority of alternate reality games have not been aligned with a brand or product in any way. That is, while there have been many commercial alternate reality games and fan alternate reality games—such as *Exocog* (Jim Miller, 2002) for *Minority Report* (Steven Spielberg, 2002); *Metacortechs* (various, 2003) for *The Matrix* (Wachowski Brothers, 1999-2003); *SEN5241* (Virtuaquest, 2004) for *THX1138* (George Lucas, 1971); and *Omnifam* (various, 2005) for *Alias* (JJ Abrams, ABC, 2001-2006)—the majority of the projects have been original intellectual property, and of a small scale. Indeed, McGonigal approximates that between 2001 and 2006 there were "seventeen commercial alternate reality games (ARGs), fifty-two independent ARGs, and many dozens more smaller and lesser-known ARGs" (McGonigal 2006, 262).

Hoodlum were commissioned by media company Yahoo!7 to create a multiplatform fiction "to encourage customers to engage with the Yahoo 7! priority products (IM, podcasts and radio)" (Hoodlum). The resulting project, *PS Trixi* (2005), involved Yahoo!7 services such as their social networking site 360°, Yahoo Music, Famous Magazine and the television series *Home and Away*. Hoodlum designed the fiction around these constraints with techniques such as creating a young character that is a DJ who promotes herself using these services, including podcasts. In such projects the proprietary technologies would often have a target demographic as well, which in turn also influences the fictional world abstraction and design.

Another design implication of proprietary technologies is an ethical one. Game theorists and designers Irma Lindt, Jan Ohlenburg, Sabiha Ghellal, Leif Oppermann and Matt Adams argue that games commissioned to use proprietary devices both disadvantages and advantages different players (Lindt et al. 2005). That is, "the costs of the equipment may disadvantage players that have limited financial resources" and inversely "the financial situation of players might give players an advantage over others, since they are able to buy more sophisticated devices" (ibid.). Indeed, media theorist Tom Apperley has argued that participation in transmedia storytelling in countries like Venezuela, which are "limited by sparse access to privately owned PCs," results in spectator engagement "rather than playful explorations of transmedia worlds" (Apperley 2007). All commercial constraints have ramifications.

Not all branded entertainment projects have overtly placed a brand in the creative work though. The alternate reality game *The Lost Ring* (McDonald's, AKQA, and Jane McGonigal, 2008) was conceived by agency AKQA with McDonalds, "as a celebration and extension of their historic sponsorship of the Olympic Games" (McGonigal 2008b). Produced in collaboration with the International Olympics Committee, the game prefigured and culminated at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. It involved numerous websites, emails, live events and tangible clues given in special packages posted to people. The creators still had a brief that influenced their design, such as aiming at "alternate reality

gaming at a truly global scale" (McGonigal 2008a). The project was therefore designed to include a raft of strategies that, to the practitioners, facilitated that goal.

In *The Lost Ring,* the diversity of languages and cultures needed for a truly global game was addressed by having multiple characters that are located in different countries and speak different languages. The creators also considered design issues such as scalability. Scalability is fundamentally the ability of a project or technology to facilitate increasing participants; and is an issue in projects that involve technologies and live events. Indeed, game theorists have noted how pervasive games (games which usually involve live events) require "considerable resources, people and technologies, to deliver a game to a relatively few players" (Capra 2005, 92). In *The Lost Ring,* scalability was addressed with (among other techniques) a mini-game that anyone in the world could realize themselves. That is, rather than the designers hosting events that only some people can attend (which they did as well), the game provided the instructions for playing a "lost sport of Olympia" (a blind-folded labyrinth game, see Figure 5) the players could enact themselves with diegetic consequences (see Figure 6). This rule-set enabled players worldwide to participate, indeed create, their own live events and to, as McGonigal explains, give "gamers worldwide the opportunity experience the best of the Olympics firsthand, instead of experiencing them vicariously" (McGonigal 2008b).
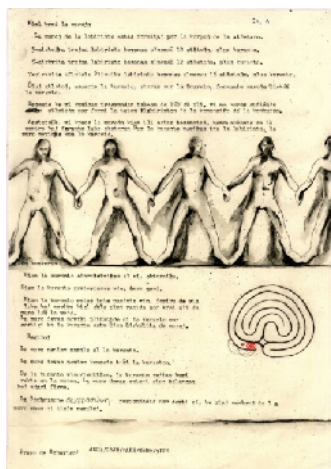


Figure 5. Codex with instructions for blind-folded labyrinth game, *The Lost Ring* (McDonald's, AKQA, and Jane McGonigal, 2008) Image source: (May 2008)



Figure 6. Photo of players enacting the blind-folded labyrinth game, *The Lost Ring* (McDonald's, AKQA, and Jane McGonigal, 2008) Image source: (May 2009)

The designers of this game also had personal goals or missions they wanted to achieve with the creative project: "a game that changes people's lives and brings the world together; an epic story that the whole world discovers and brings to life [...] a months-long adventure players will remember for the rest of their lives; the chance to be a part of something huge [...] a truly epic scale [...] to get to know people in 100 countries and make lifelong friends with them; be a global force for fun, turn players into real-world superheroes; fill the real world with magic [...] the whole world, every corner of it" (McGonigal 2008a).

*The Lost Ring,* therefore, is an example of how the designers had their personal design goals that were married with the client brief. Branded entertainment often involves certain constraints that influence the design of a project but this does not necessarily negate aesthetic goals. Economics has a variety of influences that can thwart creative practice. But to relegate all economic concerns as artistically antagonistic naively places creative practice in some idealised world that perhaps doesn't exist. What I have attempted to show is some of the ways economics affects the design process.

But some may still argue the mere fact that projects are sponsored or branded negates the likelihood of a creative work existing in its own right. It is intended to be and therefore can only be promotional, nothing else. But an interesting repercussion of the heightened value of creative experiences in marketing campaigns is the difficulty in ascertaining what is and isn't marketing. Musician Trent Reznor's *Year Zero* project is a case in point. Reznor, the lead singer of *Nine Inch Nails*, co-created an alternate reality game with the same team that produced *The Beast* mentioned earlier, for his 2007 album *Year Zero.* 42 Entertainment and Reznor worked to together to "redefine a concept album of today" (Bonds 2009). The alternate reality game prefigured and overlapped the release of the album and involved players around the world delving into a dystopian future set in 2022. They analysed websites detailing environmental and social issues of the time; deciphered clues embedded on T-shirts, discovered unreleased tracks in USB sticks left in restrooms; rang phone numbers; created art for resistance; and some even attended a secret

resistance meeting, which turned out to be a private concert with Nine Inch Nails, before they were thrown out by (fake) SWAT Police.

"But right off the bat," Reznor laments, "someone goes, 'Oh, it's 42 Entertainment. They've been hired to market this record.' It's not fucking marketing, you know. I'm not trying to sell you anything" (Reznor, cited in Rose and Reznor 2007). Reznor also defended his project to his fans, explaining in their forum, The Spiral, that:

> The term "marketing" sure is a frustrating one for me at the moment. What you are now starting to experience IS *Year Zero*. It's not some kind of gimmick to get you to buy a record—it IS the art form… and we're just getting started. Hope you enjoy the ride.
>
> (Reznor 2007, original emphasis)

To complicate the matter further, marketers argued that the *Year Zero* alternate reality game is still marketing:

> Where I have to throw the bull-s#!t flag is when Reznor says this isn't marketing. This new form of engagement may not be what traditionally comes to mind when you think of marketing (i.e. TV ads, distribution deals, street teams, etc.), however in my opinion this is definitely marketing. The main goal of communication is to engage the audience, and I can't think of a more immersive experience than this.
>
> To me ARGs are just another available tool in a marketer's tool box that can be used to communicate with a group of people. This nomenclature and weighted connotations that follow words like "marketing" and "advertising," which all seem tied to the traditional methods of the past, make it harder to talk about what it is that we actually do as marketing and advertising professionals. […] So to me, Reznor is just using a new method of engaging his fans, creating a more entertaining and immersive experience for them and in the end selling albums, that is marketing 101.
>
> (Southern Planner 2008)

Embedded in these arguments for and against the creative status of the *Year Zero* alternate reality game is the question of motivation. Some deem *Year Zero* as a mere marketing ploy and so argue it shouldn't be regarded as a creative project in itself; Reznor claims *Year Zero* is not marketing because it has artistic rather than financial

goals; while some marketers argue that *Year Zero* is marketing because it is both a creative project in its own right and ends up selling albums at the same time. The interesting point I wish to highlight from this debate is the fact that people have to resort to questions of motivation to determine the nature of the project. The project in itself does not seem to identify itself as being either obviously marketing *or* art.

The difficulty in ascertaining the nature of a project based purely on the end-product has been considered on theorists before. Significantly, philosopher Arthur C. Danto reflected on the use of commonplace media (ordinary media) in art and how the subsequent question of how one determines what an artform is. His exploration was triggered by his experience of (among other artworks), Andy Warhol's "Brillo Box":

> I recall the philosophical intoxication that survived the repugnance of his exhibition in 1964, at what was then the Stable Gallery on East 74th Street, where facsimiles of Brillo cartons were piled one upon the other, as though the gallery had been pressed into service as a warehouse for surplus scouring pads. […] Some irrelevant negative mutterings aside, "Brillo Box" was instantly accepted as art; but the question became aggravated of why Warhol's Brillo boxes *were* works of art while their commonplace counterparts, in the back rooms of supermarkets throughout Christendom, were not. Of course there were manifest differences: Warhol's were made of plywood and the others of cardboard. But even if things were reversed, matters would have remained philosophically unaltered, leaving it then an option that really *no* material differences need distinguish the artwork from the real thing.
>
> (Danto 1981, vi–vii, original emphasis)

Danto observed that "you've got a difference which is un-empirical; you can't tell the difference, and yet the difference is momentous in a certain way" (Arthur C. Danto, cited in Saunders and Danto 2006). This "method of indiscernibles" led Danto to conclude that "Fluxus was right": "the question is not which are the art works, but how we view anything if we see it as art" (Saunders and Danto 2006). An artwork cannot be viewed with the eye, but with the mind.

In Warhol's case, the issue of indiscernibles emerged because the artwork was indistinguishable from commonplace media (indeed commercial packaging, commercial

media). The commonplace object, the object that is emblazoned with promotional rhetoric, was (figuratively) taken off the shelves of a supermarket and placed in a gallery. Now, the situation is not so much reversed as there is no artwork that has been placed in the shelves of supermarkets because the "space" is neither exclusively a gallery nor a supermarket. The materials are not paint or packaging—they are websites, concerts, graffiti on walls, posters, USB sticks, emails—and they can be utilised in the same way by both marketers and non-marketers. I argue it is a good sign that the debate has shifted from whether commodity packaging is art to whether a creative project is marketing. It is a good sign because despite the peculiar demands of sponsorships, campaigns and commercial constraints, some practitioners have managed to produce creative projects that are judged on aesthetic criteria, or are at least difficult to discern.

The ramifications of the shift towards content marketing and the high priority on these projects being creative works in their own right has resulted in works that challenge existing marketing structures. That is, if the creative projects do actually stand on their own then they are no-longer mere conduits to a product or service, they become a product or service themselves. At present though, advertising is structured to have a short-term existence, to be somewhat transient. The projects cited in this discussion so far are ones that could only be played once. So, while they were regarded by some as being a creative success, they still did perpetuate a short-life implementation. But more recently, two content marketing projects that facilitated long-term engagement became so popular the planned closing of them has caused concern. Disney's *Virtual Magic Kingdom* and Hasbro's *Monopoly City Streets* are both massively multiplayer online games that many people have engaged with as they would any other game of the genre. *Monopoly City Streets* was created to promote a new boxed version and, according to *Wired,* attracts over 15 billion page views every month (Kirwin 2009); while *Virtual Magic Kingdom* has reportedly attracted a community of over a million users (Viitamäki 2009). Both companies are considering the negative repercussions of closing these online game worlds that, though had a long-term plan, were always intended for closure. The design ecology of transmedia branded entertainment is two-way therefore. Changing attitudes and values and marketing approaches have resulted in substantial creative projects, and

these creative projects have been so markedly different that they have changed the companies that create them.

Other design ecology factors that influence the creation and design of transmedia projects include institutional ones, such as the rise of funding bodies, arts organizations, broadcasters, studios and the like mandating cross-platform, cross-media, 360, and multi-platform projects. For instance, in 2007 BBC Vision launched a multi-platform strategy that involves the introduction of multiplatform channel editors, multiplatform commissioning executives, the provision that "for the first time, every television programme will have its own website with web support provided at three prioritised levels: Basic (created automatically), Enhanced (for 50+ programmes a year) and 360 (rich content for 15+ programmes a year)," and the "ambition to double investment in multiplatform, with an additional £30 million in funding over the next three years" (BBC Press Office 2007). Such programmes have the potential to facilitate the growth of transmedia projects, which, depending on the knowledge and skills of the decision-makers, can act as cultural activators.

Related to these commissions and funding mandates are their associated industrial processes, including what Caldwell calls "ritualized forms" (Caldwell 2004, 57). In his consideration of how industrial concerns shape a project, Caldwell discusses the influence of ritualized forms such as pitching, writing-by-committee and executive revolving doors (ibid., 57–61). Regarding the influence of commerce on design, I argue pitching and industry presentations are two ritualized forms that have the potential to facilitate derivative projects. The pitch process communicates the design of a project, but it can also, if part of the initial concept-development process, influence the entire project. For instance, some practitioners begin their design process by constructing a pitch to attract financial assistance (for programmes such as those mentioned previously). The idea is therefore constrained at the beginning to conform to this ritual which is governed by certain conventions:

> Pitches work by hooking the buyer with a short but recognizable convention of some sort, then glomming, spinning, or aggregating it with some other

> unconventional element in order to create a "just like X but with Y" variant. One result of this logic of juxtaposition and variation is that story sessions are now defined by excessive cross-genre hybridization.
>
> (ibid., 58)

The "industrial performance art of pitching," Caldwell continues, "inculcates the production culture with a clockwork-like dependence on endless variation/replication and a process of generic aggregation" (ibid., 59). What this means is, some practitioners develop their idea from a point of comparison, drawing on *what is* and offering some slight twist based on *what already exists* as well. This ritual, if it is seriously implemented at the concept-development stage rather than later as a communication discourse, has the potential to facilitate "excessive cross-genre hybridization" and derivative projects. Likewise, another industrial ritual that influences design is the industry presentation. Industry presentations are often delivered as case-studies, highlighting the outcomes and in some cases the methods the speaker used rather than some higher-order design principles. This is due to a number of factors: the requirement that claims are personally substantiated, but primarily because industry talks are, for the speaker, a promotional tool for their own business. What practitioners take away from such presentations are approaches and ideas that *a* practitioner used rather than an understanding of what informed theirs and others approaches. Therefore, attendees don't necessarily learn *why* design decisions were made, and so therefore are not in a position to make different design decisions for their own project. Often the result is projects that imitate the same design as others, irrespective of the peculiar demands of the new context.

In conclusion, economic considerations are part of the complex design ecology of transmedia projects. These include the lure of transmedia projects for some practitioners, and various influences on the design process. Just because an economic logic is involved does not necessarily mean the projects are treated with less artistic intent. Further to this, the argument can be made that the projects are more likely to fulfil their financial goals if they attend to the design issues peculiar to transmedia projects. But the fact remains that not all transmedia projects are created purely because of some aesthetic urge; and, further to this, not all projects created because of some economic lure or constraints are devoid

of aesthetic concerns. Indeed, it is often difficult if not impossible to place them as two entirely separate and conflicting influences. This is why it is important to study economic implications as part of the design ecology of transmedia practices (all practices). The next part of this chapter continues to explore industrial and aesthetic implications in transmedia practice, in the context of the employment of distinct media and environments.

## Distinct Media and Environments

> All objects are walls for writing on.
> Take any form and project it onto any surface.
> Earrings can be billboards, tables can be screens,
> buildings can be magazines.
> We are the Babylonian translators.
> (Gerritzen et al. 2001, 129)

Many theorists have put forward that one of the important defining traits of this phenomenon is the employment of multiple media platforms and in some cases also locations. In this section I explain why I have employed the term *distinct media*. I discuss the implications of distinct media: how it implies a peculiar end-point experience that is characterised by haptically-distinct interactions; how the actual delivery medium can be *activated* as a semiotic resource; and how the use of media not only entails understanding the affordances of the medium, but also negotiating mono-medium creative production industries. I affirm the inclusion of *environments* in current theories and explain how environments are activated as a semiotic resource too.

The greater historical background of distinct media practices in media, art and gaming theories is then discussed to highlight how the urge to combine distinct media has been an ongoing concern in many creative sectors across time. With these ongoing emergences in mind, I argue against media specificity to facilitate the interrogation of the transhistorical and transartistic nature of this phenomenon. Leading from this discussion about the transhistorical urge to combine media, I discuss the aesthetic difference between transmedia and "intermedia" practices. I explain that while there is a higher-level congruency between the two, the employment of distinct media has more resonances with separation or "unmixed media" aesthetics.

## What does Distinct Media Mean?

Theorists have attempted to distinguish the phenomenon discussed here from multimedia *within* a media platform, by describing these creative works as being "distributed across varying media channels (film, web, music, video games, print, live performance, etc.)" (Ruppel 2005b). Jenkins explains that transmedia storytelling involves a story "unfolding across multiple media platforms," with examples of a media platform being a film, television, novel or a comic (Jenkins 2006, 95–96). McGonigal explains that ubiquitous games are "distributed across multiple media, platforms, locations, and times" (McGonigal 2006, 43). Walker Rettberg's characteristic of "distribution in space" describes practices when there "is no single place in which the whole narrative can be experienced" (Walker 2004, 94); and Montola's "spatial expansion" value for pervasive games involves "physical architecture" and the appropriation of "objects, vehicles, and properties of the physical world into the game" (Montola 2009, 12).

The use of terms such as media platforms refers specifically to communication occurring across multiple delivery media, media channels or transmissive media. Terms such as platforms and channel and delivery media usually refer to media such as a television, computer, gramophone, telephone, mobile phone and even the Internet. But as Ryan notes, media means different things to different fields of inquiry and practice, in that for an art critic it may mean music, painting, sculpture, drama, photography, architecture; for an artist it may mean clay, feathers, beer can tabs; for an information theorist it may mean "papyrus scrolls, codex books and silicon chips" and so on (Ryan 2003). In this thesis, while the projects discussed do not represent the breadth of media possibilities, the term media is intended to be all-encompassing. That is, all-encompassing of media specific to the distinct trait.

This distinct trait is not a prerequisite in some theories though. There are some creative works that although they are within a single media platform, each unit or text is spread across space. For instance, a creative work may be experienced through a single media

platform (an Internet-enabled computer) but is delivered across a number of websites or even a number of locations within a virtual world. Walker Rettberg's distributed narratives is inclusive of such works, as the distribution in space characteristic refers to distribution "across multiple websites" as well as physical spaces and several media (Walker 2004, 99). This is because Walker Rettberg, and Montola (Montola 2005; Montola 2009), highlight the notion of a boundary transgression of a work (or magic circle) as being a significant trait of distributed narratives (and pervasive games respectively). While I discuss these arguments in the next chapter, it is enough to note here that an important aspect of the boundary transgression argument Walker Rettberg and Montola propose involves a *shift away from the singular*, a notion echoed in other theories such as transfictionality, which encompasses "those practices that expand fiction beyond the boundaries of the work" (Saint-Gelais, cited in Ryan 2008, 386).

However, I consider any distribution across space (beyond the singular) a higher-level category that encompasses intramedium and intermedium works. That is: any expansion beyond the singular can happen *within* a media platform and *across* media platforms. Not all expansions within a media platform are equivalent though. Transmedia practices are the latter sub-category of this greater expansive concern then, privileging fictions expressed *across* distinct media. Any movement away from the notion of the singular is significant, but a subset of this idea—the practice of expressing a (fictional) world across distinct media—is an under-recognised phenomenon and so is the focus of this thesis.

This under-recognised phenomenon refers to expression of a (fictional) world across physically distinct hardware or objects, such as a television, laptop, book, photograph, cinema, statue or vase. The qualifying trait is its (usually) haptically-distinct nature, which is not the same as media within a medium platform (images, sound or even websites on a computer). An audience member or player usually has to engage with more than one interaction technology. They may tap on a keyboard on a computer (and listen and watch and read), as well as turn pages in a book (and read text and images), as well as push buttons and twiddle a gaming console controller (and watch, listen and read), as well as run through the streets or shakes hands with an actor playing a character. The

distinct nature refers not just to the nature of the technologies or media, therefore, but also the material experience of them.

The material experience influences design, as not only do practitioners need to consider their affordances, the peculiarities of the end point-experience, but also the cumulative experience of them. How does it feel to move from the very insular experience of turning pages of a book to tapping a keyboard to communicate with characters online? How does it feel to spend forty intense, heart-pounding hours playing a digital game with a controller and friends yelling around you at home, to then trundle into the cinema to sit down and watch a film in silence for an hour or so? At present, however, much research into the use of multiple distinct media is concerned with people's general use during a time period with no attention paid to the content they are accessing. That is, how many media do people use within a time period, irrespective of why or what they're using it for? While some recent studies are interrogating how people consume a variety of media according to a content type (such as entertainment news) (Dutta-Bergman 2004), I have yet to find any publicly available studies into the cross-media experience of people pursuing a specific fictional world across media, and even then, a fictional world that is designed to facilitate cross-media traversal. The penultimate chapter of this thesis will explore some of the rhetorical devices to facilitate that traversal, but the issue of what may be called cumulative materiality is to be addressed in future research.

Another aspect of distinct media to note is that while on the one hand transmedia practices are identified by (among other factors) the employment of distinct media, there are times when the actual distinct media is activated as a semiotic resource. Distinct media can be invoked as a semiotic resource by practitioners as part of the meaning-making process. There is a difference, in other words, between a practitioner designing parts of a fictional world specifically for the affordances and experience of a distinct media, and a practitioner who intentionally invokes the medium and/or environment as part of the meaning-making process. This is, of course, a concern with meaning-construction and so doesn't negate the role of media and environments in the meaning-making process in general.

But just what is the difference between *semiotic activation* and the undeniable semiotic role any medium plays? Marshall McLuhan (McLuhan 1967), Walter J. Ong (Ong 1984), Friedrich Kittler (Kittler 1996; Kittler and Johnston 1997), and many others have highlighted the configurative role of a medium. A medium is not a hollow channel through which communication occurs unaffected. This view is a shift, it should be noted, from the transmissive definition of media, in which media such as television, radio, the Internet, the gramophone, the telephone, books and newspapers are viewed as mere channels (Ryan 2004a, 16). Among others, Kress and van Leeuwen have explored the semiotic potential of such "distribution technologies":

> Speaking about "distribution" *semiotically* means, in the first place, acknowledging that the technologies may be used in the service of preservation and transmission as well as in the service of *transforming* what is recorded or transmitted, of creating new representations and interactions, rather than extending the reach of existing ones.
> (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001, 93, original emphasis)

However, Kress and van Leeuwen's theory is concerned with the effect of a distribution technology (scratches on a record for instance) and the role of the person who operates the distribution technology (who stamps the DVDs for example, or engineers the sound during a concert). These are important influences to account for but the question in the context of this discussion is not whether the people who made the distribution technologies are recognised as part of the meaning-making process, but whether a transmedia practitioner has constructed meaning with the distribution technology, whether they have assigned it a semiotic function. That is, when does a transmedia creator activate the actual technology, the hardware, the tangible object to be part of the meaning-making process, to be one of the cues that trigger a mental construction of a (fictional) world? In some ways, the activation of distinct media discussed here is an extension of the notion of (intra-medium) materiality Aarseth describes:

> To be an "author" (as opposed to a mere "writer") means to have configurative power over not merely content but also over a work's genre and form. That is, to be able not only to control all the "poetic" elements but also to introduce new

> ones. […] A good example of medium control is Vikram Seth, who manipulated the sentences on the final page in the Indian edition of his novel *A Suitable Boy* (1993) so that the text ran all the way down to the bottom. His readers would not know they had finished the book until they turned past the last page (see Eriksen 1994, 29). Such materiality of literature is seldom, if ever, acknowledged by literary theory, although it plays an important (if normally invisible, i.e., ideological role in the process of reading and writing.
>
> (Aarseth 1997, 164–165)

This thesis interrogates such medium control at the point of the actual distinct media: when the medium (the distribution technology) itself becomes part of the message, not just the layout of text or images within a medium. Anthony McCall's 1973 work *Line Describing a Cone* is a case in point. It includes the projection light as part of the meaning of the work. McCall has described the work as "the first film to exist in real, three-dimensional space" (Godfrey and McCall 2007). It involves a projection of a white dot on a flat surface. Slowly the dot moves around, making a circle with its line. Importantly though, it is what is between the end projection and the projector, the projection light, which forms the cone. Since the work is shown (intentionally) in environments without seating and with a smoke machine, that cone is highlighted, therefore cueing the audience to its overt presence and semiotic role. The lack of seating likewise facilitates the audience moving into and playing with the projected light (see Figure 7). To McCall, "*Line Describing a Cone* is what I term a solid light film. It deals with the projected light beam itself, rather than treating the light beam as a mere carrier of coded information, which is decoded when it strikes a flat surface" (ibid.). Here, the meaning of the work—a highlighting of the nature of film, its processes and the interpretive norms surrounding it—is cued through the projector, light and projection.

Figure 7. Photo of *Line Describing a Cone* participants
at the Whitney Museum exhibition "Into The Light," 2001-2
Photograph by Henry Graber, 2002
Image source: (McCall)

McCall's work is historically situated within the Expanded Cinema movement, which was in part "triggered by the Happening movement in the art world" (Jud Yalkut, cited in Gschwandtner 2004). It gathered momentum during the 1960s and 1970s when in New York in particular, "filmmakers, composers, dancers were all overlapping, attending each other's things" (ibid.). To expanded cinema practitioner and proponent Valie Export, the movement involved (among other things) a splitting up of the formal components of the film phenomenon and then putting them "back together again in a new way" (Export 2003). "The operations of the collective union which is film," she continues, "such as the screen, the cinema theatre, the projector, light and celluloid, are partially replaced by reality in order to install new signs of the real" (ibid.). Export cites Birgit Hein, who writes that expanded cinema is "not a stylistic concept, but rather a general indicator for all works that go beyond the individual film projection" (Birgit Hein, cited in Export 2003). Indeed, it was during this time that practitioners "began to consider the sculptural dimensions of film—paying attention not just to the images that they presented on the screen, but to the texture of the film emulsion, the sound of the projector, the space between projector and wall" (Godfrey and McCall 2007).

Expanded cinema is not defined by the use of particular technologies though, as it has many other aesthetic and political functions. Media arts theorist and critic Gene Youngblood argues that expanded cinema "does not mean computer films, video

phosphors, atomic light, or spherical projections," instead, "[w]hen we say expanded cinema, we actually mean expanded consciousness" (Youngblood 1970, 41). One outcome of this expanded consciousness, though, is the conscious use of different film components as part of the meaning-making process.

Additionally, practitioners can also appropriate unusual media and invoke them as part of the meaning-making process. Walker Rettberg (Walker 2004) cites Shelley Jackson, who chose to publish her story, *Skin* (2003–present), "on the skin of 2095 volunteers" (Jackson 2003). At the time of writing, about 510 words had been inked on the bodies of participants (see Figure 8 for examples). Although the link between the story and its delivery medium is unknown (because it is only published on bodies and so is not available anywhere else), it is clear the project is constructed to make the skin on each person (distinct media) meaningful. But importantly, it is the nature of the delivery medium, bodies, that is part of the meaning of the work. The work only exists on the skin of volunteers, therefore, in "the event that insufficient participants come forward to complete the first and only edition of the story, the incomplete version will be considered definitive" (ibid.). Further to this, the volunteer bodies are not just a semiotic technology that is part of the meaning-making process, the participants are themselves both the content and the medium, as Jackson explains:

> From this time on, participants will be known as "words". They are not understood as carriers or agents of the texts they bear, but as its embodiments. As a result, injuries to the printed texts, such as dermabrasion, laser surgery, tattoo cover work or the loss of body parts, will not be considered to alter the work. Only the death of words effaces them from the text. As words die the story will change; when the last word dies the story will also have died. The author will make every effort to attend the funerals of her words.
>
> (ibid.)

Figure 8. Screenshot of webpage from *A Mortal Work of Art*
Project website for *Skin* (Shelley Jackson, 2003–present).
Image source: (Jackson 2003)

In all of these cases the actual delivery technology is part of the meaning of the work. Judging by the expanded consciousness rhetoric of the previous cinema experiments, it appears that practitioner activation of media as a semiotic resource parallels a revived awareness of a medium. Transmedia practice does facilitate (and is a response to) such a medium awareness, and so in cases where the same practitioners work on the various media (rather than working with one medium and so not necessarily becoming aware of its semiotic potential) there is an increased likelihood of a semiotic activation of media. In the penultimate chapter of this thesis I discuss just how the actual media are activated as a semiotic resource in many transmedia projects. But the point about medium awareness and how it may be relative to whether a practitioner actually works with each medium is an interesting one. Not all practitioners who work on transmedia projects engage with all of the stages of design and production of a transmedia project. This is because of a variety of factors, the most pertinent being the nature of mono-medium production cultures.

Indeed, there are television, gaming, film, theatre, radio and new media industries, as well as independent gaming and arts cultures. To practice in any of these media entails engaging with their respective production cultures. This is not always the case though, as networked technology, print-on-demand facilities, the postal system and real world environments are examples of semiotic resources that practitioners may utilize without engaging with production cultures. The rise of projects that combine websites and live-events attests to the accessibility of this media combination. But in transmedia projects that involve distinct media which are part of existing creative production cultures, a practitioner needs to not only understand the affordances of the medium, but be able to negotiate the associated industries.

Kress and van Leeuwen explain this implication in the context of multimodality, and how it marks a shift from "the previously monomodally conceived arrangements (one profession deals with one mode and in that profession there are hierarchically differentiated practices and jobs)" (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001, 47). These observations are echoed in media theories of "convergence". Journalism scholar Jane Singer, for instance, describes convergence as involving "some combination of technologies, products, staffs and geography among the previously distinct provinces of print, television and online media" (Singer 2006, 3). While not all transmedia practitioners work with all media production cultures, the differences between these distinct practices and professions reveals another aspect of what is extraordinary and challenging about transmedia practice.

In 2001, media theorist Stephen Jeffrey-Poulter reflected on a year-long *Digital Synergies* programme that "aimed to demonstrate to film, television, and digital media companies and freelance individuals the benefits of forging appropriate commercial, technical and creative alliances in the digital media marketplace" (Jeffrey-Poulter 2001, 155). What Jeffrey-Poulter chose to explore is "how the very nature of creative development of content in converged media might inform the ways in which it needs to be made" (ibid., 162). He observes differences between film, TV and theatre production and its

"triumvirate of producer, director and writer," and the digital media production and advertising agency model, which has a project management matrix of client, account manager and project manager (ibid.). Perhaps influenced in part by these professions and hierarchies, Jeffrey-Poulter also notes that the film, TV, literature and theatre industries tend to be more "authored," whereas in digital production environments many people are "required" to contribute to the creative process (ibid.). A practitioner that is more versed in one or the other would need to adapt to the different creative processes and hierarchies that each entail. For instance, traditionally a writer is held in high regard in the television industry, lesser regard in the film industry (the director more so), and with little regard and perhaps even suspicion in the gaming industries.
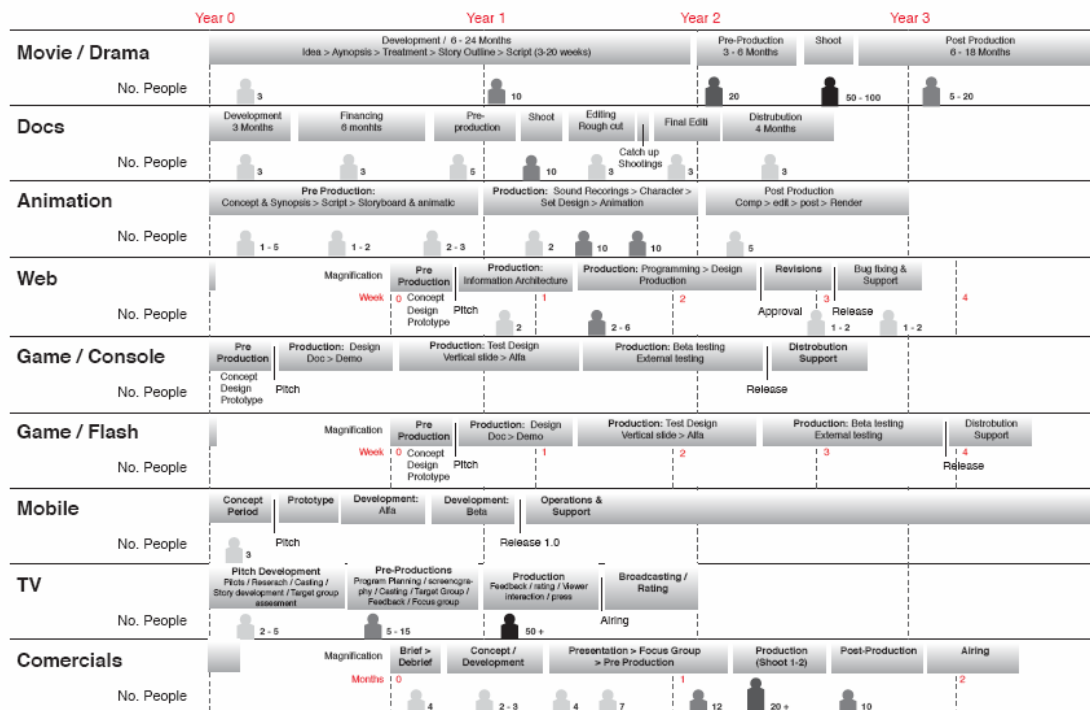


Figure 9. 'Cross-Media Production Process Comparison' Chart, *Crossover Nordic*
Conceived by Crossover Nordic Team, chart visualization by Daniel (DaPonte 2008)

These differences have a direct relationship with production cycles and processes. Consider for instance the discontinuities observed by participants of an industry residential designed to facilitate "cross-media production": *Crossover Nordic* (see Figure 9) (DaPonte 2008). As represented in the chart, a feature film production may entail six

months to years of concept development and scripting, while a console game may have a short concept development and design stage, and then iterate during production. This difference can be further understood through the notion of concept and execution. In his study of screenwriting, media theorist Steven Maras observes a split between conception and execution (Maras 2009, 21–23). Acting and shooting, Maras explains, are seen as being at the "execution" side, whereas screenwriting is at the "conception". "The separation of conception and execution permeates our ideas about the script": where the "script is supposedly written and then shot as planned" (ibid., 22). This separation "is institutionalised by dividing production into stages (pre-production, shooting, post-production)" (ibid.). But, as Maras notes, "[n]ot all forms of production rely on a single moment of conceptualisation or scripting, and scripting can happen across the entire process of production" (ibid.). This is particularly marked with digital technologies:

> According to Scott McQuire, digitally-oriented film production no longer follows an assembly "line," but rather happens in a parallel development, whereby work that may traditionally have been seen as "post-production" happens during the shooting phase (1997, 36). Digital filmmaking techniques not only potentially rework the separation of conception of execution, but also the relationship between words and images and the nature of scripting itself (through animatics and pre-visualisations).
>
> (ibid.)

Likewise, in digital gaming there is not always a distinct chronological split between the concept and production stages. In many creative industries and in particular digital gaming, there has also been the emergence of a further split during what could be called the concept-development stage. That is, scripts for a film, television show, interactive story or digital game are not the first document that is written. Before the intricacies of dialogue and description, there is careful planning of the overall plot and/or gameplay. This can be developed by one person or team, and then the actual scripting by another. While such an approach does take place in highly collaborative writing environments such as television shows, it is particularly evident in large-scale interactive projects. Book writers, playwrights and podcasters, may not, however, be familiar with such a division of labour because these duties are often entirely their own.

Other differences include the differences between the nature of the product itself. Of particular significance are differences between media that are interactive and those that are not. For instance, game and media theorist Marie Denward reports on a clash of media cultures in her analysis of *The Truth About Marika* (*Sanningen om Marika)* (Denward 2008). The production was co-produced in 2007 by The company P, a company whose practitioners have a background in live action role-playing, and Swedish broadcaster Sveriges Television. The project involved a television series, a fake documentary series, and missions to achieve in both online and offline environments. Denward reflected on some of the difficulties during the production process, noting the role of the differences between media culture familiar to The company P and that of Sveriges (see Figure 10).

spectator                                           participant

↑                                                     ↕

planned, set and                          outlined and directed
recorded                   versus        real time
dramatic                                     immersive
acting                                          roleplaying

↑                                                     ↕

broadcasting                               game mastering
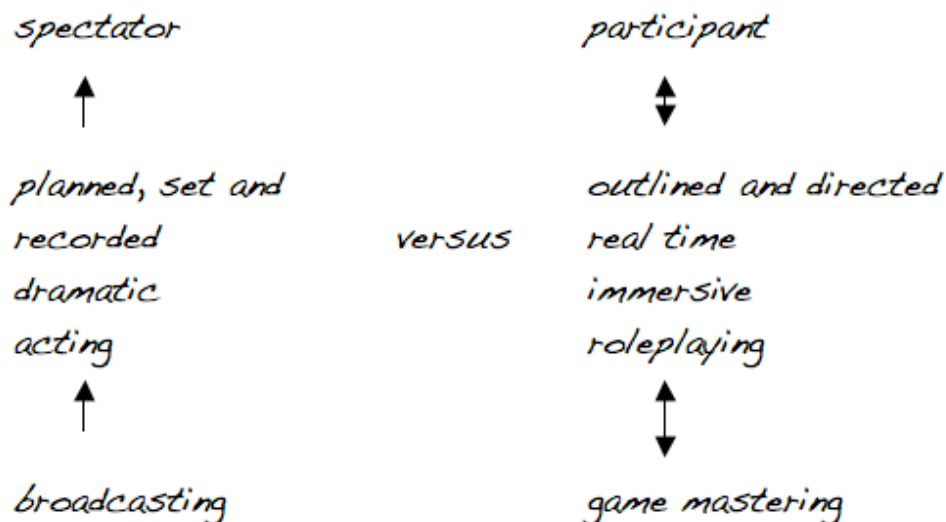
Figure 10. Marie Denward's Comparison of 'Broadcast and Role-Playing Production'
Image source: (Denward 2008, 11)

Denward further explains the differences as follows:

> The broadcaster thinks in terms of transmission, creates a finished program and transmits it to an audience (Bardoel & Lowe 2006), a one-way communicative activity. The audience is typically seen as passive spectators, a "target," limited in influence and interaction with the storyline, and success is measured quantitatively in terms of viewer ratings. The program is seen as a performance, with a set narrative and plot. A director uses a written manuscript to direct and

stage employed actors to implement the show. The performance is recorded and broadcasted to an audience. The result is a controlled, onedirectional and easily broadcasted product. […] On the other hand, in role-playing culture the individuals (both game masters and players) taking part are seen as participants and co-creators by the producers and participants are expected to contribute to game masters' experiences as well. The multi-directional activity of role-playing games, like other forms of interactive narratives, represents a fundamental blurring of the distinction between producer and consumer, creator and audience, and storyteller and viewer. Within the rules, the participants may improvise freely; their choices shape the direction and outcome of the games (Rilstone 2000).

(ibid., 11)

What Denward outlines are the differences between the live-action role-playing culture and a broadcasting culture. While not all projects involve such cultures, the points about interactivity cultures are another implication in the employment of distinct media. Media theorist Aphra Kerr has also distinguished between the different production cycles *within* the gaming industries: between console games, PC games, massively multiplayer online games, and mini games (such as those for portable devices) (Kerr 2006, 53–55). Each has their own peculiarities, such as development periods that last years for console and massively multiplayer online games, while some casual mini games can be designed and executed within a few weeks. Media theorist and game practitioner Trevor Elkington complicates the differences between media production cultures even further, explaining that "the process of making a good film are not the same process as making a good game, and the elements that make a film good may not translate well into game form" (Elkington 2009, 213).

Working on a transmedia project therefore involves not only the employment of distinct media, but oftentimes also negotiating distinct mono-medium practices, professions and cultures. One does not simply deliver part of a story or game through a mobile device, as this also involves designing specifically for the medium, using protocols that are specific to the device, developing relationships with gatekeepers and understanding the discourses and processes that are specific to that media industry. The multiplicity of decisions a transmedia practitioner makes in this new domain are both creative and industrial. Further to this, the nature of transmedia practice also changes mono-medium industries.

Indeed, the nature of transmedia practice has already seen changes to the way creative production industries operate. There has been a substantial rise in the number of production companies that specialize in or focus on the conception, development and realization of transmedia fictions. My cursory survey at the time of writing counts over eighty companies that specialize in transmedia around the world. This is different to companies that specialise in one medium that can contribute to an existing fictional world (for instance, creating a digital game for release with a film that another production company created). A notable example is the production company the Stupid Fun Club. The Stupid Fun Club is headed by Will Wright, creator of digital games *The Sims* and *Spore*. Early 2009, Wright left his position at Electronic Arts to start his own company, described on the company website as follows:

> The Stupid Fun Club is an entertainment development studio. The ideas developed here can be manifested in video games, online environments, storytelling media and fine home care products.
>
> (Wright 2009)

Wright doesn't even call himself a game designer anymore, preferring the medium- and mode-agnostic term "entertainment designer" (Will Wright, quoted in Gaudiosi 2009). Likewise, Lance Weiler does not call himself a filmmaker anymore, preferring the medium-agnostic term "story architect" (Weiler 2009e). In companies like the Stupid Fun Club there are production processes being developed that are specific to transmedia practice. At present there are, therefore, tensions between mono-medium practices and professions and emerging new domains of transmedia practice. But these transmedia emergences do not represent some new world order where distinct practices, and even mono-medium thinking and processes will be superseded. Transmedia practices are characterized by the employment of distinct media, which represent distinct cultures, practices and professions. Mono-medium practices will always exist because people do not change at the same time, in the same way—as communications theorist Amanda Lotz observed in the context of changes to the American television industry: "all production process do not shift simultaneously and […] people adopt new technologies and ways of

using them at varied paces" (Lotz 2007, 8). There will always been an urge towards integration (or convergence if you like) *and* separation (or disintegration). Integration can only exist in response to separation, and separation in response to integration. Integrative practices will always emerge and exist along with separation processes. Transmedia practice is a response to, and co-exists with, mono-medium practices.

## Why Environments?

Montola, Ruppel and Walker Rettberg all employ terminology that is encompassing of a wide range of expressive possibilities. As stated earlier, Montola and Walker Rettberg include space as a value to discuss distributions or expansions within a medium, across media and also *environments*. McGonigal explains that ubiquitous games are "distributed across multiple media, platforms, *locations*, and times" (McGonigal 2006, 43, my emphasis). "Very distributed storytelling" (Davenport et al. 2000) and "networked narrative environments" (Zapp 2004) account for *environments* such as public spaces and gallery installations as part of a composition. But what does the term environments actually mean? Environments are the spaces in which creative works are experienced, they can be the theatre a person watches a play in, lounge-room a person watches television in, the study a person answers emails in, the train a person watches an episode on a portable device in, the street a player runs down during a game. Every distinct media has an environment, but for some creative works the environment is not incidental but constructed to be a part of the meaning-making process. The overt inclusion of environments in this theory acknowledges the fact that some practitioners consider the context of the end-point experience in their design (the lounge-room they sit in, the street they see a sign in), but more importantly, there are times when an environment is invoked by the practitioner as part of the meaning-making process.

For some practitioners this means constructing an almost total environment, in which visitors can walk and ride through a theme park; constructing partial environments, in which audiences, characters and props share the same theatre space; or activating an existing environment. This is a shift beyond the notion of a medium in which the environment around is not part of the artwork. In such cases a medium is a singular

entity, and exists in its own self-containment. A medium, when held up as a distinct feature divorced of its environment enters a condition art theorist Rosalind Krauss has described as "a kind of sitelessness, or homelessness, an absolute loss of place" (Krauss 1979, 34). Design, therefore, concentrates on "the positive space…[t]hat's the thing being built; rather than the negative space, the place where people will be" (Rogers 2000 [1997]).

Theme parks, for instance, were originally fun parks or thrill rides. It was Walt Disney who developed and popularized the concept of themed or planned environments: the idea that *all* of the elements of the park should contribute to the experience, not just the rides. Disney helped construct an immersive environment in which there was a "synthesis of architecture and story" (Pearce 2007, 200)—the whole park was part of the storytelling (meaning-making) process. Disney designer David Hench further explains the concept:

> When we design any area of a Disney park, we transform a *space* into a *story place.* Every element must work together to create an identity that supports the story of that place—structures, entrances and exists, walkways, landscaping, water elements, and modes of transportation. Every element must in its form and color engage the guests' imagination and appeal to their emotions.
> (Hench and Van Pelt 2003, 69, original emphasis)

"As designers," Hench continues, "we Imagineers create spaces—guided experiences that take place in carefully structured environments, allowing our guests to see, hear, even smell, touch, and taste in new ways" (ibid., 2). Here, participants enter a space, interact with it and be immersed, if you like, in a space that is almost completely diegetic. This approach still occurs in a variety of practices. Game theorists and designers Annika Waern, Markus Montola and Jaakko Stenros, for instance, explain how larpers (live-action role-players) and history re-enactment hobbyists often create an authentic environment to facilitate a "360 degree illusion" (Waern, Montola and Stenros 2009, 1550). They do this by hiding anything that may break the illusion, and by making sure everything is perfectly crafted. An example they give the *Dragonbane* LARP crew, and how they "spent three years building houses, designing costumes and designing a hydraulic dragon in order to realize their vision" (ibid.).

Indeed, the creation of what may be called constructed environments is also evident in contemporary marketing practices. Marketing theorist and practitioner Timothy deWaal Malefyt argues that the use of "more sensory media which tap into a broader range of consumer experiences with brands" indicates "a reprioritization of experiential and sensory approaches to consumer marketing" (deWaal Malefyt 2006, 86). This approach includes a reprioritisation of the environment in which products or services are experienced. That is, retail environments are reconfigured to be a part of the meaning-making process. For instance, architect and designer Massimo Losa Ghini speaks of shopping center design and how the environment is part of the brand experience:

> Today, there is a real connection between the world of entertainment and the retail environment. […] My vision is that the shop of the future could be something like Disneyland - obviously adapted to different contexts, and with different images. […] The product then becomes just one part of the experience, not the main player.
>
> (Ghini, cited in Riewoldt 2002, 107)

But shopping center design is different to the production of a specifically themed environment for a certain brand. The former choreographs an experience that encompasses many brands (including the uber brand of the shopping center), while the latter is concerned with one (such as the BMW Event and Delivery Center). Architectural journalist Otto Riewoldt describes the efforts of many companies who are creating themed environments as "brandscaping":

> Brandscaping—the three-dimensional design of brand settings—is all about forging backdrops for experiences with a high entertainment value, from flagship stores to corporate theme parks, from customized, modular shop systems to innovative mall concepts.
>
> (Riewoldt 2002, 7)

Experimental art practitioners also construct immersive environments, like *The Transient Realities Generators Project* (*trg*) by a collective of artists, designers, academics and programmers known as FoAM (2006). *Trg* is an entire actual environment (see Figure

11) that even had its own physics, carefully created as "an exercise in world-building" (Kuzmanovic and Gaffney 2006a, 14).



Figure 11. Photo of participants of *trg*
by FoAM (2006).
Image source: (FoAM)

What the designers of the project *trg* attempted to achieve is a "world that would be touched, tasted, seen and heard" (Kuzmanovic and Gaffney 2006b, 70). It is "an amalgam of soft architecture, graphics, sound, performance, costumes, food and drinks" that included a range of haptic, aural and visual elements:

> The physical elements (such as costumes, stretchable and inflatable architecture, varied tactile forms and textures) were to be shaped to amplify their tactile qualities (smooth, wet, pocky, solid or unbalanced). The soundscapes would echo as a multitude of atmospheric vibrations propagating through different volumes and surfaces (as a wind passing through tensed silk, or as a swarm of sonic grains bouncing within the vacuous chambers of a dirigible). The graphics would change the lightness and density of the space, making the air appear thicker or sparser.
>
> (ibid.)

These efforts to create constructed environments provide an intricately designed space to be an entirely semiotically-constructed experience. There are also what may be called partially-constructed environments. These are existing environments that have been augmented in some way with objects or people that are constructed to be a part of the

meaning-making process. An important historical reference point for these are the lecture environments created by photographers in 1920s. In 1922, photographer Frank Hurley sent a message to Antarctic explorer Douglas Mawson, asking if he could loan tents, sledges and any other equipment to place in the theatres where he will show photos of Antarctica (Dixon 2006, 61). These "synchronized lecture entertainments" that Hurley ran "were complex performance events" (ibid., 62) that involved projected slides, films, orchestras, live narrations, sound recordings and props among other media available within and outside the theatre environment. To prevent any possible involvement that Mawson may want, Hurley warned that it is imperative "the entire show be left entirely in my hands," for "I have had wide experience now in this form of synchronized lecture entertainment" (ibid., 61). A form, obviously, that involved its own peculiar knowledge and skills to produce a semiotic environment.

From the heritage of such developments are contemporary cinema events. Unlike theatre architect S. Charles Lee's motto of "the show starts on the sidewalk" (Valentine 1994), these theatre environments are actually part of the meaning-making process of the film, rather than the theatre experience in general. The environment of the cinema is not extra-diegetic (Genette 1997 [1982], 295), but diegetic. The semiotic activation of environments is evidenced in cinema events such as the "scare-tactics" of horror filmmaker William Castle in the 1950s and 1960s. Castle (who produced Roman Polanski's *Rosemary's Baby*) used "gimmicks" such as having ambulances on stand-by outside the theatre in case the theatre goers were scared to death. This tactic, it should be noted, was also used by many exhibitors during the 1920s and 1930s for comedy (laugh yourself to death) and horror (scare yourself to death) (Berenstein 2002). But for Castle, these were ways the theatre experience could be interweaved with the film narrative.

In his 1959 film, *The Tingler*, the Tingler is an alien creature that grows on your spine. If you feel a tingling, the alien is there and growing. The only way to stop the Tingler is to scream. At a moment during the film, the pathologist (played by Vincent Price) is attacked by the Tingler, and then just as he is about to secure the creature in a container the film goes black. The voice of Vincent Price (and the sound of women screaming)

alerts the audience that the Tingler is now loose in the theatre. At this moment, some of the theatre seats are then activated with a buzzing machine (which Castle called Percepto!), simulating the growth of the Tingler in the moviegoer's spines.

More recently, horror filmmaker (or "story architect" (Weiler 2009e)) Weiler's 2006 production of *Head Trauma* continues this tradition, but now includes narrative and game elements in what he calls a "Cinema ARG". *Head Trauma* includes—among other compositions such as an interactive comic on a website and an alternate reality game— cinema events especially engineered to communicate meaning. For one of his cinema events, which was developed as a way to make the theatre a unique experience in itself, Weiler started the experience in the streets. "As people were making their way to the venue, we had written some software that allowed all the payphones up and down the block to ring" (see Figure 12) (Weiler 2009a). Weiler put fragments of conversation on the payphones, so if people answered them, they would foreshadow the story of the film. Attendees then encountered a street preacher (see Figure 13). The preacher was "spouting fire and brimstone and handing out these small religious comics" (see Figure 14) (ibid.). The comics are remediated on the films website ("www.headtraumamovie.com"), but importantly also feature in the film: the protagonist finds a comic at a payphone (see Figure 15).



Figure 12. Photo of payphone that calls when attendees walk by on the way to the screening of *Head Trauma*
(Lance Weiler, 2006).
Image source: (Weiler 2009g)



Figure 13. Photo of Preacher character giving a sermon on the street and handing out comics on the way to the screening of *Head Trauma*
(Lance Weiler, 2006)
Image source: (Weiler 2009d)

Figure 14. *Head Trauma* screening attendee reading
the comic handed out by the street Preacher
character
(Lance Weiler, 2006).
Image source: (Weiler 2009g)



Figure 15. Screenshot of character finding comic at
a payphone in the film *Head Trauma*
(Lance Weiler, 2006)
Image source: (Weiler 2009g)
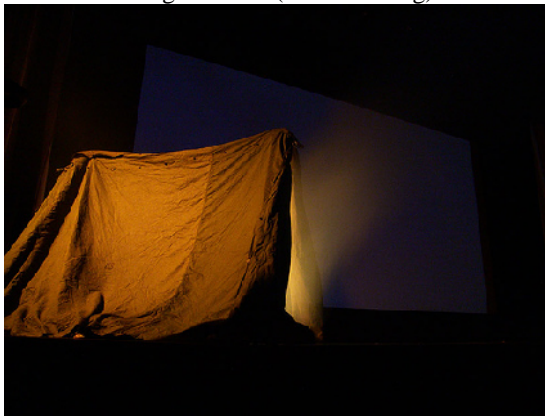


Figure 16. Photo of tent at *Head Trauma* screening
Image source: (Weiler 2009f)



Figure 17. Photo of musician at *Head Trauma*
screening.
Image source: (Weiler 2009c)

Once at the cinema, patrons find a tent (see Figure 16). The tent is "an iconic image that's used within the movie itself" (ibid.). The soundtrack was played by musicians live (see Figure 17), and once the patrons left, characters would send messages to their phones. For Weiler, what is "really important is making elements of the story tangible for the audience" (ibid.) He wanted "to create something where the movie comes to life" (ibid.). To Weiler, this partially-activated semiotic environment provides "texture, it's about putting people in the shoes of the protagonist, and it's about letting them feel something that they wouldn't normally feel through a passive film" (ibid.).

Indeed, the rise of such semiotic environments is part of a growing emphasis on experiential elements in contemporary entertainment. In some ways, digitization has

supplanted the authority of a medium. A "defining characteristic of digital media" is its ability to remediate, to represent one medium in another (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 45). A book can be simulated in a CD-Rom, DVD, portable reader and online, so too a painting, film and television show. The consequences of this levelling of the status of a medium is, ironically, a heightened awareness of the affordances of each medium and a desire for what "isn't easily copyable," what "can't be put onto a memory card" (Eno 2009). And so we see the rise of musicians touring, outdoor music festivals, outdoor games and cinema events. Likewise, much of current theory about ubiquitous and pervasive games is bejewelled with rhetoric about how the everyday world, streets and parks are all fair-game for play.

> The physical world is an unbeatable source of information, supplying us at each moment with a continual stream of new images, sounds and feelings that cannot be fully simulated by computers. Pervasive games aim to directly exploit the richness of the physical world as a resource for play by interweaving digital media with our everyday experience.
>
> (Capra et al. 2005, 89)

This interweaving of the everyday experience represents another type of semiotic environment: the activated one. That is, rather than constructing or partially constructing an environment, an existing one is appropriated as part of the meaning-making process. This of course is not new. Site-specific art has a long history with such efforts. A curious case in point is conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth's *The Seventh Investigation (Art As Idea As Idea)*. The work was part of the pivotal 1970 exhibition at the Jewish Museum in New York: *Software, Information Technology: Its New Meaning for Art*. The exhibition was curated by Jack Burnham, who is described as follows: "Burnham is to art in the age of real time systems what Walter Benjamin was to art in the age of its mechanical reproducibility" (Gere 2005). Kosuth's work involved the replication of six statements:

> (1) to assume a mental set voluntarily (2) to shift voluntarily from one aspect of the situation to another (3) to keep in mind simultaneously various aspects (4) to grasp the essential of a given whole; to break up a given whole into parts and to isolate them voluntarily (5) to generalize; to abstract common properties; to plan ahead ideationally; to assume an attitude toward the "mere possible" and to think or perform symbolically (6) to detach our ego from the outer world.

These statements were reproduced at four public locations: "a large banner strung across a street in Turin, Italy; a billboard in New York City's Chintown (see Figure 18); a wall-mounted poster included in the Software exhibition at the Jewish Museum, New York; and as a print advertisement which ran along the bottom of page 11 in the Daily World newspaper on Saturday, 5 September, 1970" (ibid.).
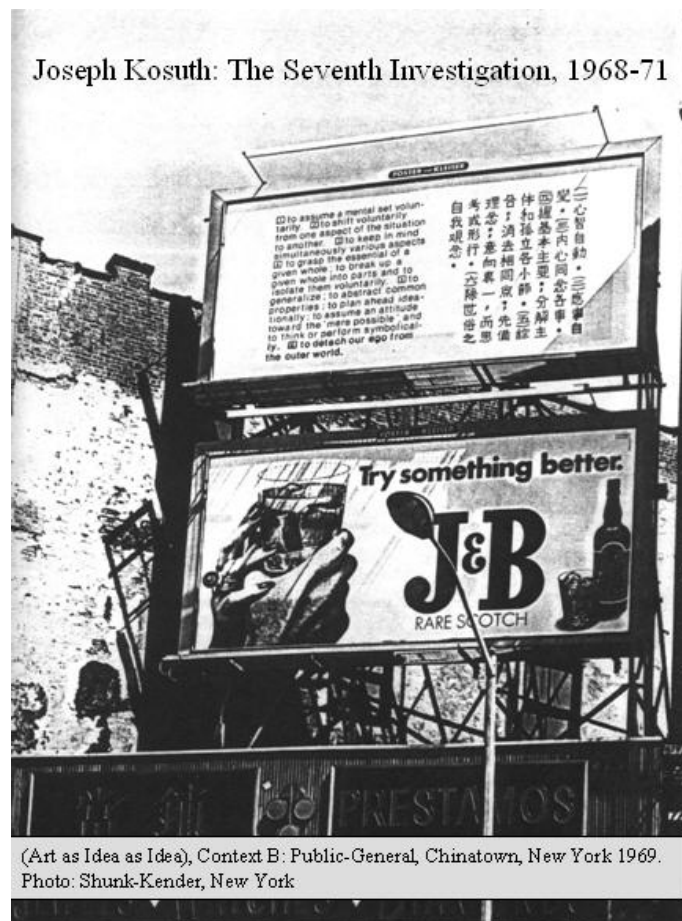


Figure 18. Photo of billboard in Chinatown, New York,
*The Seventh Investigation (Art as Idea as Idea)*
Photo by Shunk-Kender, image source: (Dreher 2005)

In this work the distinct media and environments are both crucial to the meaning of the work. If the work was only the poster in the Software exhibition, then it would have a different overall meaning to the work involving also a billboard, newspaper and banner.

For art critic Edward A. Shanken, the meaning of this replication across distinct media and environments is about decontextualisation:

> According to the software metaphor underlying Burnham's exhibition, the art in Kosuth's work was not the billboard or the other structural elements (hardware), but was manifested rather in the idea of contextualizing philosophical questions (software) within the context of visual art and simultaneously decontextualizing them in various public, nonart media. In this way, his work investigated the relationship between art and non-art ideas, the vehicles by which they are expressed, and the semiotic networks that enable and delimit their meanings in multiple contexts.
>
> (Shanken 2002, 435)

But for Kosuth, the meaning of the work was not necessarily in juxtaposing art and non-art distinct media and environments, but in framing these so-called non-art delivery media and environments as art. Indeed, in his artist statement Kosuth explains that "[t]he art consists of my action of placing this activity (investigation) in an art context (i.e. art as idea as idea)" (Kosuth, quoted in Shanken 2002, 435). It was an argument about the nature of art and how it is something that is created through conceptual framing rather than the semiotic resources it employs.

Environments can also be activated to be a part of the meaning-making process by participants. But in the meaning-construction context, they are relevant here when that activation is facilitated by the practitioners. A case in point is Nick Montfort's and Scott Rettberg's *Implementation* (2004–present). *Implementation* is a novel in 238 paragraphs, with each paragraph provided as a sticker for anyone to download and stick on poles, walls and fences anywhere around the world. The paragraph stickers can be found in Paris, New York, Amsterdam, Tokyo; and photos of them on sites across cyberspace: the main website and the online photo-sharing site Flickr for instance. People can experience parts of this work, therefore, at a public location, through a picture uploaded to the Net, by downloading a printout of the paragraphs, and at public readings.

But, as Walker Rettberg notes, the authors "surrender control of how their work spreads and is pasted in new contexts, as each new context produces new meanings" (Walker

2004, 96). Due to the spatially distributed nature of the project, Montfort and Rettberg distinguish the "categories of people [who] will experience the project in a potentially meaningful way" as sheet readers, place readers, web readers and participants (those who post stickers, photograph and upload the photos) (Montfort and Rettberg 2004). On the latter, Montfort and Rettberg posit how the participant's choices can contribute to meaning:

> The most interesting interactive aspect of *Implementation* will lie in how participants choose to situate the individual stickers and in how they photograph these placements. We hope that this form of interaction will engender new and unanticipated meanings as *Implementation* is situated in specific public spaces that resonate with the texts in different ways.
>
> (ibid.)

The story of *Implementation* is "about psychological warfare, American imperialism, sex, terror, identity," and, fittingly, "the idea of place" (ibid.). In one example of careful placement, a participant illuminated the themes of sex and place, and the specific meaning of the text fragment (see Figure 19), when they placed the following sticker conspicuously under the connotative coin slot of a parking meter:

> He fantasized about what she might do with her. She was an officer of the peace. He was a new hire. She had never been bothered thinking about him—or her, for that matter. She thought about her almost constantly, imagining uses for those handcuffs. They would never meet. The barrel, the chamber, the butt.

Figure 19. Photo of sticker on parking meter for *Implementation*
(Nick Montfort and Scott Rettberg, 2004–present)
Image source: (Montfort and Rettberg 2004)

In both of these examples, the environments and the distinct media all work together to contribute to the meaning-making process. This process is akin to what Lemke has called multiplicative meaning (Lemke 1993; Lemke 1998a; Lemke 1998b; Lemke 2002; Lemke 2004; Lemke 2006).

> If we have a set of words, and a set of pictures, that are not in one-to-one correspondence with each other, but which may be freely combined in different ways, then the set of *possible* meanings is enlarged to be the *product* (not the sum) of the meanings that can be made with each set separately.
> (Lemke 1993, 11, original emphasis)

In the examples cited previously, there are existing locations which are juxtaposed with practitioner-created elements. The sticker story and parking meter modulate each other's meanings, as Lemke elaborates: "In multimedia genres, meanings made with each functional resource in each semiotic modality can modulate meanings of each kind in each other semiotic modality, thus ***multiplying*** the set of possible meanings that can be

made (and so also the specificity of any particular meaning made against the background of this larger set of possibilities)" (Lemke 1998b, original emphasis).

Both the actual media and environments are semiotic resources practitioners can construct or activate to be a part of the meaning making process. This is why environments are an overt part of the definition of transmedia practice, and why the various implications of the employment of distinct media is explained. Indeed, the term distinct media does not just refer the haptically-distinct nature of a medium, but the industrial and creative implications of its use. I have invoked the term distinct media rather than media platforms to highlight the distinct nature of the media being referred to, but also to encompass a great variety of media such as bodies and projection light. In the next section I further explain why the theory of transmedia practice is structured to recognise any types of media.

## Beyond Media Specificity

Media, art and gaming studies have for a while recognised the significance of projects that involve distinct media, but they have done so by focusing on specific media combinations: old and new media, networked media and installations, virtual environments and the real world, art and non-art media. While this approach facilitates fruitful insights into the nature of such practices, this thesis is concerned with facilitating another insight: what can be learned about the phenomenon of combining distinct media in general. In this section I'll overview some of the specific media combinations that have been studied, to illustrate how the combining of distinct media is not specific to contemporary practices, and so warrants a transhistorical and transartistic interrogation.

In media studies (which has traditionally focused on so-called mass media), the specific media combination that has been a focus is old and new media. Scholarship in the area has been predominately concerned with the displacement effects of new media, but has more recently explored the possibility of "media complementarity". Of note is Mohan J. Dutta-Bergman, who explains that theories about the relationship between the Internet and traditional media conceptualize "a dialectic, a manifestation of the tension between

the two opposing philosophical forces of stability versus change" (Dutta-Bergman 2004, 42). Dutta-Bergman continues, explaining how scholarship frames Internet and traditional media in discourses concerning a "rubric of supersession (Dunguid, 1996), constancy (McCombs, 1972), and displacement effects (Kayany & Yelsma, 2000), [where] the fundamental question hinges on the ability of a new medium to replace or displace an old one (Kayany & Yelsma, 2000)" (ibid.). To combat this leaning, Dutta-Bergman explores the notion of media complementarity, in which consumers don't choose one medium over the other, but consume both "online and traditional media within a specific content domain" (ibid., 41). For instance, Dutta-Bergman found "individuals interested in procuring information in a particular content area [such as news] expose themselves to a multitude of media outlets to optimize the information on that particular content area" (ibid., 48).

Other theorists have likewise not viewed different media through a supersession or competitive lens, but through an industrial and cultural convergence lens in which new and old media are characterized by their interrelations and dependencies. Dan Harries has characterised the "interaction, augmentation and interdependence arising between what can be roughly deemed as 'old' media and 'new' media producers" as being "some of the most prominent aspects of contemporary media" (Harries 2002, ix). Jenkins explains that "[i]f the digital revolution paradigm presumed that new media would displace old media, the emerging convergence paradigm assumes that old and new media will interact in more complex ways" (Jenkins 2006, 6). In media studies, therefore, old and new media has been the media combination of interest.

In gaming there is a growing interest in the combining of new, digital or networked media and actual world environments. I have cited gaming theories that include the use of environments earlier, but there is type of gaming that is concerned with what is variously called mixed reality, augmented reality or trans-reality games: which are "games that combine virtual gaming with game experiences staged and played in physical environments" (Lindley 2004, 1). Game theorist Craig Lindley explains that "just as a trans-media game can be played across different media, a trans-reality game should be

playable across different realities" (ibid.). Trans-reality games include those that combine a virtual map or overlay that a player views on a portable device whilst in a street. Because of the peculiar demands of combining the virtual environments (such as a graphically represented space) and everyday environments (such as a street or park), there are concepts, methodologies and design issues specific to them (ibid., 10).

Before trans-reality gaming emerged with such force, artist and theorist Andrea Zapp edited a collection of essays on what she describes as "networked narrative environments" (Zapp 2004). Invoking the traditional artist space of the gallery or theatre as a point-of-departure, Zapp describes the networked aspect of these works as being "public installations and theatrical spaces that are linked to the Internet," and the environment as the "physical installation architecture," with both combining "real and virtual role-play" (ibid., 12). In her essay on the practice, Zapp explains that she is moving "from solely Web- or browser-based works" to "combining physical installations with online components" (Zapp 2004, 63). Zapp has now reframed these works and their contemporary implementations to the context-specific nomenclature of "mixed reality narratives and installations" (Zapp 2007).

Other researchers and practitioners have highlighted the combining of multiple networked devices and public spaces in general. In 2000, researchers and designers at the *Interactive Cinema Group of the MIT Media Laboratory* outlined their mission to develop what they term "very distributed storytelling":

> In addition to an evolving array of story elements, Very Distributed Storytelling uses a diverse array of presentation modalities and synergistic devices. The narrative of the future will take place simultaneously in multiple venues: on networked computer workstations, in large-scale public spaces, and on small mobile devices (such as pagers, cellular phones, and "wearable" computers).
>
> (Davenport et al. 2000, 457)

"The term *Very Distributed Storytelling,*" they explain, "*suggests* a new medium in which multicast, point-to-point networking and local computation converge to offer a

dynamic, morphogenic experience" (ibid., 456, original emphasis). The technologies include:

> Electronic remote-sensing devices, tiny "wearable" computers, sophisticated communications systems for voice, image, text, and other sensations, quality video projection at any desired size and resolution, "haptic" devices for input and display, and "intelligent" digital storytelling engines will converge within phantasmagorical frameworks for expression.
>
> (ibid., 467)

These specific media combinations are evident in earlier art theories and practices as well. In 1980—the year before IBM launched their first personal computer, MTV broadcast its first music video *Video Killed the Radio Star* by The Buggles, and the Director of Marketing and Business Development at CBS Television began building "the television industry's first multi-platform integrated marketing initiative" (Myers 2009)— artists Kit Galloway and Sherrie Rabinowintz installed their "public communication sculpture": *Hole-in-Space* (Galloway and Rabinowitz). It was discovered by pedestrians who, as they walked past the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City, realized the building windows were not mirroring them but were in fact broadcasting images of other people. Those other people were located at The Broadway department store, Century City, LA. As soon as each city realized they were communicating live (via satellite), cross-country communication ensued. Jokes were made and families and friends who hadn't seen each other for decades reunited, remotely. *Hole-in-Space* is a pivotal example of what art theorist Roy Ascott later called "telematic art".

Ascott explains that telematics is "a term used to designate computer-mediated communications networking involving telephone, cable, and satellite links between geographically dispersed individuals and institutions that are interfaced to data-processing systems, remote sensing devices, and capacious data storage banks" (Ascott 2003 [1990], 232). Artists who utilize such technologies engage in telematic art. Art theorist and critic Edward Shanken describes the features of Ascott's telematic art in ways that resonate with rhetoric about contemporary practices: permitting "the artist to liberate art from its conventional embodiment in a physical object located in a unique

geographic location"; it "provides a context for interactive aesthetic encounters and facilitates artistic collaborations among globally dispersed individuals"; it "emphasizes the process of artistic creation and the systematic relationship between artist, artwork, and audience as part of a social network of communication";  and "a distinctive feature of telematic art is the capability of computer-mediated communications to function *asynchronously*" (Shanken 2003, 53, original emphasis).

Sometimes it isn't networked technologies and environments that is the combination touted by theorists though. In his essay on "intermedia" (which is discussed in more detail in the next section), artist and scholar Dick Higgins highlights the combining of art media and life media (Higgins 2001 [1965]). For Higgins, there are "aesthetically rewarding possibilities" for employing art media and life media such as a painting and a shoe together (ibid., 49). What are the reasons for combining such media? Shanken's discussion of Kosuth's artwork earlier is relevant here: "his work investigated the relationship between art and non-art ideas, the vehicles by which they are expressed, and the semiotic networks that enable and delimit their meanings in multiple contexts" (Shanken 2002, 435). Irrespective of whether the media employed is life media (Higgins's shoe) or mass media (Kosuth's newspaper), the aesthetic impetus at play here (among others) is often to import non-art media into an art context and vice versa, to see how this changes our experience of the artwork, our understanding of art, and our understanding of life. Such experiments were, according to Higgins, "relatively unexplored" (Higgins 2001 [1965], 49).

Indeed, a new media can be any media that is traditionally not considered art, or any media that is simply new at the time. Early photography in the 1920s was described by historian Martyn Jolly as involving "an ever-changing mix of established media and emerging, 'cutting edge' technologies" (Jolly, cited in Dixon 2006). Similarly, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, during a "period of conglomeration within the media industries," writers of literature and performers in theatre were experimenting with the new medium of radio, and even attempting stories that were simultaneously performed on air and printed in magazines (Weedon 2007). Observing these recurring responses to whatever is

new at the time, some theorists have conceptualized new media not as a specific technology, but as a transhistorical phenomenon. For instance, new media culture theorist and critic Darren Tofts posits that "cyberculture is an instance of an ongoing tendency to alteration, a re-configuration of what it means to be human in the context of technology" (Tofts 2003, 3–4). It is concerned with "mutability, with intimations of transformation, variations in thinking about the division, indeed, the indivisibility, of human life and technology" (ibid.). Likewise, in his foreword to the edited collection of essays in *Multimedia: From Wagner to Virtual Reality*, science-fiction writer William Gibson states that:

> Multimedia, in my view, is not an invention but an ongoing discovery of how the mind and the universes it imagines (or vice versa, depending) fit together and interact. Multimedia is where we have always been going. Geeks and artboys, emerging together from the caves of Altamira, have long been about this great work. This book is one start toward a different sort of history, a history cognizant of an impulse that seems to me always to have been with us.
>
> (Gibson 2001, xiv)

When addressing the question of whether new media refers to specific technologies or any recent media, new media artist, theorist and critic Alan Sondheim claims that it is perhaps instead a state of mind:

> What I would honestly propose is that new media is not a _field_ but a _filter_. In this sense, fifty years from now, there would still be new media—not as a discipline, but a loose domain critiquing and producing within and upon whatever has come along at that point. In this sense, new media is not a discipline or noun or product or production but an ongoing process.
>
> (Sondheim 2004)

The same arguments have been put forward about practices related to transmedia. Theorist and critic Gene Youngblood explains that intermedia "has more to do with attitude than technology" (Youngblood 1970, 43), and Higgins argues that intermediality is not distinct to the 1960s, but has "always been a possibility since the most ancient times" and will remain "a possibility wherever the desire to fuse two or more existing media exists" (Higgins 2004 [1965], 18).

The point of these discussions is to highlight that the urge to combine distinct media occurs throughout time, in mass entertainment and independent arts, with any media that happens to be distinct or new or different at the time (sometimes relative to the practitioner). Art and non-art media, installations and networked technologies, old and new media, real and virtual realities are observable in many transmedia projects, but are not representative of all implementations. Therefore, while the particular media utilized entail different skills and result in very different experiences, it is the greater phenomenon of the urge to combine distinct media that is of concern here. That is, the study of transmedia practices is methodologically positioned to encompass any combining distinct media. This enables the study of this urge as a transhistorical and transartistic phenomenon; a research question that is obscured by media specificity. But what does combining mean? While the urge to combine distinct media is evident throughout time, the aim and outcome of this process is not always the same. This does not negate the notion of a transhistorical phenomenon, it merely explains how the same urge manifests in different ways to varying degrees at different times. The next section explains what is peculiar about transmedia practices.

## Transmedia as "UnMixed Media" Aesthetics

The "distinct media" characteristic of transmedia practices is invoked intentionally to denote the nature of the media being employed and the nature of the end-product. That is, transmedia practitioners employ media that are often the result of creative production cultures that have facilitated separate and different media. Further to this, these distinct media remain distinct, in that the end-point experience involves the traversal or use of media that are often haptically distinguished. The media cannot be physically compressed into the one object. This phenomenon is different to related practices such as intermedia, which involve the combining of distinct artforms with the result of a material fusion. Transmedia practices are characterized by what could be called unmixed media. That is, while there are congruencies between the aesthetic urge to combine, the outcome is different. To help illuminate the peculiar nature of transmedia practice, this section

explores these differences through a discussion about the nature of "intermedia" practices.

In 1965, Higgins introduced the term intermedia to "offer a means of ingress into works which already existed, the unfamiliarity of whose forms was such that many potential viewers, hearers, or readers were 'turned off' by them" (Higgins 2001 [1965], 52). It is a significant notion to discuss because its introduction coalesced a long-standing aesthetic approach, as Jack Ox and Jacques Mandelbrojt explain in their introduction to the special issue on intermedia in *Leonardo*: "Higgins did not invent these doings—many artists before him had achieved 'intermediality'—but he named the phenomenon and defined it in a way that created a framework for understanding and categorizing a set or group of like-minded activities" (Ox and Mandelbrojt 2001, 47). Higgins coined intermedia, Fluxus artist and theorist Ken Friedman explains, "to describe the tendency of an increasing number of the most interesting artists to cross the boundaries of recognized media or to fuse the boundaries of art with media that had not previously been considered art forms" (Friedman [1998]). Intermedia works brought together what had been artificially estranged:

> Much of the best work being produced today seems to fall between media. This is no accident. The concept of the separation between media arose in the Renaissance. The idea that a painting is made of paint on canvas or that a sculpture should not be painted seems characteristic of the kind of social thought—categorizing and dividing society into nobility with its various subdivisions, untitled gentry, artisans, serfs and landless workers—which we call the feudal conception of the Great Chain of Being. […] We are approaching the dawn of a classless society, to which separation into rigid categories is absolutely irrelevant.
>
> <div align="right">(Higgins 2004 [1965])</div>

The creation of works that combine conventionally separate artforms and/or media is a somewhat political as well as aesthetic act:

> Thus the happening developed as an intermedium, an uncharted land that lies between collage, music and the theater. It is not governed by rules; each work determines its own medium and form according to its needs. The concept itself is

better understood by what it is not, rather than what it is. Approaching it, we are pioneers again, and shall continue to be so as long as there's plenty of elbow room and no neighbors around for a few miles.

(ibid.)

Not all practices that bring together different media and artforms are intermedia though. Higgins distinguishes between mixed media and intermedia according the degree of integration. Opera is an example of mixed media for it has "music, the libretto, and the mise-en-scene" which are "quite separate: at no time is the operagoer in doubt as to whether he is seeing the mise-en-scene, the stage spectacle, hearing the music, etc." (ibid.). On the other hand, intermedia practices involve a fusion to the degree that elements cannot be separated. In her essay discussing her father's theory of intermedia, Hannah Higgins reinforces this notion of fusion with her argument that intermedia "refers to structural homologies, and not additive mixtures, which would be multimedia in the sense of illustrated stories or opera, where the various media types function independently of each other" (Higgins 2002, 61). An example she cites of fusion is the blending of musical and visual techniques in Jackson Mac Low's *A Notated Vocabulary for Eve Rosenthal* (1978) (see Figure 20).

Figure 20. Scan of part of *A Notated Vocabulary for Eve Rosenthal*
(Jackson Mac Low, 1978)
Image source: (Smith and Dean 1997, 164)

It is important to note too that the distinctions from opera are, among other functions, an attempt to distance intermedia from German opera composer Richard Wagner's "gesamtkunstwerk" or "total work of art":

> Artistic Man can only fully content himself by uniting every branch of Art into the *common* Artwork: in every *segregation* of his artistic faculties he is *un-free,* not fully that which he has the power to be; whereas in the *common* Artwork he is *free,* and fully that which he has power to be. […] The true Drama is only conceivable as proceeding from a *common urgence of every art* towards the most direct appeal to a common *public.* In this Drama, each separate art can only bare its utmost secret to their common public through a mutual parleying with the other arts; for the purpose of each separate branch of art can only be fully attained by the reciprocal agreement and co-operation of all the branches in their common message.
>
> (Wagner 2001 [1849], 4–5, original emphasis)

The difference between Wagnerian practices and intermedia has been further articulated by Jürgen Müller (Müller 1996). Since Müller's writings on this topic are not in English, I refer to Joki van de Poel who, in his dissertation on intermediality, discusses Müller's argument about the difference between the "multimediality" and "intermediality":

> He makes, like Wagner, a distinction between multimedia and intermedia along the lines of the functioning of media next to each other (*Nebeneinander*) and with each other (*Miteinander*). With *Nebeneinander* he means that the separate media function within a larger production but maintain there own qualities, concepts and structure, whereas in the *Miteinander* variant the different media function in an integrative way. The media take over each others structure or concepts and are changed in this integrative process.
>
> (Poel 2005, 36, original emphasis)

This notion of separation, or more appropriately *retention of separation*, is actually a key trait of transmedia projects. So, despite a higher-level congruency between transmedia and intermedia, it is the fact that the media remain distinct in transmedia projects that differentiates them from Higgins's intermedia. Interestingly, the notion of separation as an aesthetic is considered by digital media scholar Melanie Swalwell, when she makes the point that although intermedia is distinguished from works in which medial elements

are separated, there are times when "separation produces its own—arguably intermedial—results" (Swalwell 2002, 51). Such "unmixed media" utilize "separation itself […] to generate experimental combinations of media" (ibid., 49). Swalwell cites a collaboration between Merce Cunningham, John Cage and Robert Rauschenberg, as an example of extreme separation practices: which involved "each artist working in isolation on his or her aspect of the performance, sometimes not bringing the various elements together until opening night" (ibid., 50).

One can transpose the separation practices of this performance experiment to the transmedia context. In some transmedia practices there are large, isolated, teams that work on different compositions. The coming together does not occur as it does in the performance space. Instead, the coming together is actualized in the relations between the media, as cued by the hypertextual references. As Walker Rettberg observes, distributed narratives "are not *things* but connections" between things (Walker 2004, 91, original emphasis). There are "intermedial results" therefore (Swalwell 2002, 51), but the aesthetic is one of separation, of unmixed media. Indeed, the emphasis on creating an end-product that is integrated through techniques such as continuity and expansion is a way in which intermedial results can occur in the context of distinct practices and industries.

This does not mean transmedia practices are therefore akin to the "mixed" trait of Wagernian opera. As I explained earlier in this chapter, distinct media are always distinct. The end-point experience is therefore not premixed for the audience to experience through one interaction mode. If a theatre production entails an array of multimedia elements such as lighting, music, dance and singing, it would not be transmedia until the audience had to, for instance, pick up their mobile phone to SMS a message to a screen on the stage. The audience may also continue their experience at home, as in the case of a 2007 play by theatre producer and playwright Jason Grote: *1001*. For this experience, audiences could not only experience the play in the theatre, but could (either before or after the production) also view a specially-made website: *The Daily Times* (see Figure 21). Grote created the fictional newspaper to provide further detail about his fictional

world. Here the fictional world is experienced in the theatre and on a computer (presumably at home).



Figure 21. Screenshot of the online fictional newspaper 'The Daily Times', "www.1001NYC.com", *1001* (Jason Grote, 2007)

Likewise, the canvas of a painting can stretch beyond the gallery and onto the Internet, as tonyjohansen.com did with his artwork *GoFigure.Net.au* (2005). He describes the work as a "triptych in four parts" and entered it into the prestigious Australian Archibald Art Prize in 2005 (Barker 2005). The work comprised three paintings in the gallery, while the forth was only available online (see Figures 22 and 23). In both of these transmedia compositions, distinct media are fused at a conceptual, not material, level.

Figure 22. Image of gallery self-portrait for
*GoFigure.Net.au*
(TonyJohansen.com, 2005)
Image source: (Artistportfolio.net)

Figure 23. Image of online self-portrait for
*GoFigure.net.au*
(TonyJohansen.com, 2005)
Image source: (TonyJohansen.com 2005)

Therefore, while transmedia projects do share a concern with bringing together media and artforms that are distinct, in transmedia projects each distinct media retains its manifest nature. Fusion does exist in transmedia projects, but it happens at an abstract level. It is characterized by a conceptual synthesis of separate media rather than an assemblage or transformation at the expressive or material level. The peculiar challenge of this approach is to bring together elements that are disparate, incompatible or isolated, in a way that retains their independent nature. This approach does not try to change that which is manifest, but tries to find connections at a level that reconfigures them conceptually. The objects change, but that change happens around the materials, within the minds of those who design and experience them. Unity is perceived, variety is manifest.

## *Summary*

The employment of distinct media and environments therefore does not just indicate the nature of the communication resources, but the creative production cultures, end-experience and design issues that are peculiar to transmedia practice. It is a practice that does in part come from a history of commercially-driven factors. But as argued, these commercial imperatives can be conceived not necessarily as competing forces, but as part of a complex design ecology. This design ecology includes the rising prevalence of

branded entertainment, which is evidence of, once again, a higher value being placed on the creative character of elements that were previously considered "ancillary". It is a practice that shares an aesthetic concern with intermedia practices across time and creative sectors, but is differentiated by its "unmixed" outcome. This means the practice is not defined by a convergence of technologies, thus indicating a hybrid medium, but instead indicates a practice that involves an intangible convergence. As Jenkins has surmised, it is a cultural not technical convergence. The rest of this thesis explains how this conceptual convergence operates in practice. That is, how practitioners develop content that is appropriate to a transmedia expression. The next chapter begins this task by drawing on relations theories from media and narrative studies to distinguish between the expansion and adaptation practices of transmedia practitioners.

# Chapter 3: *Relations Theories and Distinguishing Transmedia Types and Practice*

The boundaries of films, computer games,
and other entertainment media are expanding ever outward
as they intersect with diverse media in a multitude of ways.
(Ndalianis 2004, 72)

More and more, storytelling has become the art of world building,
as artists create compelling environments that
cannot be fully explored or exhausted
within a single work or even a single medium.
(Jenkins 2006, 114)

In the previous chapter I discussed, among other things, how franchises have changed, and what the nature of distinct media and environments means in terms of the nature of transmedia practice. In this chapter I delve beyond the nature of the medium to the content or discourse of transmedia projects. This is because theorists have argued that transmedia phenomena can be best understood by an end-product trait: a transtextual relation between compositions. That is, Jenkins, Long, and others argue that transmedia storytelling is pivoted on the characteristic of a "story [that] unfolds across multiple media platforms with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole" (Jenkins 2006, 95–96). Further arguments by Jenkins and others affirm that this view is specific to an "expansive" structural relation: where stories continue or provide new content in each medium. Although Jenkins doesn't explicitly exclude other structural relations in his book (ibid.), he has made it clear in other arenas that he does not regard adaptation as part of the transmedia storytelling phenomenon: "for many of us, a simple adaptation may be "transmedia" but it is not 'transmedia storytelling' because it is simply re-presenting an existing story rather than expanding and annotating the fictional world" (Jenkins 2009).

I have in the past taken these arguments at face value, preferring to see them rhetorical strategies designed to help people understand that a story doesn't have to finish in the same medium it began in. However, there has been a continuous affirming by Jenkins and

others of the importance of an end-product trait (a structural relation) to identify the phenomenon, and an emphasis on expansion over adaptation. On the latter, Long explains that transmedia storytelling is different to adaptation: "Retelling a story in a different media type is *adaptation*, while using multiple media types to craft a single story is *transmediation*" (Long 2007, 22, original emphasis); and Smith likewise felt the "distinction must be made between transmedia extensions and adaptations" (Smith 2009, 24). While Smith recognises "some people may consider a visually pleasing and entertaining adaptation 'a distinct and valuable' contribution to a franchise," they are still "redundant adaptations" that do not contribute "a new part of the overall story" (Smith 2009, 25).

In this chapter I interrogate the issues associated with defining the transmedia phenomenon according to an end-product trait, and the specific end-product trait of expansion. The first part of this chapter problematises the argument for expansion, explaining that this trait is only applicable to projects that involve multiple compositions such as a film, game and book. This is only one type of transmedia practice, the other of which is a single composition that is itself transmedia (a cross-media game, for instance, that is played with portable media, a live event and the Internet). The two are both significant types of transmedia practice that need to be recognised, but which entail different design issues, experiences and methodologies.

The first section distinguishes between these different types of transmedia fictions for the purpose of illustrating how current theories do not necessarily capture the diverse nature of this phenomenon. While studying a variety of forms is not argued to be a prerequisite, a consequence of such an approach is a lack of recognition of the breadth and diverse nature of transmedia practice. The methodological orientation of this thesis, therefore, is concerned with recognizing a variety of transmedia practices. The types are described through the notion of *intracompositional* and *intercompositional* phenomena. That is, some works are transmedia works themselves, while others can be transmedia because of the relations between works. Or, to put it another way, a street game that involves

multiple devices is a transmedia project, and a fictional world expressed across a feature film and a console game may also be a transmedia project.

For me, the expansion versus adaptation argument is predominantly specific to intercompositional transmedia phenomena. That is, it is only an issue for projects that involve multiple compositions. This is not surprising as most of the theorists are from a media studies background (therefore concerned with mass entertainment), or interrogating changes to large-scale projects in general. Nevertheless, the argument is, as I will explain shortly, specific to intercompositional and not all transmedia phenomena. The first part of this chapter discusses issues related intercompositional transmedia phenomena. It is in these sections I challenge the argument that transmedia phenomena can be understood with a structural relation, even for intercompositional practices only. I argue structural traits do not indicate what is different about this phenomenon. I am not alone with this view. Long, for instance, argues that transmedia storytelling is better identified by cohesion and canon (Long 2007, 33–34). Designing projects to be part of the canon from the outset, and to ensure continuity, are traits that, in my mind, lean towards the notion of transmedia practice. That is, the nature of an intercompositional transmedia phenomenon is not identified in end-product traits necessarily, but in the processes, knowledge and skills that produce it.

These views don't mean structural traits aren't relevant. The rich history of transtextuality studies does aid understanding of transmedia practices. However, it is important that such theories are not simply overlaid onto transmedia practices. Transmedia practices are a different phenomena than those studied in the theories of intertextuality, transtextuality and more recently with transfictionality. So, while the insights gained can (and will) be invoked in transmedia studies, I will explain how the phenomena being studied is not analogous and why this is important. From these disputations of the criteria of structural relations criteria and the applicability of transtextual theory, it becomes clear that intercompositional transmedia phenomena needs to be further defined. How are transmedia practices different from other phenomena? In the next section I discuss a

practice-oriented approach to understanding what is different: explaining how practitioners facilitate continuity.

The next section problematises further the argument against transmedia adaptation. I argue that the rationale of these arguments perpetrates a denigration of adaptation and denies the semiotic role of the delivery technology. But key to this argument for adaptation is the notion of transmedia adaptation practice being different to conventional adaptation practices. That is, there is a difference in the design and experience of adaptations that are intended to work together to communicate meaning, and are equal points of entry for different audiences.

Intracompositional transmedia practices are then discussed. I further explain how intercompositional theories are not always applicable to intracompositional transmedia phenomena. For instance, they do not and cannot involve "self-containment" because each unit is highly dependent. It is not a relationship between works, but between units within a work. To illuminate the nature of intracompositional practices I discuss a variety of implementations. I then draw on two theories that are specific to intracompositional transmedia phenomena. Walker Rettberg and Montola argue that their respective phenomena are best understood as breaking the boundaries of narrative and game norms. While transmedia practices do involve a breaking of boundaries in many ways, I argue the particular boundary they highlight is specific to those exterior to the phenomenon. But none of these interrogations can happen without first understanding what intra- and intercompositional transmedia phenomena is and why it is important to recognise the differences.

## *Recognising Inter- and IntraCompositional Transmedia Phenomena*

Some theorists define transmedia phenomena according to relations observed between works, and others do not. So, unlike Walker Rettberg (Walker 2004), Montola (Montola 2005; Montola 2009) and McGonigal (McGonigal 2006), theorists such as Jenkins (Jenkins 2006), Ruppel (Ruppel 2005a; Ruppel 2005b), Long (Long 2007) and Smith

(Smith 2009) are concerned with relationships between feature films, television shows, computer games and pervasive or ubiquitous games rather than the nature of a transmedia work in itself. Why is this important? Without delving into how these phenomena differ from others, all adaptations, remixes and franchises have the same amorphous, transhistorical identity. Jenkins, Ruppel, Long and Smith, therefore, have attempted to differentiate these phenomena from other franchises or large-scale projects. Essentially, the argument they have put forward is that contemporary transmedia phenomena are differentiated by a specific structural trait.

Jenkins, Ruppel, Long and Smith define their respective phenomena according to the delivery of *unique* content across media platforms. Jenkins argues what is significant about contemporary franchises is that a "story unfolds across multiple media platforms with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole" (Jenkins 2006, 95–96). He continues:

> In the ideal form of transmedia storytelling, each medium does what it does best—so that a story might be introduced in a film, expanded through television, novels, and comics; its world might be explored through game play or experienced as an amusement park attraction.
>
> (ibid.)

A now well-known example Jenkins cites is the continuation of a "storyline" across three media platforms (anime DVD short, computer game and feature film) in the Wachowski Brothers' *The Matrix*. In 2003, Andy and Larry Wachowski released a story across three different works: a short anime (Japanese style animation), digital game and feature film. Each of these compositions are self-contained, but also have a continuing narrative that run through all of them[6]. In the short 2003 anime, 'The Last Flight of Osiris,' the character Jue and her crew discover the machines are drilling to Zion. Their aim is to warn Zion of the impending danger by sending a message to the Nebuchadnezzar crew.

---

[6] Television theorist Robin Nelson describes this type of narrative structure as "flexi-narrative", which has "the joint advantage of an unresolved narrative strand—a cliff-hanger to draw the audience to watch the next episode—and a new group of characters and self-contained stories in each episode" (Nelson 1997, 34).

At the end of the story Jue just manages to post the letter (thus ending a narrative thread), but what happens to the letter is not revealed in the anime (a continuing thread). Instead, what happens is dealt with in the 2003 digital game, *Enter the Matrix* where the first mission for the player is to retrieve the letter from the post office. The player succeeds in continuing the narrative but the consequences of that action are not revealed in the game. It is at the beginning of the second film, *The Matrix Reloaded* (Warner Brothers, 2003), when Niobe (who is one of two player-characters in the game) reports on the "last transmissions of the Osiris": the transmissions posted in the anime and retrieved by players in the digital game. To Jenkins, the continuation of the storyline across media platforms is the peculiar and defining trait of transmedia storytelling. Jenkins is not alone in this view. In 2004, media theorist Matthew Kappell, put forward the argument that *The Matrix* differs from other franchises such as *Star Wars* in a similar way:

> When the first of the *Star Wars* films was released in 1977, it quickly received immense cultural popularity. What then happened helped change popular culture forever. But this change, ushered in by *Star Wars* and similar films, was only one of quantity, in that there were more products to purchase, but they did nothing to help tell the story of the films. […] Unlike the case with *Star Wars* or any other similar franchise, the Wachowskis have shown us that it is now possible to add needed details to the entire franchise through the use of different media. We believe this makes the *Matrix* franchise a new form of entertainment, and one likely we will be seeing more of in the future. It did not take long for the Wachowski brothers to get from toying "with the idea of continuing the story in comic book form when the movies are finished" (Wachowski brothers interview, 1999) to publication of "volume one, Fall 2003" of *The Matrix Comics*.
>
> (Kapell 2004, 183–184)

Based on the publications he has made available, Ruppel shares a similar view with what he terms cross-sited narratives. For Ruppel, these "multi-sited narrative networks" "do not constitute simple 'retellings'—stories told and retold down a chain, mimicking oral forms" (Ruppel 2005b). Specifically, Ruppel argues there are two structures to this phenomenon: horizontally and vertically cross-sited narratives (Ruppel 2005a). Horizontally cross-sited narratives involve "the *expansion* of a narrative across media''; and like Jenkins, Ruppel argues *The Matrix* is the prototypical horizontal cross-sited

narrative because of this expansion (Ruppel 2005a, original emphasis)[7]. Long also agrees, stating that transmedia storytelling involves the expansion of a story across media platforms, so that "the first chapter of a narrative might be a TV show, the second a film, and the third a video game" (Long 2007, 13). Smith likewise feels the "distinction must be made between transmedia extensions and adaptations" (Smith 2009, 24). Therefore, what Kapell, Jenkins, Long, Smith and Ruppel argue (and I have previously (Dena 2006)), is the phenomenon is identified by this specific structural relationship: expansion, or addition.

Walker Rettberg, McGonigal and Montola, on the other hand, are chiefly concerned with the nature of works that are transmedia themselves. Even though they cite works that are actually part of a larger fictional world—both McGonigal and Montola, for instance, refer to *The Beast* and *I Love Bees,* which are part of existing fictional worlds: *The Beast* is an official production set with in the *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence* fictional world of the 2001 feature film (which is an adaptation of Brian Aldiss's 1969 short story *Super-Toys Last All Summer Long*), and *I Love Bees* (as I mentioned earlier) was commissioned to promote the launch of Bungie Entertainment's 2004 computer game *Halo 2*—neither theorist had the methodological goal of determining the relationships between these compositions and their respective feature film, book or computer game.

One could criticise the game studies approach represented by McGonigal and Montola for ignoring the greater fictional world (and institutional factors) their objects are situated in. Indeed, textual studies scholar Steven E. Jones argues that game scholars should "stop treating games as formal, self-contained objects (even if 'interactive' ones) and start recognizing that they are always played within dynamic material and social circumstances" (Jones 2005). But, all of the approaches exercised by theorists are pertinent to understanding transmedia practice. Why? The theory of transmedia practice pivots on a key single trait: the employment of multiple distinct media, and environments. This unifying trait is one that can be implemented in many creative practices, industries,

---

[7] Ruppel's second trait (vertically cross-sited narratives) describes a rhetorical device, and so will be discussed in the penultimate chapter of this thesis.

countries and cultures. It can be recognised in a single creative work or from the relationships between works. This wide goal *requires an interrogation of all implementations*.

To further explain the differences and implications of these implementations, I introduce the notion of *intercompositional* and *intracompositional* transmedia phenomena. In this thesis I employ the term composition to denote a work, or in some cases the equivalent of a game, installation, film, book or painting. But of course in the transmedia context such medium-specific nomenclature is not appropriate. Whereas for some the material boundary of a work is somewhat analogous to the abstract boundary of the work (a story begins and ends in a book for instance), this is not the case with transmedia projects. It is therefore not appropriate to label a transmedia entity a film, book or television show, because the work (the story for instance) may be expressed across all of these. One may refer to a film, novel or television episode when these terms denote that part of the material expression of the fictional world; but they do not, in the transmedia context, denote the boundary of the fictional world, or even a story or game. Further to this, a transmedia project may not be utilise a film, book, television show or painting at all. It may be employ a number of websites, artworks, billboards, faxes, objects and live events.

Narrative theorist Werner Wolf faced a similar nomenclature problem in his study of "intermediality". Intermediality was introduced by Aage A. Hansen-Löve (Hansen-Löve 1983) to augment Genette's transtextual relations between literary texts. Intermediality was needed, Wolf explains, to "capture relations between literature and the visual arts," but has since developed to encompass all "heteromedial" relations (Wolf 2005a, 252). The study of intermediality "includes not only various genres and groups of texts but also artefacts, performances, installations, and so on" (ibid.). Therefore, Wolf prefers the more accurate terminology of "semiotic complexes or entities," "work," or "composition" (ibid., 252–253).

The two high-level transmedia types proposed here are developed from Wolf's typology of intermediality (Wolf 2002). Wolf's typology includes two top-level categories of what

he calls "intracompositional" and "extracompositional" phenomena. Intracompositional phenomena are "observed exclusively within given works" (ibid., 13). Examples of intracompositional phenomena include Thomas Hardy's pictorializations in his novel *Under the Greenwood Tree,* and the musicalization of literature in Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point* (ibid., 26). Whereas extracompositional phenomena refers to relations "between works transmitted in different media" (ibid., 13) or "forms which result from relations or comparisons between medially different semiotic entities" (Wolf 2005a, 253); such as the intermedial relations between Patrick White's novel *Voss* and Richard Meale and David Malouf's operatic version: *Singing the Nation* (Wolf 2002, 20).

Fundamentally, Wolf's typology outlines two approaches: to study intracompositional intermediality is to observe intermedial phenomena within a single work; to study extracompositional intermediality is to observe intermedial phenomena across many works. It is these two types of phenomena that are transposed to the study of transmedia projects. Before I elaborate, I should explain why Wolf's term *extra*compositional has been modified here to *inter*compositional. This change is to decouple "extra" from compositional parlance, because in narrative (and media) studies, extra often denotes a different creator. It is important to ensure the term operates purely in reference to more than one composition, while at the same time enabling those compositions to be by different or the same creators. Therefore, intracompositional and intercompositional refers to a single composition and the relations between compositions respectively. The rest of this chapter explains how these two approaches illuminate the theoretical and design implications of transmedia practice.

## *Theorising InterCompositional Transmedia Phenomena*

The notion of *intercompositional transmedia phenomena* is introduced to frame the study of transmedia phenomena that involve multiple compositions. In Figure 24, I illustrate two types of intercompositional transmedia phenomena. I explain these types through examples, but I should mention that these diagrams are purely for illustrative purposes to indicate the difference between intercompositional and intracompositional phenomena, and so they don't represent all of the intricacies. The first type of intercompositional

phenomena is evidenced in the fictional world of *Twin Peaks,* which was expressed across a television series, feature film and three books; the second is *Halo 2* and *I Love Bees*.
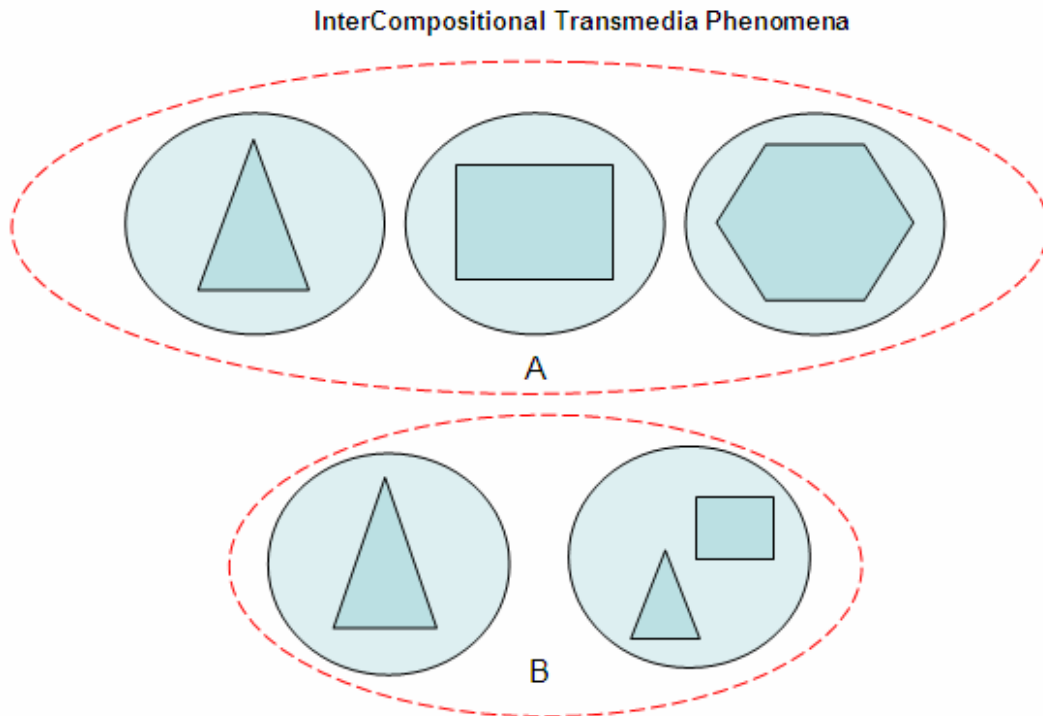


Figure 24. Two types of intercompositional transmedia phenomena.
'A' has three mono-medium compositions (eg: TV show/series, feature film and book)
'B' has a mono-medium composition and a transmedia composition (eg: film and cross-media game).

The *Twin Peaks* fictional world is expressed across the television series (which was co-created by David Lynch and Mark Frost) as well as many books and a feature film. As I explained in the previous chapter, between season 1 and 2, *The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer* was published (written by Jennifer Lynch). The background of the character investigating the murder, Agent Cooper, is revealed in the 1991 book *The Autobiography of F.B.I. Special Agent Dale Cooper: My Life, My Tapes*, written by Mark Frost's brother Scott Frost. There was also a 1991 travel guide to the fictional town of Twin Peaks, written by David Lynch, Mark Frost and Richard Saul Wurman: *Welcome to Twin Peaks: Access® Guide to the Town*. And finally, in 1992, David Lynch directed the feature film *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*.

Each of the works in the fictional world—the television episodes, feature film and books—are compositions in themselves. They are substantial works in their own right. But they become intercompositional phenomena when they are studied according to their fictional world, the relations between the compositions and the producer. They are represented with illustration A. In A, the triangle, square and hexagram represent distinct media. In this case, the triangle may be the television series (which isn't represented in as episodes but merely as a distinct media), the square is the film (which can denote a cinema, broadcast television or DVD), and the hexagram is a book. The blue circles encompassing the triangle, square and hexagram, represent the stories associated with those media platforms. So the hexagram and blue circle around it, for instance, represents the book and the story. That is one composition. When we look at the feature film, television series and books, we have multiple compositions, making them intercompositional transmedia phenomena. Researchers can study any one of these compositions, but to study the relationships between them is to be concerned with intercompositional phenomena.

*I Love Bees* and *Halo 2*, represent a different type of intercompositional transmedia phenomena. *I Love Bees* was created by 42 Entertainment but commissioned to promote the launch of Bungie Entertainment's 2004 computer game *Halo 2*. As an alternate reality game, it was expressed through multiple websites, videos, live events and importantly, payphones. It is therefore a transmedia fiction in itself. So in the illustrative example of B, the triangle and its blue circle represent the mono-medium composition of the digital game, while the small triangle and square with the blue circle represents the other composition, which encompasses multiple distinct media. The alternate reality game is a transmedia fiction in itself (making it intracompositional), but its relationship to the digital game makes it intercompositional phenomena as well. Researchers can study the alternate reality game in isolation, the digital game in isolation, or the relationships between the two (and any other compositions that make up the *Halo* universe).

*Prima facie,* intercompositional phenomena has been practiced for centuries and has been explained through many theories. Indeed, film historian and theorist David Bordwell comments that "transmedia storytelling is very, very old":

> The Bible, the Homeric epics, the Bhagvad-gita, and many other classic stories have been rendered in plays and the visual across centuries. There are paintings portraying episodes in mythology and Shakespeare plays. More recently, film, radio, and television have created their own versions of literary or dramatic or operatic works. The whole area of what we now call adaptation is a matter of stories passed among media.
>
> (Bordwell 2009)

However, transmedia projects are a different kind of intercompositional phenomena. The many texts of the Bible are not analogous to the many media of *The Beast.* As explained earlier, theorists have attempted to explain how this phenomenon is different through the structural relation of expansion. That is, those previous types of "storytelling" are not transmedia storytelling because they are adaptations.[8] Therefore, before I explain how they are different, I first need to further examine the argument that the phenomenon is best understood by an end-product trait.

## The Problem with End-Product Traits

> What matter who's speaking?
> (Foucault 1977, 115)

The respective theories of Jenkins, Long and Smith define the phenomenon according to (among other traits) the end-product trait of expansion. That is, the phenomenon can be understood as the addition of new information across media, something that is garnered from analysing the end-product. I argue this is a misplaced emphasis on the additive structural characteristic as a defining trait of the transmedia phenomenon. The highlighting of that structural trait of expansion (unique content) has resulted in many researchers, students, practitioners and commentators identifying all franchises, marketing campaigns, indeed almost any intercompositional phenomena with this

---

[8] I wish to briefly note here that I do not consider these earlier texts "storytelling". As Ryan notes, fiction and nonfiction seem to be an invention of the age of print (Ryan 2008, 395).

structurally additive trait throughout time as transmedia storytelling. While it may be the case this trait was perceivably uncommon in the past, and is a significant contemporary phenomenon, works with an additive structural relationship can be (and have been) articulated by anyone—by fans, by practitioners in different departments, different companies, without any creative impetus or oversight—and can be completely inconsequential to the meaning of the work. Indeed, media scholars Christian Krug and Joachim Frenk find the expansive trait is not the crux of the phenomenon:

> While we believe that Kapell and other scholars have touched on a crucial aspect in their description of the *Matrix* franchise, we would argue that the outstanding feature of the franchise is situated on a different level. The franchise is not remarkable because supplementary texts now elaborate on or even modify the story of a successful pretext—after all, Hollywood has made films out of successful comic books and has expanded on the myths that inform these pre-texts (*Superman, Batman*). Rather, the radically new potential of the *Matrix* franchise derives from the status of the various media involved in the process.
>
> (Krug and Frenk 2006, 75)

Here, Krug and Frenk make the observation that expansive practices have been implemented before and while their implementations are more prevalent—and have undergone what Marshall describes as an "intensification and elaboration" (Marshall 2002, 69)—it is not a structural relation that is a significant change in franchises. Indeed, one aspect of this argument is that almost anyone can implement an elaboration or modification of a pre- or prototext. Unofficial and official expansions are evident throughout history. Structural relationships can be observed between *anything* and articulated by *anyone*. But, due to the prevalence of certain practices over the past few decades, some have developed associations between certain structural relations and its source. Consider the following relations as a case in point:

Composition X is REMIXED in Composition Y

Composition X is ADAPTED in Composition Y

Composition X CONTINUES in Composition Y

These relations do not indicate an authorial relationship, but each of those structural relations has become for some married to a source. For instance, remixing is an anarchic and in many cases illegal practice undertaken by an "other"; adaptations are the handy work of a franchise machine and not the original creator; while the continuation of story in another medium is undoubtedly the product of some new Hollywood storytelling approach. But the reality is, I cannot tell from the structural relationship alone whether these were undertaken by a fan, provocateur, pirate, licensee, artist, by the same person, or a creatively-organized group; and each of these sources are inextricably linked to its meaning, and has implications in the design. Here is where the difference lies: not what the structural relation is per say, but whether each composition is intended to be a part of the meaning-making process. As Krug and Frenk propose, it is "status of the various media involved" (Krug and Frenk 2006, 75).

I argue what differentiates this phenomenon is that it is a transmedia practice, a practice where practitioners are either undertaking it themselves or co-constructing them to be a part of the meaning-making process: adapting, remixing and continuing their fictional world across distinct media and environments. While it isn't remarkable that creators expand their work (seriality attests to that), it is remarkable that they are expanding their fictional world across distinct media. Bordwell identified the same characteristic when he commented that the "platform-shifting" nature of transmedia storytelling is "planned and executed at the creative end, moving the story world calculatedly across media" (Bordwell 2009). These efforts are different to the content that is "created by audience members without the permission, or even the knowledge, of the creators" (ibid.).

Bordwell also offers Genette's theory of transpositions as a helpful starting point "because he anticipated several possibilities we're seeing now" (ibid.). However, it is important to note that currently, theories which recognise intercompositional phenomena (such as Genette's) do not recognise transmedia practice; instead they are predominantly concerned with relations *between compositions by distinct creators*. It is important to highlight this difference not to exclude the theories, but to ensure the peculiar nature of the transmedia phenomenon is understood.

## InterCompositional Relations Theories

In this section I discuss what I term *intercompositional relations theories* from narrative and media studies: "dialogism," "transtextuality," "intertextuality" and "transfictionality". By this I mean theories that are concerned with the relations between compositions. While the relations these theories recognise are highly relevant to this study, they describe very different phenomena. That is, existing intercompositional relations theories are constructed to observe relations between compositions created with the same medium, by different and isolated practitioners, practitioners who were often not creatively involved with the composition they are transforming or expanding in some way, unlike transmedia practices.

An important historical forerunner of many intercompositional relations theories is philosopher and semiotician Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism (Bakhtin 1981 [1930s]a). Dialogism was introduced by Bakhtin in the 1930s to bridge the gap between scholarship of the development of the novel and the reality of its influences. "Historians of literature," Bakhtin explained, tend to see genre reformation as the result of "the struggle of literary tendencies and schools" (Bakhtin 1981 [1930s]b, 5). While these struggles exist, "they are peripheral phenomena and historically insignificant" (ibid.). Bahktin argues that what is missing from these studies is the interplay between literary works and their "double":

> It is our conviction that there never was a single strictly straightforward genre, no single type of direct discourse—artistic, rhetorical, philosophical, religious, ordinary everyday—that did not have its own parodying and travestying double, its own comic-ironic *contre-partie*.
>
> (Bakhtin 1981 [1930s]c, 53, original emphasis)

This *contre-partie* provides "the corrective of laughter and criticism to all existing straightforward genres, languages, styles, voices; to force men to experience beneath these categories a different and contradictory reality that is otherwise not captured in them" (ibid., 59). Dialogism recognizes the ongoing conversations between the monologic (canonized works) and its *contre-partie*, as Michael Holquist explains:

> Dialogism is the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia. Everything means, is understood, as part of a greater whole—there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others. Which will affect the other, how it will do so and in what degree is what is actually settled at the moment of utterance.
>
> (Holquist 1981 [1930s], 426)

In admittedly simplistic terms, dialogism acknowledges a dialogue—a conversation between genres, languages and cultures in terms of the motivations to create new texts, the interpretation of them and how they influence each other. Fundamentally, in this context and in contemporary parlance, dialogism recognises the relations between official and unofficial texts, and always by distinct practitioners. Despite the attention to this particular object of study, Bakhtin's observations of the relations between texts, how they shape each other and our interpretation of them, inspired much scholarship in narrative and media studies.

Transtextuality or intertextuality includes a raft of theories in narrative studies that build on the theoretical heritage of Bahktin's dialogism. Indeed, literary scholar Julia Kristeva's intertextuality (Kristeva 1986 [1969]), Michael Riffaterre's intertexte (Riffaterre 1979; Riffaterre 1980) and Genette's transtextuality (Genette 1997 [1982]) are all concerned with the study of "all that sets the text in relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts" (ibid., 1). However, it was Genette's study that provided an unprecedented comprehensive analysis of the various ways texts can relate to each other. While Genette attends to five top-level categories—which he defines as intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, architextuality and hypertextuality—the majority of his book focuses on hypertextual relations.[9] Hypertextuality describes any relationship between two literary texts beyond commentary, and could be described here as the relations between literary texts that reference the same fictional world in some way. Genette documents over sixty ways in which a second text imitates or transforms a

---

[9] Genette's hypertextual is of course different to hypertexuality as it is known in digital media studies. For instance, George P. Landow describes hypertext as "text composed of blocks of text […] and the electronic links that join them" (Landow 1997, 3). "It denotes an information medium that links verbal and nonverbal information" (ibid.).

previous one. In most cases the texts are *literary texts*, by *different, distinct, authors*, but there are some exceptions though. While Genette undoubtedly focuses on literary texts, there are references to what he terms "hyperartistic practices" (ibid., 384–387). But even then these are predominately relations between works within the same artform rather than relations between different artforms. For example, Genette cites Marcel Duchamp's *L.H.O.O.Q.* as an example of "pictorial parody" of Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* (ibid., 384).

There are also occasions when Genette refers to same-author (what he terms "autotextuality") relations between texts. These autotextual relations are mentioned in his discussion of "transposition" and "translation" when he refers to bi-lingual writers such as Samuel Beckett and Vladimir Nabokov, who do "self-translations" (ibid., 214); in his discussion of "expansion" when he refers to Queneau's own expansions (ibid., 261); in his discussion of "transtylizations" when he refers to Queneau's *Exercises in Style* (ibid., 226); and when he describes Valery and Mallarmé as "self-transtylizations" (ibid., 227). This "self" prefix often re-emerges: "self-hypotext" {(ibid.), "self-excision" (ibid., 231), "self-expurgation" (ibid., 235), "self-concision" (ibid., 237), "self-condensation" (ibid., 243), "self-adaptation" (ibid., 278), "self-transvocalisation" (ibid., 290), and even an "autographic epilogue" (ibid., 208). However, Genette makes it clear that these practices are exterior to his study of transtextuality:

> An author who prolongs his work doubtless does imitate himself in a certain way, unless he transcends himself, betrays himself, or collapses, but all that has little to do with hypertextuality. […] This "autotextuality" or "intratextuality," is a specific form of transtextuality, which ought perhaps to be considered in itself— but no hurry.
>
> (ibid., 207)

Genette also comments in his brief discussion of self-transtylization that he shall not "theorize on the paratextual function of the foretext, or self-hypotext; [as] this may be the topic of another inquiry" (ibid., 227). Therefore, while Genette has included what he has variously described as "intratextuality," "autotextuality" and "autographic" in his book, they are all antithetical to his theory of hypertextuality, which observes relations between

texts (literary works) by distinct authors. While many of the relations Genette observes relate to many practices, the idea that intra- or autotextuality is a different inquiry highlights the peculiarity of transmedia practice. That is, there are (at least) two important insights to gain from this understanding. One is that it is important to consider the producer of a work as well as the end-point characteristics (such as a structural relation) to further understand the nature of the relations (indeed the work). The other is that while structural relations do provide a rich method to understanding practices, they can be applied to and therefore illuminate quite different phenomena. The phenomenon of one author prolonging the work of another, is different to one author continuing their own. What happens when authorship is not an overt part of a theory?

To Genette, intertextuality refers to "the actual presence of one text within another" (a quotation for example) (ibid., 2). In media studies though, intertextuality is developed from Kristeva's notion of intertextuality (Kristeva, 1986 [1969]), Robert Stam (Stam 1988) and (predominately) the theorist that inspired Kristeva and Stam: Bakhtin and his dialogism (Bakhtin 1981 [1930s]a). This is largely due to the fact that Genette's theory wasn't widely disseminated in English until 1997, while key forerunners of intertextuality produced theories in English in the 1980s. Indeed, Kristeva has been credited with introducing Bakhtin's ideas to Western scholars through, among others, her essay 'Word, Dialogue and Novel,' which was written in 1966, published in French in 1969 and translated to English in 1980 (Toril Moi, in Kristeva 1986 [1969], 34). Kristeva explained that "Bakhtin was one of the first to replace the static hewing out of texts with a model where literary structure does not simply *exist* but is generated in relation to *another* structure" (Kristeva 1986 [1969], 35-36, original emphasis). "Dialogism," Kristeva continues, is "the concept of relation" (ibid., 58). It "enable[s] us to understand intertextual *relationships*" (ibid., 40, original emphasis), it "identifies writing as both subjectivity and communication, or better, as intertextuality" (ibid., 39).

Media scholars embraced Bakhtin, Kristeva and Stam's intertextuality as a way to explain how contemporary mass entertainment operated. The issue to be observed here is not just the difference between Genette's intertextuality and intertextuality as it is theorised in

media studies, but that media scholars have applied (what is analogous to) hypertextual relations between texts (texts in media studies is employed in the general sense, not literary works) created by the same or distinct practitioners. That is, media studies intertextuality recognises an ever increasing set of relations between texts created within franchises and in popular culture in general, irrespective of their sources. This is perhaps not surprising, since "[t]he situation in mass-media fiction is quite different insofar as authorial considerations do not weight as much as they do in literature proper" (Saint-Gelais 2005, 613).

Important early media studies writings on intertextuality include Fiske's study in the context of mass entertainment (Fiske 1987). Fiske explains that "the theory of intertextuality proposes that any one text is necessarily read in relationship to others" (ibid., 108). But unlike Genette's "palimpsestuous reading" where each text is read in relation to another (Genette 1997 [1982], 399, original emphasis removed), Fiske argues "there is no need for readers to be familiar with specific or the same texts to read intertextually" (Fiske 1987, 108)[10]. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, for Fiske there are two dimensions to intertextual relations: horizontal and vertical. Horizontal intertextuality refers to relations "between primary texts that are more or less explicitly linked, usually along the axes of genre, character, or content"; while vertical intertextuality is "between a primary text, such as a television program or series, and other texts of a different type that refer explicitly to it" (such as "studio publicity, journalistic features, or criticism, or tertiary texts produced by the viewers themselves") (ibid.). Here, Fiske is in a sense referring to an intertextual reading process: where relations between texts can be garnered from contiguous elements one observes, and how the experience of them is tempered or informed by the "secondary texts" around them. This is not a theory of transmedia practice. Kinder describes the area in similar terms:

---

[10] This view is not representative of all media studies accounts of intertextuality. Bennett and Woollacot's notion of 'inter-textuality' refers to 'the social organisation of the relations between texts within specific conditions of reading' (Bennett and Woollacott 1987, 44–45), and Ndalianis explains that 'neo-baroque intertextuality [...] is reliant on an alternative elite [where] … paths are successfully traversed by individuals who are literate in media that are available to many' (Ndalianis 2004, 94).

> In contemporary media studies, intertextuality has come to mean that any
> individual text (whether an artwork like a movie or novel, or a more
> commonplace text like a newspaper article, billboard, or casual verbal remark) is
> part of a larger cultural discourse and therefore must be read in relationship to
> other texts and their diverse textual strategies and ideological assumptions. [...]
> Thus, even if the author or reader of a particular text is not consciously aware of
> the other texts with which it is connected, those texts still help to structure its
> meaning.
>
> (Kinder 1991, 2)

As noted in the previous chapter, Kinder developed a theory in the context of 1980s franchises of what she describes as transmedia intertextuality. Focusing on the relationship between Saturday morning television and their associated computer games, movies, commercials and toys, Kinder argues that a child enters a super entertainment system: "a network of intertextuality constructed around a figure or group of figures from pop culture" (ibid., 122). So on the one hand, a supersystem is intentionally "constructed," but on the other hand the supersystems that Kinder observe are executed by distinct practitioners. The constructions that Kinder refers to implies an authorial body of control (a franchise machine if you like), but, this is not analogous to a transmedia practitioner or approach (a point I will illustrate further in the next section).

More recently, a highly relevant theory that has emerged in narrative studies is transfictionality. Transfictionality is a research inquiry that captures the relations between compositions that are linked at the thematic level of a fictional world rather than its "texture". It was introduced by narrative theorist Richard Saint-Gelais as an elaboration of Lubomír Doležel's "postmodern rewrite" (Doležel 1998), which in turn is a development of Genette's hypertextuality (specifically his transpositions) (Genette 1997 [1982]). Doležel observes that intertextuality has traditionally "been treated as a property of texture," where "intertextual meanings reside[s] in words, phrases, quotes, clichés, and the like" (Doležel 1998, 201). But, Doležel explains, "[l]iterary works are linked not only on the level of texture but also, and no less importantly, on the level of fictional worlds" (ibid., 202).

> [F]ictional worlds gain a semiotic existence independent of the constructing texture; they thereby become objects of the active, evolving, and recycling cultural memory. They enter their own chain of succession, complementing and reinforcing or competing and undermining one another. They move from one fiction maker to another, from one period to another, from one culture to another as extensional entities, while their original texture, style, modes of narrative, and authentication have been forgotten. A fictional world is more memorable than the texture that brought it into existence.
>
> (ibid.)

How is a fictional world different to texture? If you recall from chapter one, according to narrative studies a fictional world exists in the reader's mind, as triggered by the author's text. It is co-constructed by the author and reader: the author inscribes the world with a "kind of score" and the reader's "text processing and world reconstruction follow the instructions of the score" (of course also filling in gaps with "naturalization" processes) (ibid., 205). A fictional world is a consequence of texture, but exists beyond it. The key point to be garnered from this theory is that a new text may not attempt to tell the "same" story, for instance, with a different mode of expression (adapt a novel into a play), but instead may explore other possibilities of the greater fictional world. This is significant in the context of debates about the split between form and content in adaptation. For instance, narrative theorist Kamilla Elliot argues that:

> [T]o dismiss the idea that something passes between novel and film in adaptation as theoretically incorrect, as a naïve popular illusion harking back to outmoded semiotic theories and as, therefore, unworthy of serious scholarly attention, is to miss a great deal about the perceived interaction between literature and film in adaptation. Indeed, it is in the heresies committed by the practice and criticism of adaptation that we learn most about literature and film in relation to each other.
>
> (Elliott 2004, 239)

With adaptation the heresy is that there is a form and content divide. A story or game can exist and even pass between media. With transfictionality, a perhaps even greater heresy is being proposed: elements beyond what is triggered in the text (even beyond the story or game) can also move in some way across media. What are these elusive elements that can be transposed? Among Genette's fifty types of transposition are two types of semantic transposition: *diegetic* and *pragmatic*. To Genette, diegetic refers specifically to the

"spatiotemporal world": "where the action of the film is taking place" for example, not the cinema the film is being shown (Genette 1997 [1982], 295). Examples of such transpositions include *transdiegetization*: where the historical-geographical setting is altered (ibid., 296), and *identity*: changing character's names (and thus potentially their nationality, gender, family background) (ibid., 297).

Doležel continues this investigation in the context of postmodernist rewrites of classic literary works (Doležel 1998). A postmodernist rewrite of a classic work, he explains, "confronts the canonical fictional world with contemporary aesthetic and ideological postulates" by "constructing a new, alternative fictional world" (ibid., 206). "All postmodernist rewrites *re*design, *re*locate, *re*evaluate the classic protoworld" in a way that is "motivated by political factors, in the wide, postmodernistic sense of 'politics'" (ibid., original emphasis). While it is possible that an author could confront their own fictional world, the phenomenon Doležel observes is rewrites initiated by distinct authors. He suggests three types of postmodernist rewrites:

> a. Transposition preserves the design and the main story of the protoworld but locates them in a different temporal or spatial setting, or both. The protoworld and the successor world are *parallel*, but the rewrite tests the topicality of the canonical world by placing it in a new, usually contemporary, historical, political, and cultural context.
> b. Expansion extends the scope of the protoworld, by filling its gaps, constructing a prehistory or post history, and so on. The protoworld and the successor world are *complementary*. The protoworld is put into a new co-text, and the established structure is thus shifted.
> c. Displacement constructs an essentially different version of the protoworld, redesigning its structure and reinventing its story. These most radical postmodernist rewrites create *polemical* antiworlds, which undermine or negate the legitimacy of the canonical protoworld.
>
> (ibid., original emphasis)

It is the category of expansion I wish to highlight here for a moment to distinguish between adaptation and expansion practices. Doležel's expansion describes a relation that is not necessarily characterized by an alteration of what exists but instead extends it. When shifted outside of the rhetoric of one author attempting to radically transform the protoworld of another, it is conceivable that a practitioner can expand a fictional world

without referring to already documented events. Noting the prevalence of this phenomenon, Saint-Gelais broadened Doležel's study of fictional worlds in postmodernist rewrites, to the study of all fictional world expansions. Since Saint-Gelais's writing are predominantly in French, this discussion about his theory will have to pivot around his *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* entry (Saint-Gelais 2005), email correspondence between myself and Saint-Gelais, and translations, essays and listserv discussions by Ryan (Ryan 2007; Ryan 2008). In her essay on transfictionality, Ryan translates a definition offered in a pamphlet of a 2005 conference dedicated to the subject (organized by Saint-Gelais, René Audet and Irène Langlet):

> The concept of transfictionality covers those practices that expand fiction beyond the boundaries of the work: sequels and continuations, return of the protagonists, biographies of characters, cycles and series, "shared universes," etc. Transfictionality crosses historical periods as well as boundaries between national literatures or literary genres, it affects literature as well as other media (film, television, comics, etc.), and it penetrates mainstream or experimental literature as well as popular culture.
>
> (Saint-Gelais, cited in Ryan 2008, 386)

On first glance, the theory of transfictionality is applicable to transmedia fictions as it refers to the notion of a fictional world across texts and even possibly distinct media. However, like Doležel (Doležel 1998, 202), Saint-Gelais (Saint-Gelais 2005, 612) and Ryan (Ryan 2008, 386) explain that the phenomenon is within the paradigm of Genette's study (which, as stated earlier, is not concerned with autotextuality). For Saint-Gelais, "[t]ransfictionality may be considered as a branch of intertextuality," but "it neither quotes nor acknowledges its sources," instead, "it uses the source text's setting and/or inhabitants as if they existed independently" (Saint-Gelais 2005, 612). This would put the theory of transfictionality in the realm of discussions about how distinct authors and not the same authors "share elements such as characters" and "imaginary locations" (ibid.). As Ryan explains, "[i]f authors are the masters of their own creations, they are free to expand fictional worlds, and the texts that perform that expansion should be regarded as the building blocks of the same world" (and are therefore not transfictional) (Ryan 2008, 389). However, in a personal email communication to me on May 10, 2007, Saint-Gelais

explains that he does include same authors in his theory of transfictionality (reprinted with permission):

> [I]n my view, transfictionality may be produced either by the same author (e.g., by Conan Doyle or Hemingway writing Sherlock Holmes or Nick Adams stories) or by different authors (e.g., when Michael Dibdin wrote *The Last Sherlock Holmes Story*, or when Jean Rhys wrote her prequel to Jane Eyre, *Wide Sargasso Sea*). While it is obvious that the identity of the (same vs. different) author(s) entails crucial differences in respect to the interpretation, evaluation and especially "authenticity" of the sequels, etc., I prefer to gather both formulas under the umbrella of transfictionality, in order precisely to study and compare what's at stake in each case.

This enables transfictionality to be studied as a transmedia practice, and could therefore be a research inquiry that transmedia fictions are a sub-set of. That is, transfictionality could encompass studies that observe relations at the fictional world level between compositions created by a single practitioner, same creative body, or by distinct creators. However, in her essay on the subject, Ryan argues that transfictionality is concerned with relations between texts that have distinct fictional worlds. This does not mean Ryan is referring to relations between *Harry Potter* and *Star Wars*. Instead, all the texts share the same uber-fictional world if you like, but transfictionality is the study of relations between texts that have discrepancies in logic, they do not have continuity. Indeed, Ryan argues that the research area is pivoted on the study of significant changes to fictional world: the "term 'trans' suggests a relation between two distinct worlds and two distinct texts" (Ryan 2008, 395). This means it isn't the study of various expressions (compositions) of a fictional world, but how the logic constructed in a previous text is significantly altered in another text. "[W]hen two texts refer to the same world, characters with the same name and the same personal history represent one individual" and so are not transfictional phenomena (ibid., 390).

To identify a transfictional phenomenon, Ryan proposes a condition that the "worlds projected by the two texts must be distinct, but related to each other" (ibid., 389, original emphasis removed). Ryan offers a test to determine if the worlds are distinct:

> (1) The fictional world of the two texts must contain logical and semantic discrepancies that prevent their fusion (this will be automatically the case for transposition and modification); *or* (2) The authors must be distinct—a condition which, in turn, presupposes the relevance of the notion of authorship.
>
> (ibid., 390, my emphasis)

With this condition Ryan permits the possibility of a practitioner creating different texts, but only if they do not conform to its preceding logic. For example, when an author "rewrites one of his novels, placing the plot in a new setting, or changing the destiny of one of the characters" (ibid.).

> This possibility is illustrated by the Russian/French author Andreï Makine, who reuses in various novels, under different names, and in different circumstances the figure of a French woman exiled in the Soviet Union who maintains her cultural identity throughout the turmoil of history and passes on to the narrator a love of the French language and cultural heritage. Though the plots are different, the various incarnations of the French woman maintain a core of identity that authorizes readers to regard them as counterparts of the same individual in different fictional worlds.
>
> (ibid.)

Therefore, Ryan's argument would encompass a transmedia fiction when the practitioner alters the logic of their own fictional world. Saint-Gelais notes too that depending on the source of the text, what is regarded as new fictional world (a change in the logic) is highly relative:

> Clearly, a purely semantic approach is not sufficient for explaining the (in)compatibility of transfictional versions. Major modifications in a character's attitude or behaviour are likely to be accepted as new twists when they are made by the original author, whereas faithful versions, when written by somebody else, will probably be taken as apocryphal.
>
> (Saint-Gelais 2005, 613)

But how does this apply in the collaborative context? Ryan acknowledges the theory is complicated here: "Of course in TV the author is a whole team, and the team may change: this just shows that concepts must be adapted as we pass from one medium to another" (Ryan 2007). What this means in the context of franchises (and any

collaborative intercompositional project), is that what are considered "inconsistencies" are perhaps overlooked when from the same creative body (the same production company and/or the intellectual property owners). Indeed, in his study of the interpretive experience of what he calls "transmedia franchises," Lemke argues that the "secret of successful transmedia franchises or complexes is that they make us into ideal transmedia consumers," who "construe satisfying transmedia meanings across these media presentations of universes that are 'the same' only insofar as we construe them as being the same" (Lemke 2006).

However, what has been argued by many theorists of transmedia phenomena is that these works are differentiated by their lack of inconsistencies. That is, there is no change in the logic of the fictional world, it has continuity. Therefore, the theory of transfictionality applies to producers who may have copyright, indeed are licensed to expand a fictional world, but who have created compositions that are riddled with inconsistencies. The notion of authorship in transfictionality needs to be problematised therefore. This is why authorship as it has been defined in literature has difficulties in collaborative contexts. This is also why transmedia phenomena complicates the matter further, because even when there is an authorial body in terms of intellectual property, there are further distinctions to be made between authorial bodies that observe the logic of a fictional world and those that don't. The next section delves into this issue, explaining how transmedia practices are different to previous collaborative practices. Indeed, I explain how large collaborative projects are being managed to reduce inconsistencies and maintain a creative vision.

## Understanding InterCompositional Transmedia Practice

In the previous section I discuss how many theories are concerned with relations between compositions by distinct creators or a reading process. The theory of transfictionality helped illuminate a different kind of relation, that of a fictional world, and provided a method to identify differences between fictional worlds. But from the discussion of fictional world logic, it became evident that the notion of authorship needs complicating. In single author scenarios the equation is fairly simple, but in collaborative environments

it isn't. The crucial complication, however, is the fact that creators may be "primary producers" (in terms of their intellectual property rights), but still create transfictional works (outside of the logic of a fictional world). Authorship is not always a sufficient criterion then. Media studies researchers have argued that what distinguishes the transmedia phenomenon is an effort to maintain the logic of the fictional world (Jenkins 2006; Long 2007; Smith 2009). Therefore, before any discussion about the ways in which practitioners expand their fictional world can take place, I need to first establish how authorship in collaborative projects operates in transmedia practices, and how practitioners maintain the logic of the fictional world. Only then can one understand how they are exercising a practice that doesn't place them into a "distinct authors" category.

Indeed, this section begins the task of differentiating transmedia practice from other forms of intercompositional phenomena. The notion of distinct authorship is developed by explaining how practitioners in large collaborative projects can be understood as operating in isolation, with no creative oversight or shared vision. Therefore, while many practitioners (and companies) may hold the intellectual property (and so be considered primary producers), there is a difference between the works they produce and transmedia practice. Long argues the difference is the effort to maintain the logic of the fictional world.

While Long agrees with Jenkins that the expansion (or addition) trait of transmedia storytelling is significant, he argues Jenkins's criteria of each extension making a "distinctive and valuable contribution" needs developing. He does so with a method that is not necessarily end-product specific: "transmedia narratives can be evaluated by how well they set themselves apart from transmedia branding through narrative *cohesion* and *canon*" (Long 2007, 33–34, original emphasis).[11] Long continues, explaining that "[t]his is where a crucial distinction can be made concerning true transmedia narratives […] and can be considered a first step toward establishing an aesthetics of transmedia storytelling:

---

[11] As I argued in the previous chapter, some transmedia fictions do have marketing functions, but can also be designed with aesthetic considerations and be part of the meaning-making process. So I am not concerned here with the difference between compositions that are branding or not, as the two are often conflated.

each component of a transmedia story is designed as canonical from the outset" (ibid., 40, original emphasis removed). In a semiotic context, canon can be transposed to an argument that all of the elements are constructed to be part of the meaning-making process. In short, Long argues that expansion is not a reliable trait on its own to identify transmedia phenomena. Instead, making sure the narrative is cohesive and designed to be canon from the outset is a more reliable indicator of "true transmedia narratives" (ibid.). Long is not offering traits that define the phenomenon in ways it can be analysed from the end-point (the actual compositions). Instead, he is concerned with the nature of a transmedia practice. How this occurs in large collaborative projects is problematic though.

The first and most important point to recognise is that in many cases, due to the mono-medium literacies of most practitioners, the majority of intercompositional transmedia projects are not designed and entirely realized by the same practitioner, creative body, department or production company. This is especially the case with intercompositional transmedia projects that involve narrative-driven modes such a film, television and books as well as game-driven modes such as console games. While there are practitioners emerging that are at least familiar with both forms of creative expression, the majority are versed in one or the other. What this means is that at this stage co-creation doesn't necessarily happen throughout the whole production process, but at certain times, with certain individuals in certain ways. In some cases it is the conception stage, whether it be conceiving of a transmedia project from the beginning, or conceiving together each new branch or composition. The next two chapters discuss what a transmedia concept may be. The discussion here, on the other hand, will delve into how, despite the disparate practices and professions, a unity of creative vision is facilitated.

Both transmedia theorists and practitioners argue that transmedia projects are differentiated from other franchises by their efforts to ensure continuity. Jenkins has criticized franchises that are "riddled with sloppy contradictions" (Jenkins 2006, 105); practitioner Gomez has argued transmedia projects should involve a "concerted effort" to "avoid fractures and schisms" (Gomez 2007); and Long has argued that in order "[t]o

avoid a fragmented sense of the story world, each transmedia extension should follow the rules of their shared universe, and not conflict with any other extensions" (Long 2007, 138). Continuity can be facilitated through the efforts of individuals who work as a "human bible" as (Caldwell 2008, 16) (screenwriter Jane Espenson uses the term "walking bible" (Espenson 2008)), but also through documents such as a "world" or "universe" guide. In what follows, therefore, I discuss how the effort to create a unified vision across media is managed by people and documentation.

## The Who of Transmedia Practice

Kress and van Leeuwen argue that digital technology "has now made it possible for one person to manage all these modes, and to implement the multimodal production single-handedly" (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001, 47). Therefore, in single-person projects, the question of creative influence is fairly simple. Author and artist Steven Hall, for instance, wrote a 2007 novel *Raw Shark Texts* and designed the accompanying alternate reality game *The Lost Envelope* that adapted parts of the story. But in large collaborative projects like a television series, feature film, theatrical production or console game, the question of how continuity is achieved is more difficult to discern. These questions are not contrary to the discussions in chapter one about the (potential) influence all practitioners have at any point of the creative process. Meaning can be made during design, production and distribution. Instead, these questions are concerned with who out of all of the practitioners in large collaborative intercompositional projects is in a position to facilitate a continuity of creative vision across distinct media? That is, who needs to have the knowledge and skills specific to transmedia practice? In this section I argue that in the context of the current state of transmedia practice, there are particular roles that demand transmedia knowledge and skills more than others.

While *all* practitioners involved in a project play a part in constructing meaning, in intercompositional transmedia fictions it is so-called the "above the line" roles and duties that are highly relevant at this stage. As media theorist Mark Deuze explains, in the film and television industries (and in the advertising industry), "workers tend to see their activities in terms of 'above the line' and 'below the line' tasks":

> Above the line work is thought of as creative talent and is more visible and better paid. It mostly consists of acting, directing, producing (scheduling, budgeting, human resources, quality control), and scriptwriting. Below the line practices are placed at the end of a movie or show's credit roll as these consist of technical and supportive work as varied as (digital and analog) editing, lighting, set design and construction, wardrobe assistance, and camera-work.
>
> (Deuze 2007, 191)

In this thesis, it is the roles and duties involved with design (whether it is narrative or game design, scripting, strategy and the like), producing or project managing, and directing that are the focus. These roles and duties are privileged above others here not because they are deemed as the only or primary constructors of meaning in a creative work. Instead, they are the focus of this discussion because it is their knowledge and skills which are (at this stage) directly related to that of a transmedia practitioner. An actor performs differently in a film, television episode, webisode, game (with their voice or body), theatrical event and live event, but they adhere to the conventions of each whether it is a transmedia fiction or not. Likewise, set design and construction, wardrobe and lighting can persist as a practice without any understanding of how these efforts relate to other compositions. This will not always be the case though, as there are transmedia skillsets that already exist or are emerging in a variety of tasks: such as designing graphics that work well on different media platforms (small screen, large screen, letterhead and so on), camera-work and editing that takes into account the continuation of a scene in another medium, and the design and execution of ubiquitous technologies that network devices and objects.

At this early stage of the emergence of a new type or practice, and particularly with intercompositional transmedia phenomena, it is roles such as writers, designers, producers or project managers, and directors that are the ones that are crucial. This is for two reasons. One, there is no new practice without a new way of writing and a new way of designing. If writers and designers (including strategists and producers) are not conceiving and developing projects for the expression of a fictional world across distinct media, there is no transmedia practice. That is, each composition would be conceived,

designed and realized with distinct practitioners, practices and professions, with varying levels of fidelity. One would take care of their medium, and others another. That has been practiced for centuries. While not all transmedia projects involve the same individuals working on every component, transmedia practice involves some people at some points considering more than one medium and the associated creative (including industrial issues) associated with it.

At present, it is often writers who are the ones that follow through across media. For example, the 2007 feature film *I Am Legend*—the third film version of Richard Matheson's 1954 novella of the same name—has an accompanying online graphic novel (which is available for download as well). The graphic novel, *I Am Legend: Awakening,* provides a prequel to the events of the movie, detailing stories of people who have been overcome by or affected by a deadly virus. There are five stories told, by different authors and artist pairs. One of the stories, *Isolation,* is written by the co-screenwriter of the film, Mark Protosevich. The other screenwriter of the film, Akiva Goldsmith, is the Creative Editor of the graphic novel, along with Jada Pinkett Smith (the lead actor's wife and business partner, and performer in *The Matrix*). Another of the short stories, *Fighting Chance,* is written by Richard Christian Matheson, the son of the author of the original novella the film is based on.

When the same writers work on compositions in different media they are (potentially) ensuring a continuity of vision. Further to this, in some cases the rhetoric changes. That is, for some projects the writer designs a story that is not self-contained in that the story *continues* across media. Depending on the media used, this may entail rhetorical strategies that facilitate cross-media traversal immediately (such as putting the book down and going to a website to read the next part). This will be discussed briefly in the next and penultimate chapters, but is an important difference to highlight in the context of transmedia writing. The mere ability of someone to write for more than one medium is not equivalent to transmedia writing. But my intent with the previous examples was to illustrate how some transmedia projects involve the same writers working on each composition, thus facilitating continuity.

Sometimes continuity is facilitated not by directly writing or designing each composition, but by curating, if you like: personally selecting other distinct practitioners. Askwith and Jenkins note that Andy and Larry Wachowski not only wrote and directed many of the compositions in *The Matrix* universe, they also personally selected other creative personnel (Askwith 2003; Jenkins 2006, 108–113). Jenkins highlights this selection as a point of difference, explaining that if "all [the Wachowski brothers] wanted was synergy, they could have hired hack collaborators who could crank out the games, comics, and cartoons" (Jenkins 2006, 108). Instead, they sought collaborators who "were known for their distinctive visual styles and authorial voices" (ibid., 109). "They worked with people they admired, not people they felt would follow orders" (ibid.). Here, the maintaining of vision is exercised in terms of quality control, where all of the practitioners selected are deemed artistically equal, respective to their artform.

Another aspect to continuity is the creative control that can be exercised in some positions. Once there is a shared understanding of the nature of the practice and a shared language to communicate it with, many practitioners will be able to contribute to the work equally. At present there isn't though, and so at this stage there is more control being exercised from so-called above-the-line roles, and even then, a small concentration of people exercising that role as a transmedia practitioner. This is because it is they who are currently developing transmedia practice, and because it is one of the more effective ways a unity of vision can be achieved. Therefore, transmedia practitioners are the people who either do all or almost all the elements themselves (especially in small-scale projects), or those who are in positions in which they can, due to existing creative processes, conceive and design and potentially exercise creative control over many elements in the realization process. These roles include being the creator, and, in the film, television, and theatre context, the writer, producer and director; and in the gaming context, producers, directors, lead designers, and (to a lesser extent in the digital gaming industry) lead writers.

These roles are of course changing in the transmedia context. Kress and van Leeuwen explain that previously multimodal texts "were organised as hierarchies of specialist modes" by "hierarchically organised specialists in charge of the different modes" and then integrated by an editing process (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001, 2, original emphasis removed). What we have in the age of multimodality, then, is a shift away from isolated practices to a new "multiplicity of semiotic resources" where "multimodality is moving into the centre of practical communicative action" (ibid., 45). This results in a new type of practice, and practitioner:

> Previously distinct practices, the domains of distinct professions, the clear boundaries, all of these have begun to unravel. New domains of practice are in the process of being constituted, and new sets of practices are merging or will undoubtedly emerge in time; and with these new practices will emerge new, not yet consolidated professions. The practitioner in this new domain now has to take a multiplicity of decisions, in relation to a multiplicity of modes and areas of representation which were previously the domain of discrete professions and their practices.
>
> (ibid., 47)

Indeed, transmedia practices and professions are emerging, and they involve a multiplicity of decisions that were previously the domain of the distinct practices and professions in filmmaking, television, literature, theatre, gaming and so on. There are, of course, also emerging professions and structures that are specific to transmedia practice, facilitating a continuity of creative vision. I mentioned the role of the writer and designer earlier, but Elkington explains that in order "to successfully develop a project across media, the various development parties must necessarily coordinate from the ground up in order to create a world in which there are equal opportunities for high quality products across media" (Elkington 2005, 13). Likewise, Jeffrey-Poulter reports on Elaine Hernen's speech (a practitioner with development and production experience at BBC Online and Interactive and BT Openworld), and her call for such a role:

> She stressed that the complex and collaborative nature of these undertakings necessitated an overall producer/project manager figure whose role is to act as a facilitator and communicator amongst the wide range of creative, technical and production elements. This person is not only answerable for the quantitative and

qualitative aspects of delivering the finished product to time and budget as in the traditional producer role, but also has responsibilities to manage audience responses and feedback as well as delivering the business and broader commercial objectives of the project.

<div align="right">(Jeffrey-Poulter 2001, 162)</div>

Producer and journalist Kendall Allen describes such a role as a "super producer" (Allen 2009). Allen explains that "[w]ithin a more greatly integrated, multi-platform environment, there is a broader field of play and a more aggressive expectation put upon the producer to produce with convergence in mind" (ibid.). There is therefore an "outright widening of the producer role" which leads to a kind of super-producer (ibid.). What these roles do is assist in facilitating and maintaining a creative vision across distinct media and production cultures.

An example of this principle in action is NBC's *Heroes.* The creator of *Heroes,* Tim Kring, wanted to make the show "a transmedia piece of entertainment" (Swedlow and Alexander 2008). "Tim wanted to do the online comic," co-executive producer (at the time) Jessie Alexander explains, "and then there was the desire to build it out in many ways but no-one really knew how to do that" (ibid.). One technique they used to assist this process was having a person assigned the task of overseeing all the media (and therefore departments), what Alexander describes as a "transmedia czar": "There needs to be some trans-media czar who connects the creative people with the other creative people in these trans-media situations" (Alexander, cited in Sheffield 2007). The transmedia czars for *Heroes* were Alexander and Mark Warshaw, who describes his duties as follows:

> So what I do is I oversee the day to day of the *Heroes 360* initiative, of all of our *Evolutions* initiatives—which is the extension of our story online, and that involves comic books, the webisodes and things like that. I also help with the production of the DVDs and pretty much any other piece of merchandising from an action figure to a greeting card to a mobile video game. My job is basically to help extend the brand beyond the television screen.
>
> <div align="right">(Mark Warshaw, cited in Jenkins, Alexander and Warshaw 2007)</div>

The transmedia czar as it operated for *Heroes* involved overseeing various media, various departments, within a company (NBC). But sometimes transmedia projects are executed across multiple companies. Jeff Gomez, CEO of Starlight Runner Entertainment Inc.—a company that has worked on what Gomez has previously described as "trans-media production" since the 1990s—reflects on such a role and how it could exist beyond the mono-medium cultures. He describes such a profession as a "universe steward":

> In the next few years, you're going to see a new position being created that will become more and more common. It's a variation on the title transmedia producer. In other words, there will be a steward, a shepherd for very large tent-pole intellectual properties who will be responsible for co-ordinating and creatively escorting the property across multiple media platforms. They in essence will be in charge of the universe and they will respect the universe above and beyond studio politics, above and beyond licensing, above and beyond even the producers, directors and actors who are involved in creating individual components of this universe.
>
> (Gomez, cited in Baage and Gomez 2009)

Elkington appears to concur with such a role, explaining that "[i]f these projects are not centrally managed, they quickly degenerate into situations where what is good for the film or television series is not good for the game and vice versa, pitting the interests of each medium and each license-holder against the central concept of the intellectual property" (Elkington 2005, 13). A universe steward then, would be aware of and negotiate the needs of all the creative parties, with the overall demands of the creative project in mind. While operating beyond studio politics is an admirable yet perhaps unrealistic wish, such a profession is significant. Any multidisciplinary practitioner is both inside and outside of disciplines. Transmedia professions will always entail, therefore, negotiating distinct discourses, production processes and politics. Such a practitioner needs to speak, if you like, many languages. But what also emerges is a new language that is specific to transmedia practices and professions, which will potentially then facilitate the emergence of a new set of discourses, production processes and politics. Due to the nature of creative cultures though, I argue a transmedia profession will always involve negotiating *both* mono-medium and transmedia practices and professions.

Currently however, it is actually people who do more than one role that are in the best position to facilitate a unity of vision across distinct media: the writer-producer, writer-executive producer, writer-director, writer-producer-director, or, two other roles that have emerged: the "narrative designer" in gaming (Dinehart 2009b), and the "producer-director" in television (Caldwell 2008, 16). The narrative designer has emerged in the last few years in the digital gaming industry (Dinehart 2009b). In 2006, this role was described and filled by practitioner Stephen E. Dinehart at THQ as "ensuring that the key elements of the player experience associated with story and story telling devices, script and speech are dynamic, exciting and compelling"; and more recently this role was described as being "responsible for creation and implementation of the game story […] and also to collaborate with other designers to assist in design and implementation of game world systems and mission/quest design […] to maximize player immersion within the game play experience" (ibid.).

The emergence of the narrative designer role is a response to the highly distinct and often isolated function story has played in the production of large-scale digital games. The role is an attempt to ensure story elements are communicated meaningfully throughout the game. It reflects an understanding that meaning is communicated in a number ways. While this role could be reclassified to encompass creative vision, the emphasis on narrative is specific to the current status of story in large-scale digital gaming cultures. This role is a version of what Caldwell cites as a human bible (Caldwell 2008, 16). Caldwell's observation of the producer-director role is also worth noting here as it represents an approach to creative continuity he argues is "largely unrecognized" in academia (ibid.). Caldwell explains that:

> John Cassar does not write for the series *24*. Nor does Scott Brazil for *The Shield*. Yet the intensive cinematic demands, frantic shooting schedules, high production values, and the need to maintain consistency of look and narrative texture across sixteen or twenty-four episodes per year (written by dozens of different writers and directed by many different episode directors) has lead to a new authorial function: the series "producer/director."
>
> (ibid., 16–17)

In the transmedia context the role of the producer (as explained earlier, now more a super-producer) and director transforms beyond the mono-medium distinction it is currently characterized by. A director in the transmedia context may be a person who assumes the *functions* that are akin to mono-medium practices, but do not just involve the knowledge and skills specific to a medium. In other words, a film or theatre director is not immediately qualified to direct a transmedia production. Instead, they would need to understand the various peculiarities of each medium, and importantly transmedia craft. But Caldwell's recognition of a role that acts as a human bible (maintains continuity through actions and knowledge rather than production artifacts) is relevant here. Indeed, the process of continuity (or maintaining creative vision) is facilitated by the production artifacts people create (scripts, bibles, storyboards, charts) and the cognitive glue, if you like, their roles afford.

If we look at many transmedia projects that have already been created, these role combinations have been a key factor. As I have mentioned previously, Lance Weiler wrote, produced and directed his 2007 feature film *Head Trauma* as well as the cinema event and alternate reality game *Hope is Missing*. *Babylon 5* creator, J. Michael Straczynski, who writes and produces for television, novels, comics, radio and theatre, not only created the *Babylon 5* series (and wrote 44 of the episodes) as well as it's television spin-off *Crusade*, but also oversaw the novels. He "kept enough control over the items allowed to bear the Babylon 5 name, that he has decided that all of the comics and all of the novels are just as 'real' or 'official' as any episodes of the Babylon 5 television series" (Butler 2007, 944).

In the previous chapter I mentioned the 1999 *Homicide* cross-over. This project is likewise the result of practitioners who were in the position to both conceive and realize it. The project began with the producer of *Homicide: The Second Shift,* Ayelet Sela, approaching a producer of *Homicide: Life on the Street,* Sara B. Charno, with the idea of a storyline that runs across the two mediums. Together they produced and wrote the story that would take place across the television show and the web. Charno then wrote the

teleplay of the episode, *Homicide.com* (season 7, aired 5th Feb, 1999)*,* and Sela "penned the online script" (Graser 1999). Joss Whedon is another example. He continues the narrative of the television series of *Firefly*—which he created, was executive-producer, director and writer of—in graphic novel form with *Serenity: Better Days* and *Serenity: Those Left Behind*, a series which he co-wrote with Brett Matthews; as well as a five-part webisode *The R. Tam Sessions* which he wrote, directed and performed in; and the feature film *Serenity* which he directed and wrote. Jessie Alexander, who was brought in to help execute the transmedia vision of *Heroes* mentioned earlier, had the role of co-executive producer, which involved both producing and writing. Indeed, Alexander explains that because he worked "as the producer of the show and worked also with the day to day and that with the TV show, it's very easy for me to connect what we want to do on the show with what we want to do online" (Swedlow and Alexander 2008).

Therefore, while a transmedia project begins at the design stage, there are many roles that are involved in its realization. Due to the inchoate nature of transmedia practice, and existing creative production structures, I argue it is above-the-line roles that demand transmedia knowledge and skills more than others[12]. With these roles, including combinations of these roles, practitioners are (potentially) more able to facilitate a unity of vision. This overseeing of the integration of content reflects both a young and mature state of practice. On the one hand it reflects a maturing, in that the compositions in different media platforms are seen as somewhat equally important creative expressions. On the other hand, the fact that many roles have to be assigned to ensure this happens intimates the practitioners involved do not yet (understandably) have the ability to realize such a vision on their own. In other words, there is not a shared understanding of how to create a transmedia project. "Without a common language, and without the standardization of concepts and terms," a "division of labour will not work" (Swann and Watts 2002, 47). I argue that once the peculiarities of transmedia practice become mature and more widely understood, creative input will be more evenly distributed. At present though, it is these roles that facilitate a unity of creative vision across compositions. It is

---

[12] It is significant to note that after submitting this thesis for examination, the Producers Guild of America ratified a Transmedia Producer as a new credit, the first time they had ever created a new credit.

these efforts that distinguish a transmedia practice from compositions that are the result of practitioners that, although have intellectual property and so are an authorial body, produce works that are (arguably) different fictional worlds. In the next section I continue this discussion on how transmedia practices are differentiated from others through their efforts to facilitate creative continuity, with documentation.

## Continuity Documentation

This section explores some of the design documentation emerging in transmedia practices. As Kress and van Leeuwen explain, design "involves the shaping of available resources into a framework which can act as the 'blueprint' for the production of the object or entity or event" (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001, 50). It should be reiterated though, that such blueprints or documents are not merely instructions for others to execute. Design documentation is part of the meaning-making process in a number of ways. The process of creating the documentation facilitates greater understanding of a project as the process of articulation involves making decisions about the fictional world and its expression. The process of creating documentation to communicate to those inside or outside the project (other writers, designers, clients, stakeholders and financiers for instance) requires the project to be explained through discourses that transform the project. Documentation also influences those who realize the project (whether it is the same people who created the documents or those who didn't). With these influences on meaning-making in mind, I discuss the ways in which design documentation is beginning to change under the influence of the peculiar demands of transmedia projects, specifically, how world or universe continuity is facilitated.

In collaborative and long-running projects there are documents known as a "bible" or "design document". The television industry uses what is called a 'show bible' or 'series bible' to describe various elements such as the stylistic differences of the show, the characters and their relationships with each other, plots that will/have taken place and so on. Likewise, in the game industry a "game design document" or "game bible" is used, but also includes a range of elements such as the technical specifications (how the artificial intelligence works, game engine), details of the game world, player characters,

non-player characters, gameplay and so on. The functions of the series bible and game bible are not, however, completely analogous.

Since television shows are almost always written by committee, a "series bible" helps "ensure continuity in all future scripts" (Caldwell 2008, 213). An example is the series bible for *Battlestar Galactica* by Ronald D. Moore. In this document, Moore begins by explaining the "fundamentals of Battlestar Galactica," which includes the visual approach, ideological and dramatic tension of the series, along with the "three-tiered" serial structure of the entire series. The document includes a mission statement, which acts as a manifesto, explaining how the series is different to others and what it sets out to achieve. The rest of the document outlines the history, religion, culture, society and technology of the Twelve Colonies; the culture, society and technology of the Cylons; character biographies; storyline approach (tension, structure, the Cylons, plot-driven stories, character stories); season one story and character arcs; and the history, officers and technical details of the actual *Battlestar Galactica* (see Figure 25).



**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Mission Statement.................................................................1

The Twelve Colonies
    History...........................................................................4
    Religion.........................................................................5
    Culture and Society.......................................................5
    Technology....................................................................6

The Cylons.........................................................................8
    Culture and Society.......................................................9
    Technology..................................................................11

Character Biographies
    Commander William Adama.......................................12
    President Laura Roslin................................................14
    Captain Lee Adama.....................................................16
    Lieutenant Kara Thrace...............................................18
    Colonel Saul Tigh.......................................................21
    Doctor Gaius Baltar....................................................23
    Chief Galen Tyrol.......................................................25
    Lieutenant Sharon Valerii...........................................27
    Number Six.................................................................29

Storylines
    Tension.......................................................................30.
    Structure.....................................................................30
    The Cylons..................................................................31
    Plot-driven Stories......................................................32
    Character Stories.........................................................33

Season One
    Story Arcs...................................................................34
    Character Arcs............................................................36

Figure 25. Scan of part of the table of contents for the 'Series Bible' by Ronald D. Moore, *Battlestar Galactica*

A game design document, on the other hand, "is all about communicating a vision for a game, for mapping out as much information as possible about how that game will function, what players will experience, and how players will interact with the game-world" (Rouse 2005, 356). In the game design document for the digital game *Play With Fire* designed by International Hobo (2007), the document outlines details such as the controls (which button triggers what action in the game), the game stages the player must complete in order to progress, different types of play (basic and advanced), instructions for designers, limitations on actions (for instance, "no huge objects"), and an outline of the changes to the game versions (for example, "added backspace command to reset field control") (Bateman 2007). In David Perry's 'Top Secret' game (described as a "scalable multiplayer online racing game") which is to be published by Acclaim Entertainment, the game design document outlines elements such as the target audience, technical specifications, gameplay, combat system, economy, guilds and sounds (Perry 2008) (see Figure 26). This game design document guides potential designers who, through a competition Perry is running, involves enlisting "a community of thousands of gamers to collaborate with each other" worldwide (Perry 2007).

**Design Doc**

From TOP SECRET PROJECT - WIKI

Jump to: navigation, search

## Contents

[hide]

- 1 Top Secret Design Document
    - 1.1 Overview
    - 1.2 Target Audience
    - 1.3 Technical Specs
    - 1.4 What We Expect From Our Dev Teams
    - 1.5 Gameplay
    - 1.6 Mounts
    - 1.7 Breeding
    - 1.8 Riders
    - 1.9 Skill System
        - 1.9.1 Skills List
    - 1.10 Equipment
    - 1.11 Combat System
    - 1.12 Tracks/Environments
    - 1.13 Towns
    - 1.14 Personal Space
    - 1.15 Auction House
    - 1.16 Guilds
    - 1.17 Crafting
    - 1.18 Items
    - 1.19 Economy
    - 1.20 Cash Shop
    - 1.21 Social Systems
    - 1.22 Sounds
    - 1.23 Additional Features
    - 1.24 User Interfaces
        - 1.24.1 General Specifications
        - 1.24.2 Interfaces Identified
        - 1.24.3 Interface Requirements
    - 1.25 Future Additions

Figure 26. Screenshot of part of the table of contents of 'Design Doc,' *Top Secret Project*
(Perry 2008)

I mention these two examples of game design documents to highlight the disparity across documents, and how some are written for internal use while others to assist in facilitating continuity with outsourced practitioners. Indeed, Rouse notes that while certain companies may have their own format, there is no industry standard format for a game design document (Rouse 2005, 356, 373). Rouse compared situation to that of the "standardized art form(s)" of "plays, movies, or symphonies" (ibid., 373). But while a play, screenplay or music sheet is standardized, a series bible is not. There are certain elements that are usually always covered, but the stylistic approach and motivations of the project vary from author to author. It should also be noted that these documents are not just used internally for the designers during production, but are often used to help document the idea of the project, and as a sales or business document to pitch the project. Therefore, there are variations on the discourses used to describe the project.

While there are certainly overlaps between a series bible and a game design document, there is a difference between a document that outlines a single project and a document that outlines how multiple projects may operate. A series bible documents all of the different episodes in a series, while a game design document outlines all of the elements of one game. In the transmedia context, this difference can be understood as the difference between a document that outlines the design details of a single composition (an intracompositional transmedia project, an alternate reality game for example), and a document that facilitates continuity across many compositions. The former will be discussed in the next chapter on interactivity, while the latter is discussed here as a world or universe guide. A design document and a universe guide are not necessarily articulated as distinct documents though, and so are issues that inform design documentation in general.

It should also be noted that both a series bible and game design document are not always continuously updated during a project. Espenson notes this in the context of television series (Espenson 2008) and Dinehart notes this in the context of digital games (Dinehart 2009a). But when creative continuity is a concern in a transmedia project, both the human bible and documentation becomes a higher priority, and the nature of the documentation changes. Practitioners may even look beyond their team and lean on the efforts of fans. The designers of the long-running alternate reality game *Perplex City* (Mind Candy Design, 2005–2007) found that the extensive resources players had generated were more detailed and frequently updated than their own:

> This was a great deal of hard work for us but it was nothing compared to the collaborative efforts of the players who spent thousands of man-hours creating maps and websites about the story. The Perplex City Wiki ("www.perplexcitywiki.com") was truly a labour of love, an encyclopaedic guide to the game that outstripped anything we ever produced in-house. It became the writers' bible.
>
> (Varela 2007, 24)

Fans and players have always created such resources, but in the context of the "convergence culture logic" Deuze described (Deuze 2007, 99), where consumers are

part of the design, production and marketing of products or events, the shift now is that practitioners are utilizing these resources as well. What are these resources?

### World or Universe Guides

While creative continuity has been a concern in long-running collaborative projects such as a television series, feature film or digital game, continuity in the greater context of franchises has traditionally been concerned with visuals. That is, making sure each element in each media is recognizable as being part of the same entity through consistent graphic treatments. But those visuals were often governed by a different set of continuity issues. That is, licensees often had a different set of continuity rules than the original intellectual property holders. Changes to these processes are part of the emergence of transmedia practice and so will be discussed briefly before delving into world or universe continuity in transmedia projects.

A design philosophy practiced in many sectors is having a consistent appearance. The look of all so-called ancillary products, posters and the like are usually managed then through a "style guide". One way to explain this approach is to consider "integrated marketing" practices. In the 1980s and 1990s, for instance, a popular approach to integrated marketing was having a *consistent visual appearance*. In a 2006 interview, marketing theorist Don Schultz (who co-wrote a book on "integrated marketing communication" (IMC) in 1993 (Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn 1993)) clarifies how IMC operated, stating that "integrated marketing communication, at that point, simply meant, how do I get all of these things to look alike? How do I get the same sound, the same color, the same logo—all of those things—on all the outbound stuff?" (Berens and Schultz 2006). Marketing theorists Tom Duncan and Clarke Caywood agree that "image integration" involves "having a consistent message, look, and feel"; however, rather than mark this approach synchronically, Duncan and Caywood argue that *any organization at the early stage* of developing integrated marketing communication usually begins with an image integration stage (Duncan and Caywood 1996, 25).

Therefore, one could say that any practitioner or company which is at the early stages of exploring integration practices is concerned at some point with consistent imagery.

Indeed, this integration approach is also practiced in franchise management, with all ancillary products, posters and the like being managed through a style guide to ensure a consistent look. This is, of course, still a priority. But some of the changes that have occurred with style guides are who produces and oversees them, and what design standard they're being measured against (consistent across licensees or consistent across the entire franchise).

New Line Cinema's feature film trilogy of J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* is a case in point, as it was developed from the beginning as a fan- and continuity-conscious project. As media theorist Elana Shefrin explains, "*Lord of the Rings* fans have been actively courted by Peter Jackson and New Line Cinema throughout all aspects of authoring, casting, filming, and marketing the Trilogy" (Shefrin 2004, 262). On the latter, marketing, Jackson (and New Line Cinema) were sensitive to the fact that "[f]rom the start, Tolkien's fans feared that New Line would use Rings to profit from a lot of cheap or silly tie-in products"; so, as Thompson reports, "New Line repeatedly insisted that only high-quality merchandise would be licensed" (Thompson 2007, 194). The heightened value of the ancillary projects and the need for them to be of high-quality not only reflects a shift in the way audiences regard "other media" (they view them as being somewhat semiotically equal), but it also results in changes to the way style guides are managed, as Thompson explains:

> When a film company licenses another firm to make ancillary projects, the studio puts together a style guide so that the products and packaging can have a uniform look, even though dozens or even hundreds of different firms might be creating those ancillaries. Initially New Line put together a *Rings* style guide in New York. Like the initial poster mockup shown to Jackson, however, the proposed guide proved unacceptable. Jackson recalls that it "sent us into a really bad tailspin because it was very, very tacky and very cheesy-looking artwork. So at that point we persuaded New Line to involve Richard Taylor's Workshop and his design guys much more in the style guide, and so we were happy that that got onto a slightly better footing." As Alyson McRae, who was merchandising coordinator at the time, points out, why redesign everything in New York when the original designers are available?
>
> (ibid.)

In the *Lord of the Rings* example, the approach to merchandising changed in a few ways: it had to be approved by the director, the style guide was created by practitioners working on the design of the feature film, and the assets were shared among producers. Indeed, one cannot underestimate the role of digital technology in facilitating such practices. The reusing of assets is facilitated by the interoperability of digital technology, making it possible for multiple departments and companies to achieve a visual continuity. This includes the rising practice of marketing departments using the same assets as those produced in the initial creative project, thus also contributing to the perceived blurring of marketing and creative practice discussed in the previous chapter.

In the transmedia context, there is a concern about *visual continuity* but also *world continuity*. Akin to a series bible mentioned earlier, franchises are now utilizing more a franchise bible or world or universe guide. This guide sets out the history, plots, characters and event details of the world to facilitate continuity across all compositions created by either the same or different creative bodies. Industry practitioner Jeff Gomez, who has been mentioned previously, has been providing such a service for franchises since the mid 1990s for the Wizards of the Coast's *Magic: The Gathering*, and more recently for Disney's *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise and James Cameron's *Avatar* (among others):

> [Jeff Gomez had the] task [of] creating the bible for the Pirates universe. He needed to flesh out details to ensure consistency between features, novels, and games and to create a robust universe. […] In the past, companies have tried to milk the bone dry, but now they are learning to nurture franchises. This consistency across media is part of that strategy.
>
> (Sikora 2007)

The process of developing new compositions from previous ones varies from practitioner to practitioner, but Weiler's method articulated in Figure 27 shows how possible narrative paths are nurtured from an existing script. In this example, Weiler notes narrative moments that are alluded to but not articulated in the first script and marks them for elaboration in another script for another medium.
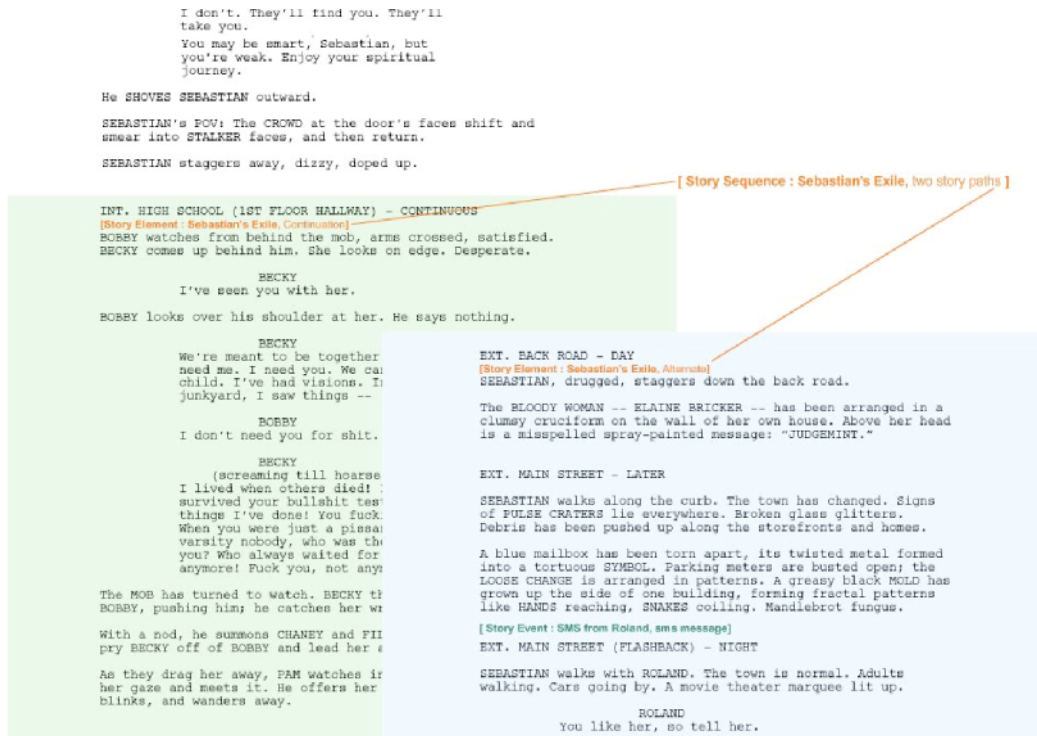
Figure 27. Lance Weiler's sample script showing a post-composition story extension process
Image source: (Weiler 2009)

Beyond a cataloguing of existing narrative paths, and continuity elements such as pronunciation and visual guidelines, Gomez's bible outlines all aspects of the fictional world (such as characters, allies & enemies, fauna & flora, props, locations, chronology). It also includes sections that are designed to facilitate consistent future production opportunities, such as the "Cosmology, Themes, Mythic Underpinnings" and "Distant Mountains" sections, as Gomez explained to me in a personal email communication on November 7, 2007:

> The real magic in these products to me is in the cosmology section. This chapter is a true guide to the chemistry, message and aspiration of the story world. Know and embrace this section and you can produce new content based on the work of the original visionary. […] I also love the distant mountains section, which is a term I nicked from Tolkien with reference to all the things you question and wonder about in the work, which could lead both creator and audience into new areas of exploration within the universe.

Since little has been shared about universe guide documents in the public domain, and of course the format is relative to the creator of the document, it is worth exploring what

elements of a world or universe would facilitate creative continuity in the transmedia context. Long has argued that transmedia projects should adhere to the "rules of their shared universe" (Long 2007, 138). Here I ask what these rules are and how they can be understood in the transmedia context.

A helpful starting point is how Gomez was influenced by his early work with the Wizards of the Coast and experience as, among other things, a Dungeons and Dragons® Dungeon Master. The *Dungeon Master's Guide* (Wyatt 2008), for instance, provides the core rules for individuals that design and run table-top role-playing games. Since every game is different, the book outlines the critical information a dungeon master needs to know, information that they then customize. Relevant here are sections such as "The World," which outlines the "core assumptions" a dungeon master can build from: it is a "fantastic place," that is "ancient," "mysterious," where "monsters are everywhere," "adventurers are exceptional," "civilized races band together," "magic is everyday, but it is natural," "Gods and Primordials shape the world" and "Gods are distant" (ibid., 150). The specifics of these guidelines are more appropriate to fantastical settings, but the approach is nevertheless the applicable here: it explains the rules and features of the fictional world that aid in the creation of missions set in that world. A helpful theory that elaborates on this approach is game theorists Lizbeth Klastrup and Susana Tosca's "core elements" of a "transmedial world" (Klastrup and Tosca 2004). To Klastrup and Tosca, a transmedial world is defined as follows:

> Transmedial worlds are abstract content systems from which a repertoire of fictional stories and characters can be actualized or derived across a variety of media forms. What characterises a transmedial world is that audience and designers share a mental image of the "worldness" (a number of distinguishing features of its universe). The idea of a specific world's worldness mostly originates from the first version of the world presented, but can be elaborated and changed over time. Quite often the world has a cult (fan) following across media as well.
>
> <div align="right">(ibid.)</div>

Klastrup and Tosca explain that their approach to transmedial worlds "allows us to go beyond a media-centered theoretical perspective and concentrate instead on the abstract

content system itself and how it is experienced" (ibid.). In particular, they concentrate on the way in which worlds "can be organised and presented in any media form" (ibid., original emphasis removed). This approach resonates with the notion of 'transfictionality' discussed earlier, in that there are elements beyond the textual or material articulation of a project that can be transposed across media. This approach is also highly relevant here because the kind of services Gomez provides has often been called upon after the initial articulation (a mono-medium composition has already been created). Now there practitioners who are either creating these documents themselves or calling in third-parties earlier in the process. So, just as world or universe guides have been produced after the initial composition(s), Klastrup and Tosca discuss ways in which a "transmedial world must be faithful to the original setting and story of the universe," and how one does this by "studying the ur-actualization of the world and the core elements which seem to define its worldness" (ibid.). Of course, this approach is informed by their notion of a transmedial world being something that both the "audience and designers share a mental image of" (ibid.).

For Klastrup and Tosca, the core features that can be found in all transmedial worlds are what they call "mythos," "topos" and "ethos". Mythos describes "the establishing conflicts and battles of the world," all the characters, creatures, stories and rumours (ibid.). "One could say," they continue, that the mythos of the world is the backstory of all backstories—the central knowledge one needs to have in order *to interact with or interpret events in the world* successfully" (ibid., original emphasis). An example they give is the mythos of *Lord of the Rings,* with the creation of Middle Earth, the different races and history of its people.

Topos refers to "the setting of the world in a specific historical period and detailed geography" (ibid.). Klastrup and Tosca note that the "actual space and time of an actualization of the transmedial world can be changed, but the general space and time of the universe is normally unchangeable" (ibid.). That is, "the world will always be set in the past or the future, according to the time of the ur-actualization" (ibid.). This does not mean subsequent projects are set during exactly the same time and space, as "newer

actualizations of a world might often be set either before or some time after the mythic time of the ur-transmedial world in order not to interfere with the mythos" (ibid.). For Klastrup and Tosca, time and space elements also include details such as the languages, poetry and traditions of Middle Earth in *Lord of the Rings.* In short, from the player's perspective, all elements that relate to topos involve knowing "*what is to be expected from the physics and navigation in the world*" (ibid., original emphasis). Finally, ethos refers to the "explicit and implicit ethics of the world and (moral) codex of behaviour" (ibid.). How do the good and bad behave, and what is "in character" and "out of character" (ibid.)? In *Lord of the Rings,* ethos refers to (among other factors) the fight of good versus evil, the love of nature and beauty, the exaltation of friendship and the promotion of heroic qualities. Therefore, the transmedial elements of topos, mythos and ethos provide a set of guidelines that help ensure continuity of a world or universe across media, a continuity that can be articulated by the same or different practitioners.

Another theory that is helpful here is Ryan's notion of inter- and intra-universe relations (Ryan 1991, 32–33, 44–45). These relations are proposed in the context of discussions of resemblances between the actual world and world projected by a fiction text, which in turn influences its accessibility. That is, how similar a fictional world is to the actual world. But, as Ryan notes, resemblances can occur between the actual world and the textual world, and between texts within a fictional world. The latter refers to the "internal configuration of the textual universe" and can be called "intra-universe" relations (ibid., 32). Resemblances or compatibilities can be assessed across compositions within the same fictional world according to certain relations and are therefore invoked here to develop the notion of world or universe continuity. For instance, the "identity of inventory" occurs when the various texts are furnished by the same objects; "physical compatibility" occurs when the texts share natural laws; "taxonomic compatibility" occurs when the texts contain the same species; "linguistic compatibility" occurs when the language employed is understood or shared across texts (ibid., 33–34). Other compatibilities include "historical coherence," which occurs when there is the same population and there are no anachronisms; "psychological credibility" occurs when the characters across texts share the same mental properties; and "socio-economic

compatibility" occurs if all the texts share the same economic laws and social structure (ibid.). Like Klastrup and Tosca's system, these compatibilities are transmedial and can be used to ensure each composition resembles the same fictional world.

Klastrup and Tosca and Ryan's lists include a range of elements that exist in the fictional world beyond the specifics of plot or game events. They include details such as setting, history, and characters. As I will further interrogate in the next chapter of this thesis, these world or universe elements are not only medium-independent, they are not specific to a narrative or game mode. They don't always describe game mechanics for instance, or plot points. Elkington has observed that many film to game adaptations and continuations are thwarted by an attempt to adhere to the "original" medium (which is usually a narrative-based medium) (Elkington 2005; Elkington 2009). Indeed, the digital game *Enter the Matrix* was criticized for its over-emphasis on non-interactive modes: the game had a tendency "to sacrifice game play for special effects and cut scenes, such that players are asked to play up to a critical moment only to have the game engine take over and deliver a canned animation" (Elkington 2005, 6). The world or universe elements discussed here refer to a continuity of a different kind, one that is not reliant on continuing the narrative or game modes from one medium to another. The drive towards continuity of a fictional world, therefore, results in production processes that reflect a medium- and mode-agnostic attitude.

All of these changes to documentation are indicative of the effort to maintain creative vision in collaborative projects. Oftentimes these projects involve a variety of compositions in distinct production cultures. These emerging forms of documentation therefore assist all the disparate teams understand the core nature of the fictional world, which in turn facilitates new compositions that are within the logic of the fictional world. Having the same practitioners (for instance the same people write, produce and/or direct and other roles as well) in each medium is also another method that has emerged. These people not only operate as human bibles, but also represent emerging transmedia professions. Furthermost though is the actual transmedia fiction. Most intercompositional transmedia projects involve self-contained compositions, with writing (for instance) for

one being entirely specific to that medium. But as more practitioners work across media, the writing will involve more rhetorical strategies that will link the compositions together. They will move beyond traditional allusions or the sharing of settings and characters, to actually being creative works that guide an audience member, reader or player across them. At present, however, the majority of intercompositional projects involve a series of orphaned compositions. This is in part due to the lack of transmedia writing literacy.

What this previous discussion has shown is that there are changes occurring in the ways these projects are designed and produced. These changes reveal, I argue, what is different about intercompositional transmedia practice. Not all projects can be distinguished at the end-point. Authorship and continuity reveal more about what has changed at this stage. Transmedia projects are a different form of creative work, it is a different practice. By drawing the discussion back to practice and away from the end-product I enable a greater range of implementations. In other words, if it is the skills and knowledge of the practitioners that is key to understanding intercompositional transmedia phenomena at this stage, then there are almost no limits to what they create. As long as they employ multiple distinct media (and sometimes environments), they are creating a transmedia project. This emphasis on practice and not an end-point trait is why I also argue adaptation is a valid form of transmedia expression.

## Adaptation and Transmedia Practice

As I outlined earlier, many current theorists define the transmedia phenomenon according the end-product expansion trait, overtly excluding adaptation. While the expanding of a fictional world across distinct media *can* imply a practitioner views every medium a viable and equal expression of their fictional world, it is *not* a reliable indicator of transmedia phenomena. Further to this, there are implications to the argument that adaptation is not part of transmedia practice. Indeed, I challenge this argument in two ways. I explain how the rationale against adaptation conflates form and function and obscures the meaning-making process of adaptation. The theory of transmedia practice articulated in this thesis recognises all structural forms. A transmedia attitude, therefore,

can be present in adaptation practices, and so I explain just how adaptation is different in the transmedia context.

### *Problematising Redundancy*

Jenkins's theory of transmedia storytelling is pivoted on the argument that a "story unfolds across multiple media platforms with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole" (Jenkins 2006, 95). Transmedia storytelling, he continues, is unlike the current licensing system, which "typically generates works that are redundant" (ibid., 105). Any composition that does not make a distinctive and valuable contribution does not offer a "new level of insight and experience" (ibid.). Indeed, anything that allows "no new character background or plot development" is therefore "redundant" (ibid.). Redundancy, Jenkins summarises, "burns up fan interest and causes franchises to fail" (ibid., 96). It is from Jenkins statements and others that subsequent researchers have also made overt distinctions between transmedia storytelling and adaptation. Long argues that transmedia storytelling does not involve, unlike other franchises, adaptation:

> Retelling a story in a different media type is *adaptation*, while using multiple media types to craft a single story is *transmediation*. For example, Peter Jackson's film versions of *Lord of the Rings* are adaptations of J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* novels. While this shares some of the same benefits as transmedia storytelling, primarily the creation of new "access points" to a narrative world through alternative media types, it differs from transmedia storytelling due to the lack of one of the key components in Jenkins's definition: distinction.
> <div align="right">(Long 2007, 22, original emphasis)</div>

The premise of this adaptations-are-redundant argument is that any repeating of a story adds no value to the experience or meaning-making process. While I certainly agree that any expansion or addition or continuation of a fictional world across distinct media is a significant phenomenon, what I wish to challenge here is the rationale behind these arguments: that adaptations are automatically redundant.

First, it is important to recognise that adaptation can describe a structural relationship between content in different media platforms, whereas redundant describes the function

of (the effect or role it has) the content in different media platforms. The conflation of structural and functional relationships in the redundancy argument obscures the fact that a form can have many functions, it can have many roles in the meaning-making process. Consider Genette's theory of hypertextuality, for example (Genette 1997 [1982]). "Imitation" is a structural category that describes, fundamentally, when a writer imitates another writer's work. From that structural relationship, imitation, many artforms can emerge: like pastiche and caricature. Not only are they artforms in themselves, but as Bakhtin argued, they contribute to the development of the forms they parody (Bakhtin 1981 [1930s]).

Music remixes are another example, which involves "a reinterpretation of a pre-existing song" (Navas 2009). While remixes are often discussed within a rhetoric of subversion, they are also simply another practice that any practitioner can utilise. For instance, filmmaker, artist and theatrician Peter Greenaway tours the world VJing his transmedia project *The Tulse Luper Suitcases* (see Figure 28). These remixes are certainly not redundant, as they are so different to the experience of the films. Indeed, they are part of his more recent philosophy: "If the cinema intends to survive, I believe, it has to make a pact and a relationship with concepts of interactivity, and it has to see itself as only part of a multimedia cultural adventure" (Greenaway 2003). Greenaway's remix aesthetic, and well discussed intertextual and intermedial aesthetics (Elliott and Purdy 2005; Kochhar-Lindgren 2005; Noys 2005; Peeters 2005) extends to invitations from other producers and students to create game versions of his films, along with his own art books and exhibitions. All of these creative works provide various adaptations and experiences of the same core narrative elements (most utilise the same assets) but they do not replace the film and vice versa, making them redundant.

Figure 28. Peter Greenaway at NoTV, June 17 2005, VJing *The Tulse Luper Suitcases*
(Peter Greenaway, 2003–present)
Image source: (Petergreenaway.info 2006)

There are also cases of practitioners designing their work from the beginning to facilitate a remix. As literary scholar and philosopher Walter Benjamin observed with the influence of mechanical reproduction on the artwork: "[t]o an ever greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility" (Benjamin 1968, 226). Likewise in this context: the work of art intended to remixed becomes the work of art designed for remix. While there are examples of this type of practice, especially examples of projects designed to facilitate remixes by anyone—including the currently in post-production remixable feature film by ModFilms, *Sanctuary*—I'll refer to a recent project initiated in 2009 at the Pervasive Media Studio in the UK because they created the adaptation themselves.

Their project investigates "how technology can extend and ultimately enhance a live performance experience, like theatre or a music concert" (Pervasive Media Studio 2009a). Such concerns are best understood in the context of The Met's experimentation with making opera, their opera, accessible to people all over the world. In 2007 they started *The Met: Live in HD* program in which operas were simulcast to locations in the USA and worldwide. They also provided the HD (high definition) recordings for (non-

simulcast) cinema screenings around the world. When I watched one of the operas in the cinema, it was clear there was a tension between two artforms—opera relies heavily on extreme make-up and gestures, while cinema demands more nuanced presentations. The inevitable result of such convergent activities is the birth of new artforms, such as that exemplified in a recent UK experiment in extending theatre.

"The Extended Theatre Experience" project involves the efforts of Watershed, Bristol Old Vic and Hewlett-Packard Labs to "create a specially-commissioned, short piece of theatre that will embed new video and audio capture technologies in to every element of the production" (ibid.). The aim, they explain, is to "test the capacity of this technology to capture the 'experience' of attending a live performance, or even of performing on stage," and then they will "explore different ways of delivering this digital experience to a viewer or end user, either inside and outside the auditorium" (ibid.). To do this, Sally Cookson worked in collaboration with filmmaker Geoff Taylor to create a screen-based experience of the play *Strange Case,* using footage captured during a one-off live performance (Genevieve 2009).

They attached cameras to the performers and musicians (see Figure 29), had fixed cameras around the set, and even attached cameras to props. The resulting video of the performance provided points-of-view that the live audience were not privy to, and facilitated a sense of immediacy and intimacy for the home viewer. While the plot stays the same, and the event is the same, the experiences are quite distinct. But rather than two entirely different productions being produced, two compositions were created from the one event. So, there is exactly the same "story," the same script and performance, but the editing and distinct media employed made two unique experiences.

Figure 29. Photo of musician with POV camera, *Strange Case*
(Sally Cookson, Bristol Old Vic, Pervasive Media Studio, 2009)
Image source: (Pervasive Media Studio 2009b)

It is also important to note that adaptation is a process. An adapter (whether a different person than the original creator or the same person) makes semiotically meaningful decisions. Hutcheon explains how adaptation always involves "interpreting and creating something new" (Hutcheon 2006, 20). Long does note that "every time a story is adapted into a different media form, it's a reinterpretation" (Long 2007, 22), but still, he argues, "the general narrative thread is recognizable as the same in both media" (ibid., 23). But when adapters make decisions about their choice of medium, they subtract or contract, and also add elements (Hutcheon 2006, 18-21). Indeed, due to the vagaries of media specificity and the creative decisions one makes during the process of adaptation, an adaptation rarely, if ever, involves a one-to-one correspondence with the original. An example of this process, and the attraction to adaptation, is explained by Hutcheon in the context of film novelizations:

> Novelizations of films, including what are called "junior" novelizations for
> younger viewers, are also often seen as having a kind of educational—or perhaps

simply curiosity—value. If Internet postings are to be believed, fans of films enjoy their novelizations because they provide insights into the characters' thought processes and more details about their background. […] They all increase audience knowledge about and therefore engagement in the "back story" of the adaptation. These various supplements are sometimes released before the films or games and therefore generate anticipation. Not only do these kinds of adaptations provide more details, especially about adapted characters' inner lives, but in the process they also help foster audience/reader identification with those characters. They might also add scenes that do not appear in the screenplay or film versions, perhaps offering a minor character's perspective on the action.

(Hutcheon 2006, 118–119)

Filmmakers Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, for example, wrote a novelization, *The Red Shoes: The Novel*, of their 1948 dance film *The Red Shoes*. In the extras of the 1999 Criterion Collection edition of the film, actor Jeremy Irons reads excerpts of the novel over the film (creating another version of *The Red Shoes* that combines the novel words in audio with the film visuals), and comments on the differences between the film and novel:

While the novel closely follows the film, it also provided Powell and Pressburger with the opportunity to add new narrative threads and to expand upon the film's original themes and characters. They paid particular attention to the impresario Boris Lermontov, and to the development of the doomed relationship between Victoria Page and Julian Craster.

(Jeremy Irons, in Powell and Pressburger 1999 [1948])

The differences between the content delivered on each media are not just by choice of course, media-specific constraints also feature. Douglas Adams created many versions of the *Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy* fictional world. It began as a six-part radio series in 1978 for BBC Radio 4 (partly co-written with producer John Lloyd). The first book *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* was published in 1979 and there have many other novels, as well as the interactive fiction for Infocom in 1984, which Douglas wrote and designed the puzzles for (and was programmed by Steve Meretzky). While Adams passed away before the feature film was finished, the screenplay was developed from his previous screenplay versions and the book of the same name. Karey Kirkpatrick, who developed the final screenplay, explains how the adaptation process wasn't straightforward. Hitchhikers, he explains, "wasn't always developed with the story at its

central driving force" (Karey Kirkpatrick, cited in Stamp 2005, 11). The producer of the film, Robbie Stamp, further explains:

> The problem that Douglas Adams faced when turning the radio and book versions of Hitchhikers into a film screenplay, was that the story he had told didn't conform to those three acts. Act 1 saw everyone introduced and brought together on board The Heart of Gold, but then almost immediately—in a brief, post-credits one-line joke at the end of episode 2 of the radio series, or one four-page chapter in the book—they arrive at their goal, the legendary planet of Magrathea, by-passing Act 2 and its attendant complications entirely.
>
> (Stamp 2005, 110)

Adams's solution for the film was to use the Infinite Improbability Drive to send the spaceship Heart of Gold to another location before the protagonists arrive at Magrathea. An Act 2 was created by having the characters visit Viltvodle 6 (a place mentioned previously in existing works) and by inventing the character Humma Kavula. Therefore, once again, there is not a one-to-one correspondence of the story; and of course the experience of each medium is entirely different.

The situation is even more pronounced in game and narrative adaptations. Many game theorists have explained that narrative and game modes are entirely different and do not easily translate across media (Juul 2001; Aarseth 2005; Eskelinen 2005). As Aarseth explains, you "can transfer characters (up to a point) and universes (unproblematically), and any kind of action gimmick such as bullet time; but for games to work, gameplay, not story, is key" (Aarseth 2005). Aarseth offers to chart to illustrate the incompatibility of transfers across mediums and modes (see Table 1):

| Element | Ride to movie | Book to movie | Movie to game | Game to movie |
|---------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Storyline | No | Ok | Not really | No |
| Events | Hardly | Ok | Hardly | Ok |
| Universe | Ok | Ok | Ok | Ok |
| Character | No | Ok | Partly | Expanded |

Table 1. Espen Aarseth's 'Crossmedia Transfer Table'
Source: (Aarseth 2005)

The argument that narratives travel across media, including games, therefore ignores the reality of the peculiar nature of narrative and game modes. There is not a "general narrative thread [that] is recognizable as the same in both media" (Long 2007, 23). But the view that narratives are easily transferable to game modes is perhaps why so many game adaptations have failed. Elkington explains that "[v]ideo games based on film and television licenses" attempt to appease two audiences with incompatible goals: "fans of the original license, who expect a certain adherence to its details, and fans of video games, who expect adherence to common notions of gameplay" (Elkington 2009, 215). In doing so, many adaptations "conceivably fail to appeal to any by including multiple elements that please one audience and actively antagonize another, such that no audience is wholly satisfied" (ibid., 214). To argue that adaptations are the same across media and narrative and game modes negates the reality of the affordances, peculiar design issues and experience of each medium. But the history of poor adaptations has contributed to the expectation, indeed assumption that adaptations are by nature of lesser value.

Indeed, there is the greater transhistorical attitude towards adaptation in general, which Hutcheon describes as the "constant critical denigration of the general phenomenon of adaptation" (Hutcheon 2006, xi), and "the explicitly and implicitly negative cultural evaluation of […] adaptation" (ibid., xii), which often involves "disparaging opinions on adaptation as a secondary mode" (ibid., xiii). This cultural distain of adaptation perpetuates an inappropriate assumption that adaptations are automatically inferior:

It is possible that in fact there is nothing qualitatively wrong with film and television adaptations, that this is simply a case in which video game reviewers are negatively prejudiced against adaptations from the outset. As the reviews above suggest, many critics work from the assumption that adapted video games will be of inferior quality unless proven otherwise, and note with pleasure when a game overcomes that expectation or knowingly report when it does not. Perhaps the problem lies less with the games than with critics. Maybe a game based on a film or television license simply cannot get a fair assessment.

(Elkington 2009, 223)

Thompson likewise notes the "familiar complaint" that an "expensive sequel or remake or adaptation comes out and disappoints critics and audiences" (Thompson 2007, 2). So, it is not appropriate to cast all adaptations as redundant. Furthermore, in the context of transmedia practice, if the original creators are involved or creatively-organized in some way to ensure each composition is part of the meaning-making process, then adaptation is simply another technique practitioners may utilise to communicate meaning. This type of practice involves design issues that are somewhat different to traditional adaptation practices, and are therefore also interpreted differently. In what follows I explore what these differences may be.

### *Designing Adaptation-Ready Texts*

One phenomenon related to the rise of transmedia practice is the instance of practitioners that design their original creation to facilitate its likelihood of being adapted across media from the beginning. Hutcheon refers to comic book artist Cameron Stewart, who reports that comic books are being made to appeal to Hollywood studios (Hutcheon 2006, 88)[13]; Aarseth notes that "many works are made with crossmedia migration in mind" (Aarseth 2005); and screenwriter John August—of films such as *Big Fish*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *The Nines*—has also commented on what he calls the "recent phenomenon" of writers constructing a story ready for adaptation:

While books have been adapted into stage plays for hundreds of years, the phenomenon of a "literary property" to be exploited in various media is a very

---

[13] Further to this, some companies creates comics of a story and characters to test in a relatively low-cost media a potential new franchise. Liquid Comics is an example of a company that employs this strategy.

recent phenomenon. These days, even high-class writers have film rights in mind as they pen their novels.

<div style="text-align: right">(August 2003)</div>

This conceiving of a "literary property" is significant in light of transmedia practice, but in the context of this discussion, it shows how the intention of adaptation can result in a change in the modal character of the writing, as the writer often utilizes the conventions of the next (or target) artform. A novel may be written with screenwriting techniques (such as privileging action to communicate meaning and avoiding narrative strategies that do not translate easily to the screen, like long internal monologues). This potentially makes the adaptation more likely to be produced because some of the necessary modal changes have already been addressed. In such cases the practitioner designs a mono-medium project that has the potential for adaptation. But such an approach may be a transmedia practice if the following adaptation was intended to contribute to the meaning-making process in some way.

But even then, this view perpetrates the historical nature of adaptation. In her discussion about the nature of, and practitioner and audience attraction to, adaptation, Hutcheon talks about "wanting to retell the same story over and over in different ways," "the desire for repetition" (Hutcheon 2006, 9) (that is, "repetition without replication" (ibid., 7)), and the pleasure ones derives "from repetition with variation" (ibid., 4). Of course, the same creative urge applies to transmedia practices and does explain part of the urge towards adaptation for the creator. However, what I wish to propose here is another kind of adaptation that is not reliant on each composition modulating meaning for other, or facilitating that pleasure of repetition with variation *for the audience*. Instead, some transmedia practitioners are perhaps not aiming their adaptations at the same audience, but to different ones. This is, of course, not new—adaptations have long been utilised to appeal to different audiences (creating a teen or child version for instance, or for contemporary audiences). What I am hinting here is a shift to a paradigm of points-of-entry.

### *Adaptations as Points-of-Entry*

The shift I am referring to is a different way of conceiving and perceiving of adaptation. Rather than seeing adaptation as a linear, assembly-line process, where there is a main composition that is then adapted into other media, it is the essence of a single story, game or event that is expressed and accessed through different media, through different artforms. This resonates with the spirit of transmedia, in which each medium is seen as an equally viable expression of a fictional world. There is a gradual shift from a media hierarchy, where each media is seen as primary or secondary or even tertiary, to a heterarchy, where each medium is an equal expression of a possible single essential but intangible element. I explore this view with two projects—Darren Aronofsky's *The Fountain* and Richard James Allen's *Thursdays Fictions*—and then delve into its implications in industry too.

In 2006, Darren Aronofsky's feature film *The Fountain* was released. A year before, however, the graphic novel version which he wrote was released. The graphic novel, *The Fountain,* is not a direct adaptation of the feature film, as it is based on an earlier script version, and was created in conjunction with artist Kent Williams, who had free-reign to interpret at will (Epstein and Aronofsky 2005). The story was first conceived as a film only, but very early in pre-production Aronofsky secured the graphic novel rights "to make sure all the work we do somehow finds an audience" (Capone and Aronofsky 2006). "If Hollywood gives me a problem," Aronosfky explained, "I'll make a comic book out of it" (Epstein and Aronofsky 2005). Aronofsky's impetus to secure the rights in another medium was therefore sparked by a concern over gatekeeper issues. But, it is also worth noting that right from the beginning Aronofsky considered his story to be one that wasn't necessarily specific to a medium, and so could be expressed in different ways. This perspective is evident in Aronosfky's description about the relationship between the graphic novel and film: "They have the same parent, the story, yet the siblings are completely unique" (Aronofsky et al. 2005, 168). On the back cover of the graphic novel, that parent, the "seed," is explained:

> An epic love story so grand that one medium cannot contain it […] The Fountain graphic novel is a sister-project to the film, using the same story as its seed, but stretched upon the limitless storytelling canvas of the comics medium. […] *The Fountain* graphic novel provides an alternate interpretation wholly unique yet still intimately tied to the movie, in what can be considered the ultimate "director's cut."
>
> (Aronofsky et al. 2005)

Through his descriptions of the "same parent," one can see that Aronofsky doesn't view *The Fountain* as being married to one medium, but as an abstract entity that exists beyond its articulation(s). This is a shift from the view that a story has a singular or primary material expression. While it would be incorrect to say that Aronofsky views the two expressions as equal (the film is his most developed artistic voice and the "ultimate director's cut"), there is a privileging of an overarching concept, a parent seed, that exists beyond its expression. Likewise, the story of *The Fountain* is concerned with love across time, in which the protagonists exist in multiple bodies. The story weaves around the various lifetimes of two lovers in their quest to understand love, themselves and life. The film is structured by having the same story with the same characters told over different periods of time. Just as *The Fountain* exists as a story that has multiple expressions, the themes of the work are about characters that have multiple lifetimes.

Interestingly, this notion that there is no single expression of an idea is also evidenced in Aronofsky's approach to directing actors and editing the film. Aronosfky would "run take after take" to "try every single emotion that could possibly work" (Aronofsky 2006). For one scene, actor Rachel Weis spent two days working on a scene:

> We would do take after take after take for this tiny scene because we just kept exploring it, and trying it in different ways. There was so much great stuff to choose from in the editing room, of ideas, I mean really the film can be cut together in many, many different ways because of the different feelings and emotions and life that the actors brought to each scene.
>
> (ibid.)

While Aronofsky did choose particular takes for the director's cut, he also saw many possible iterations of the film, iterations that he or his fans could undertake:

> The way the film was constructed, there were many ways to put the film together and we tried many different ways. We ended up with the film pretty much exactly how we wrote it. I think one day perhaps I'll do a different version of the film. It would be interesting to even have fans out there mash it up and try different ways to combine it because the story does fit together in many different ways. The version you have now is in many ways what we always preconceived.
>
> (ibid.)

The link between this kind of adaptation practice and thematic concern is also observable in the works of dancer, writer and director Richard James Allen. Since 1995, Allen, has been developing with Karen Pearlman a work, a fictional world, called *Thursdays Fictions*. It began as a Tasdance and That Was Fast dance theatre production (with director Don Mamouney) in 1995 (see Figure 30), that included a book of poems written by the main protagonist Thursday, *The Air Dolphin Brigade* given to the audience in lieu of a programme. Four years later the project then became a book of poetry *Thursday's Fictions* (see Figure 31). Seven years later the dance film version *Thursday's Fictions* was released, which Allen directed and choreographed, and Pearlman produced and edited (see Figure 32). In 2008 it became an environment in the online virtual world *Second Life*, titled *Thursday's Fictions in Second Life*. Created in collaboration with Gary Hayes, the space in the online virtual world *Second Life* remediated environments and audio from the dance film. The most recent version is a machinima series created by "filming" avatars in the specially constructed virtual world environment they have in *Second Life*. The first episode of the machinima series, titled 'The Sun's Search for the Moon,' is a sequel to the feature film narrative, but also follows characters that appeared in the stage production and book (Allen and Pearlman 2009) (see Figure 33).

Figure 30. Photo of cast from the theatre production
of *Thursday's Fictions*
(Tasdance and That Was Fast, 1995)
Image source: (Allen and Pearlman)



Figure 31. Image of book of poetry, *Thursday's
Fictions*
(Richard James Allen, Five Islands Press, 1999)
Image source: (Allen and Pearlman)



Figure 32. Still from the feature film *Thursday's
Fictions*
(Physical TV Company, 2009)



Figure 33. Still from episode one of the machinima
series 'The Sun's Search for the Moon',
*Thursday's Fictions*
(Richard James Allen and Karen Pearlman, 2009)

Since 2000, Allen has been describing his practice as "shapeshifting" (Pearlman and
Allen 2007, 22), a notion which is echoed in the story. The story is described by Allen
and his collaborator Karen Pearlman, as "a fable, an adult fairytale, about reincarnation,
about selfishness and beauty, about an artist who wants a kind of immortality: fame, and
tries to cheat the cycle of reincarnation in order to get it" (ibid., 15). They continue,
explaining the relationship between the themes of the story and its polymorphic
expression:

> Fittingly, for a project about reincarnation, it has passed through many bodies or
> forms, and on that journey it has adapted to each media in which it is expressed,
> being changed in theme, image, structure, rhythm, ideas, worlds and characters by
> the 'body' or form it inhabits.
>
> (ibid.)

I am not arguing here that certain themes are more appropriate to adaptation, or that certain ideologies lead to transmedia practices. Instead, the themes of *The Fountain* and *Thursday's Fictions* and their subsequent polymorphic expression expound the notion of fictional world not being created once and then being adapted or cloned in other media, but being expressed in different forms. This represents, as I mentioned earlier, a shift from a hierarchy where stories or games are created once and then copied or transformed along a linear chain, to a perspective that views each articulation as an equal yet diverse expression of the same intangible element.

In industry terms, this can translate to adaptations or points-of-entry targeting different audiences with different artform and media preferences. That is, not everyone wants to watch the movie and play the game. In his exploration of adaptation practices and how narrative and game mediums appeal to different audiences, Elkington observes there is an increased awareness of the affordances of each medium:

> The term underscores the idea that media convergence, despite its apparent ability to smooth over differences in media, actually creates an *increased* awareness among audiences of the particularities of the form and content across media, and consequently requires developers to be more aware of the limitations of each medium and more responsive to the vicissitudes of various audience demographics.
>
> (Elkington 2009, 218)

The fact that not all media appeal to all audiences has become more pronounced in the context of transmedia practices. Jenkins argues that practitioners should provide unique story information in each media. But when this happens fans of a fictional world are splintered into groups according to whether they are literate in the various media (or even have the time or money to pursue other media), irrespective of their desire to delve into all aspects of a fictional world. However, through the adaptation points-of-entry approach, different audiences are able to access the fictional world through their medium of choice. When the same essential elements are expressed in diverse ways, then audiences would not, conceivably, feel cheated or left out. I discuss this further in the next chapter through the notion of tiering.

In summary, adaptation is not always (or ever) redundant. It is a practice that can have many functions and has been practiced to varying degrees of success for centuries. The argument of this thesis is that the transmedia phenomenon is not best understood by an end-product trait such as expansion, but by the knowledge and skills necessary to create (and experience) a transmedia project. Those knowledge and skills involve the employment of a variety of distinct media (and environments), in a variety of ways. One of those ways is adaptation.

In this section I have attempted to show how a transmedia practice can be observed in adaptations. Not all intercompositional projects are transmedia fictions, and likewise with adaptations. I have discussed three approaches that point to a transmedia sensibility: designing adaptation-ready works for self-adaptation, self-adaptations to modulate meaning, and adaptations as points-of-entry. The previous sections discussed how transmedia practices are different from other intercompositional works in general, through the knowledge, skills and processes of transmedia practitioners. The next section delves into another form of transmedia practice that does not require these efforts to distinguish it from other forms, but it does require recognition.

## *IntraCompositional Transmedia Phenomena*

The beginning of this chapter introduced the notion of intra- and intercompositional transmedia phenomena to highlight the fact there are transmedia practices that not all theories encompass. So far I have addressed some of the theoretical issues that are specific to intercompositional transmedia phenomena, and now I delve into the intracompositional aspects. The problems of ascertaining difference do not cloud intracompositional transmedia phenomena, but they represent entirely different design and experiential issues that are what can be described as transmedia-native. That is, one does not need to look at the authors or production processes to recognise there is a transmedia practice present. Why?

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, the *I Love Bees* work can be studied as a part of transmedia fiction in that it is a composition that is linked to another composition (the *Halo 2* digital game), but it is also transmedia fiction in itself. It is an example of an intracompositional transmedia fiction in that the composition is the sum of multiple media platforms. But unlike *I Love Bees,* not all intracompositional transmedia works have a relationship to mono-medium works. There are many pervasive and ubiquitous games, augmented reality games, networked narrative environments and telematic arts, for example, that exist on their own.
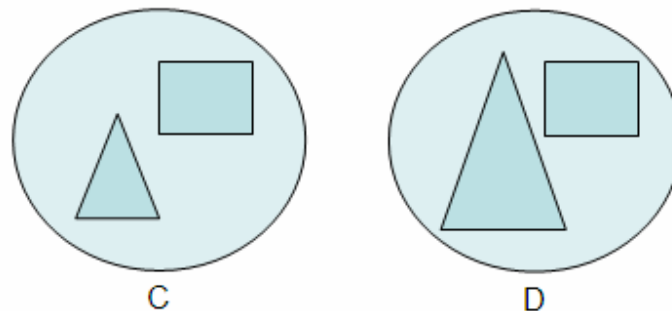


Figure 34. Two types of intracompositional transmedia phenomena.
C has many mediums expressing the fictional world (eg: an alternate reality game).
The fictional world of D is expressed across a substantial medium and a small amount
on another medium (eg: a book with a website).

To illustrate C, then, consider the independent 2006 alternate reality game created by Jan Libby: *Sammeeeees*. This composition was expressed across notes packaged in boxes with petals, phone recordings, podcasts, T-shirts, mail, clues in books, CD recordings, numerous websites and live events. Players engaged with the characters through email, blog posts, watched videos, attended meetings with characters played by actors and made phone calls. The work was distributed across all of these "spaces" and did not involve a feature film, television episode, book or theatre event. Many pervasive and ubiquitous games also fit into this category. With these types of intracompositional works, one does not study the relationships between compositions but the units that make up the one transmedia composition.

D on the other hand, represents those compositions that have a mono-medium work (a book or television show for example) as well as small elements in other media, but are not intercompositional transmedia phenomena. For example, Sean Stewart and Jordan Weisman's novel *Cathy's Book: If Found Call 650-266-8233* is a novel that also contains a variety of "personal" items one may find in a real life diary: removable photos, scribbles and napkins with phone numbers, that lead to character recordings and fictional websites. These photos, napkins, voice recordings and websites are not compositions in themselves, but are part of the experience of the book. All of the elements work together to create one composition. The illustration of the large triangle, then, represents the book, and the small square represents the napkins, websites and voice recordings experienced through a phone. It is interesting to note these books with websites or mobile technology elements have been on the rise recently, with a long list of ones published in 2009 that target the young adult market.

So-called "two-screen" experiences also fit into this category. For instance, area/code produced a TV and web-synched game for the television show *Sopranos. The Sopranos A&E Connection Game* provided a way for viewers of *Sopranos* on A&E (who were probably watching it for the second time) with a novel experience (an adaptation if you like). People collected pieces with their cell phone before the broadcast, populating their own gameboard online. During the broadcast, as the characters, settings and objects the player had collected appeared on screen, they would score points (see Figure 35). Area/code claim it "represents the first time a game was ever designed wholly for synchronous two-screen entertainment" (area/code 2007), but were perhaps a bit too quick with that statement as it appears the *webRIOT* game, which was co-created by game designer Tracy Fullerton (then at Spiderdance) for MTV in 1999, was the first. It is described as "the first interactive television game to synchronize online and television experiences precisely—within 1/10th of a second, to be exact" (Fullerton, 2006). Irrespective of who was first, there is a long line of such projects worldwide, including the plethora of live-event television game shows.

Figure 35. area/code's 'A&E Connection Game', *The Sopranos*
Image source: (area/code 2007)

Other media utilised in television projects includes magazines. For instance, a garden renovating show on Channel 9 in Australia, *Backyard Blitz,* had a "smellovision" simulcast during an episode 13 in September 2005. Whilst watching the show which featured flowers, viewers were prompted at certain points to scratch and sniff the flower scents in the show's accompanying magazine. More recently in May 2007, for a season 2 special episode of NBC's *My Name Is Earl*, Get a Real Job, viewers could participate in "the first ever 'Laugh 'n Sniff' interactive episode". Whilst watching the show, viewers were prompted to scratch the special boxes supplied on the scent card in the April 30-May 6 issue of *TV Guide* (see Figure 36)*.* When it aired in the US it had numbers come up on the screen to indicate the corresponding scents, but in the iTunes version it didn't. The scents were not a one-to-one correspondence like the flower example earlier. Instead, the scratch panels provided a different scent, that when combined with the television show scenes, facilitated a meaning that was greater than the sum of each. For instance, there was a scene that involved the discovery of a blow-up doll (see Figure 37). The accompanying scent was a new car smell. The combining of the two semiotic elements in this manner not only makes the projects intracompositional, it is an example of what Lemke has described as "multiplicative meaning" (Lemke 1993; Lemke 1998b).

Figure 36. Cover of TV Guide with
"Laugh 'n Sniff" card for *My Name is Earl*
(NBC, 2007)



Figure 37. Screenshot of scene from 'Get a Job' episode
featuring a blow-up doll, *My Name is Earl*
(NBC, 2007)

But whether a project is intra- or intercompositional is not always clear. The 1999 cross over episode for *Homicide: Life on the Street* would be intercompositional, because the web component was the equivalent of an episode. But what about the 1998 Warner Brothers Network efforts with *Dawson's Creek*, in which a website gave viewers access to *Dawson's Desktop* ("dawsonscreek.com/desktop")? Viewers could read his (and other characters) emails, IMs and diary entries, as well as webpages for all the main characters of the show, as well as websites for the local high school, newspaper, and bed and breakfast. Beyond creation of fictional artefacts, the online activity was designed to continue the narrative of the TV series, as Chris Pike explains:

> We considered our episodes to be a seven day arc starting one minute after the show ended […] Inevitably *Dawson's Creek* would end on a cliffhanger of some kind, we would expand on it, tackle it, address some of the elements fans would be calling each other and discussing. We wanted to grab that energy right after the show and propel us through the rest of the week. At 9.01, an e-mail or an instant message would start to happen. It would take on the life of a real desktop. E-mail would come in at irregularly scheduled times. Through the middle of the week we would extend a long storyline which was being developed across the season or do some online exclusive arcs which would give us more credibility that as a teen, online, he would go to websites and have chat buddies who may or may not be

represented on the weekly show but which will give the character a three
dimensional feel.

<div align="right">(Pike, quoted in Jenkins 2006, 115–116)</div>

It seems that the series, with its accompanying Internet components acted as
intracompositional transmedia episodes, rather than providing two entire compositions on
distinct media. Another key project that also provides substantial online content is Fox
TV's *Freaky Links.* Created by Haxan Films after *The Blair Witch Project,* it involved a
website that, like the Blair Witch website ("www.blairwitch.com"), went live 11 months
before the TV series aired in October 2000. The connection between the site and series is
pivoted around the protagonist: a webmaster. A week after the premier, TV reviewer
Robert Bach describes the website:

> FOX has been using the tagline "Witness something freaky from the creators of
> the *Blair Witch*, its a website with a life all its own," as a tagline and its very
> appropriate because the web site for the show at http://www.freakylinks.com
> really does have a life of its own.
>
> On the site you can: look into Derek's diary dating back to 1998 featuring
> soundbites and written journal entries, post and reply to messages about
> paranormal activity, look up terminology used in the show in the "Freak-o-pedia,"
> email Derek and a lot of other freaky-stuff. FOX has gone all-out with this show
> by creating this seemingly realistic website to go along with the events and
> characters featured in the show, giving an added dimension to the series. So, you
> can check up on paranormal investigations all week long—not just on Friday
> nights.

<div align="right">(Bach 2000)</div>

Over time, there were in fact a few sites that were part of the series: Occultresearch.com,
Acquire-GM.com and Creepyclicks.com. But the project, like *Twin Peaks*, ended earlier
than expected in February 2001. The substantial nature of the content and its diary format
before the series could be considered intercompositional, but the relationships between
the online material and the episodes renders those episodes intracompositional. Likewise,
the Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2002 television show *Fat Cow Motel,* involved
four websites that were updated daily. It involved mobile/cell, emails, forums, online
games and videos to populate the fictional town online. The online components, created
by Hoodlum, could be experienced wholly themselves and were in some cases more

popular than the television series. Since the dual-screen experience is unclear, it would render the project intercompositional.

What the juxtaposition of these different practices does is challenge theories that define the phenomena according to the traits of one type of practice. A case in point is Jenkins's argument that "[e]ach franchise entry needs to be self-contained so you don't need to have seen the film to enjoy the game and vice-versa" (Jenkins 2006, 96). In the context of intercompositional phenomena, this argument is perhaps warranted. If coherence can only occur when the audience attends to every medium, then it is highly likely the majority of audiences will never experience a coherent work. Each "franchise entry" (each story on each medium) should be therefore self-contained. But the argument for contained compositions is specific to intercompositional phenomena.

Intracompositional transmedia phenomena such as pervasive and ubiquitous games and networked narrative environments, and some of the book and television projects mentioned, are rarely self-contained as every element is a crucial and dependent part of a single work. What I wish to highlight here is the fact this trait is obscured by discussions about the need for self-containment in transmedia fictions. That is, there are two insights to gain from overtly recognising and observing intracompositional phenomena: there is a *decrease in the volume* of each segment and an *increase in the dependency* between them.

The notion of decreasing volume is perhaps understood with the example of *Cathy's Book* cited previously. Each component of the scribbles on the napkin, paragraphs of text on a website and short phone recording could be described as having small volume. In the semiotic context, these elements are akin to "units". For instance, Michael Halliday's "systemic function linguistics" divides information units into clause, (verbal) group, (nominal) group, (adverbal) group and word (Halliday 1973, 141); and Michael O'Toole's development of Halliday's model for painting includes the units of work, episode, figure and member (O'Toole 1990, 13). In the context of transmedia projects, though, these units are now spread across media. That is, now an entire story or game is expressed across distinct media in a way that makes each unit on each medium platform

the equivalent of a paragraph, member or unit. While they are a form of micro-fiction, they differ in that each is not self-sufficient. Each small volume unit has a high degree of dependency with the other units. The total work is the sum of the all of the units spread across media. Consider Figure 38 as an illustration of this idea. This type of transmedia project has significant implications in terms of the design and experience of them. They have their own specific literacy.
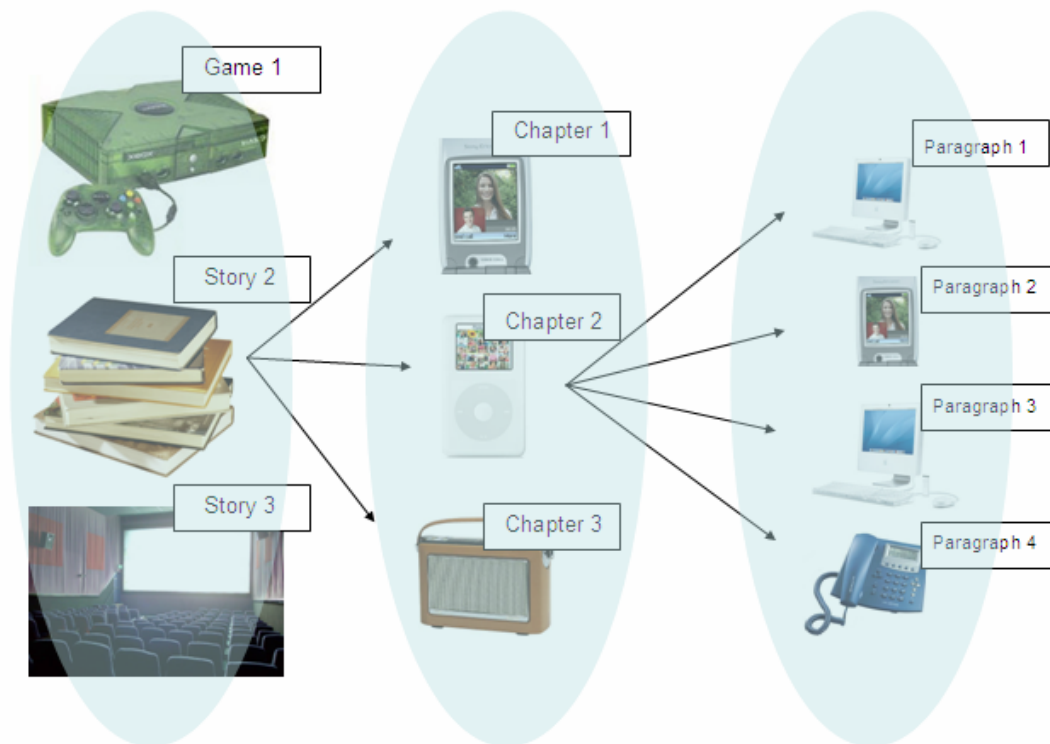


Figure 38. Representation of correlation between media, volume and dependency in intracompositional transmedia fictions

But both of these types of transmedia forms represent the greater phenomenon of transmedia practices. To study intercompositional transmedia practices at the exclusion of intracompositional transmedia practices negates the breadth and diversity of transmedia phenomena in general. Transmedia practices have not just emerged in large-scale projects that encompass a variety of mono-medium compositions, and the reverse is also true. This has implications in terms of theory and design. How have current theories theorised intracompositional transmedia phenomena? In what follows I discussed two theories that are concerned with understanding the nature of intracompositional transmedia phenomena, and so do not present theories that distinguish them from practices such as

franchises or transtextuality in general. However, they do still distinguish them from related practices; in this case, single medium works.

## The 'Breaking Boundaries' Rhetoric

Both Walker Rettberg and Montola pivot their descriptions of their respective phenomena around a breaking or blurring of boundaries (and so too does Saint-Gelais, who states that "transfictionality covers those practices that expand fiction beyond the boundaries of the work" (Saint-Gelais, cited in Ryan 2008, 386)). Walker describes distributed narratives as narratives that "escape the boundaries we have been used to" (Walker 2004, 92); while Montola defines pervasive games as "blurring the traditional boundaries of games" (Montola 2009, 18). In this section I explain their views and while their insights are rich and helpful, I argue they frame the phenomenon in a way that is highly relative.

To Walker Rettberg, distributed narratives are stories that "aren't self-contained," and "can't be experienced in a single session or in a single space" (Walker 2004, 91). They are the antithesis of "narratives that have clear boundaries" (ibid.), and so are theorized through a discussion of Aristotle's dramatic unities (Aristotle 1996 [c330B.C.]). Walker Rettberg reframes the dramatic unities of time, place and action as "disunities" that are not experienced at a single point in time, a single place, and even are distributed across authors. In the penultimate chapter of this thesis I interrogate dramatic unities further, but for this discussion here, the point is made that Walker Rettberg argues distributed narratives can be understood as breaking "conventional boundaries and constraints" (Walker 2004, 93).

Likewise, Montola argues pervasive games can be understood as breaking the abstract boundaries of game: the magic circle. The magic circle has been developed from Johan Huizinga's theory of play (Huizinga 1955 [1938]). To Huizinga, play is distinct from "ordinary" life because of its locality and duration; that is, it is "played out" within "certain limits of time and place" (ibid., 9). Regarding time, play begins and ends. But more "striking" to Huizinga is play's limitation in space:

> All play moves and has its being within a play-ground marked off beforehand either materially or ideally, deliberately or as a matter of course. Just as there is no formal difference between play and ritual, so the "consecrated spot" cannot be formally distinguished from the play-ground. The area, the card-table, the magic circle, the temple, the stage, the screen, the tennis court, the court of justice, etc., are all in form and function play-grounds, i.e. forbidden spots, isolated, hedged round, hallowed, within which special rules obtain. All are temporary worlds within the ordinary world, dedicated to the performance of an act apart.
>
> (ibid., 10)

Huizinga summarises the formal characteristics of play as involving, among other features, an activity that "proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner" (ibid., 13). Montola invokes the magic circle as metaphor for discussing the ways in which pervasive games do not adhere to the "proper boundaries of time and space" (Montola 2009, 11). A pervasive game, then, "is a game that has one or more salient features that expand the contractual magic circle of play spatially, temporally, or socially" (ibid., 12). Montola continues:

> In pervasive games, the magic circle is *expanded* in one or more ways: The game no longer takes place in certain times or certain places, and the participants are no longer certain. Pervasive games pervade, bend, and blur the traditional boundaries of game, bleeding from the domain of the game to the domain of the ordinary.
>
> (ibid., original emphasis)

While the notion of a magic circle has been contested by theorists (Marinka Copier's PhD offers a substantial discussion about the various problems and developments of the notion of the magic circle (Copier 2007)), the issue I wish to problematise here is how a boundary-breaking rhetoric positions the phenomenon. It isn't the notion of boundary-breaking in itself that is questioned here, for transmedia practice is very much characterized by the employment of multiple distinct media which often involves practitioners (and players and interpreters) crossing literacy and creative production culture boundaries. Instead, what is contested is the notion of boundary-breaking being specific to a particular boundary, and the inference that the experience of that boundary transgression is shared by all. By defining the phenomenon according to a particular boundary, the phenomenon only has meaning for those witnessing or experiencing it as

*that* boundary transgression. But for many who work with or experience the phenomena on a regular basis, that particular boundary transgression is no-longer (or never was) relevant. Instead, there are other boundary transgressions they experience, as semiotician Yuri Lotman explains:

> Because the semiotic space is transected by numerous boundaries, each message that moves across it must be many times translated and transformed, and the process of generating new information thereby snowballs.
>
> (Lotman 1990, 140)

Walker Rettberg's and Montola's general lens, on the other hand, is specific to one boundary: the line between supposed norms in narrative and game respectively and some peculiar emerging phenomena. In this sense, Walker Rettberg and Montola are describing the area as being on the periphery of a prevalent cultural practice. I argue this periphery is indicative of an individual's position in relation to the phenomena rather than the position of the phenomena itself. A phenomenon can be "culturally significant," and even be "rigidly self-organized" for one person, while to others it can be a "marginal form of culture" (ibid., 134). To continue with (this bastardization of) Lotman's theory: for some, the culture of transmedia practice exists in their own "internal space" while for others it exists in an "external space" (ibid., 131).

Likewise, in her discussion about the practice of 1960s and 1970s artists who were operating outside of perceived norms of sculpture, Krauss argued their efforts are often inappropriately framed as fringe or eclectic:

> This suspicion of a career that moves continually and erratically beyond the domain of sculpture obviously drives from the modernist demand for the purity and separateness of the various mediums (and thus the necessary specialization of a practitioner within a given medium). But what appears as eclectic from one point of view can be seen as rigorously logical from another. For, within the situation of postmodernism, practice is not defined in relation to a given medium—sculpture—but rather in relation to the logical operations on a set of cultural terms, for which any medium—photography, books, lines on walls, mirrors, or sculpture itself—might be used.
>
> (Krauss 1979, 42)

There is an inside view and an outside view. Irrespective of their own literacy or involvement with the area though, Walker Rettberg and Montola have used a rhetoric to describe the phenomena from the vantage point of a ledge looking in, not from within it. Such descriptions are essential to aiding people's understanding of the area—indeed they resonate with the majority of readers because newcomers always outnumber others—but do not necessarily sustain their relevance when people move beyond that ledge. Their approach locks the phenomenon into a permanent state of otherness. It does not represent the perception of people who were attracted to that otherness and made it their own, or the reality of their everyday experience of it. This is why one of the goals of this study of transmedia practice is to attempt to be representative of, or at least recognise, various understandings of the area. It is also why the framing of transmedia practice in this thesis is more pragmatic: unifying all practices that employ distinct media and environments, facilitating a range of understandings and implementations. While Walker Rettberg and Montola's theories are still quite pertinent (and will be discussed further), it is their framing of the phenomenon according to a particular boundary that, I argue, misrepresents the breadth of experience of the phenomenon.

## *Summary*

This chapter has shown how current theories are concerned with different types of transmedia phenomena and so their methodologies are not applicable to all forms. I have explained how this occurs by introducing the notion of inter- and intracompositional transmedia phenomena, and the importance of interrogating both. The crucial research question of how to distinguish intercompositional transmedia phenomena was interrogated. I argued against the end-point characteristic and showed how related theories such as hypertextuality, media studies intertextuality and transfictionality are applicable theories yet are designed to recognise different phenomena. I explained how intercompositional transmedia phenomena are differentiated by the knowledge and skills of people and production processes. World or universe guides were introduced as evidence of these processes, revealing how practitioners are thinking in terms of medium- and mode-independent elements.

Building on the argument that transmedia fictions can be understood as a practice, adaptation was overtly included as another viable form. I considered some of the possible reasons for the exclusion of adaptation practices and explained how transmedia adaptations could be understood. While the expansion of a fictional world across compositions in distinct media is significant, perhaps even more significant is the parallel phenomenon of a single composition expressed with multiple distinct media. In short, this section has outlined some of the varieties of transmedia practice through the notion of intra- and intercompositional phenomena, and the importance of recognizing their breadth methodologically. The next chapter delves into other methodological and design challenges the transmedia phenomenon provokes.

# Chapter 4: *Narrative, Game and Interactivity in Transmedia Projects*

I would venture the hypothesis that taking the media of manifestation of narrative
and their different semiotic and expressive possibilities into account
will exceed mere application and that is may well lead to
a significant rethinking of the domain and concepts of narratology.
(Nünning 2003, 252)

A work born within media convergence inevitably elicits hybrid forms
of storytelling that offer immersive and interactive environments
in which users are expected to perform certain activities.
Ultimately, meaning-making becomes a collaborative,
and more important, a participatory process.
(Bakio lu 2009, 31)

In this chapter I explore interactivity in transmedia practices. Many theorists of

transmedia phenomenon include the activity of a user, player or audience in some way as

a defining feature. Walker Rettberg, for instance, explains that distributed narratives

"demand more from their readers than reading or suspension of disbelief" (Walker 2004,

20). Instead, "[t]hey ask to be taken up, passed on, distributed" to the point that "readers

[are] carriers as well as interpreters" (ibid.). To Jenkins, transmedia storytelling is

intrinsically entwined with participatory culture for it "places new demands on consumers

and depends on the active participation of knowledge communities" (Jenkins 2006, 22).

Jenkins continues, explaining that

> To fully experience any fictional world, consumers must assume the role of
> hunters and gatherers, chasing down bits of the story across media channels,
> comparing notes with each other via online discussion groups, and collaborating
> to ensure that everyone who invests time and effort will come away with a richer
> entertainment experience.
>
> (ibid.)

I, however, have not bundled together participation or activity as a requisite characteristic

of transmedia practice. This is because not all transmedia projects involve interactivity or

participation. The theory of transmedia practice expounded in this thesis is concerned

with all implementations of the expressing of a fictional world across distinct media and

environments, and so how this occurs varies greatly. But in this chapter I discuss issues related to the design and theorisation of activity in transmedia practice.

I begin be delving into two key modes that figure prominently in contemporary practices and many (but not all) transmedia projects: narrative and game modes. At present, transmedia researchers privilege one or the other in their theories, describing the phenomena as being narrative- or game-based. Since this thesis is concerned with methodologies that enable the study of many transmedia forms, it is necessary to facilitate the interrogation of both. Further to this, it is crucial that modes being utilised by practitioners are recognised. Transmedia practice cannot be understood as a purely narrative- or game-based phenomenon. I therefore propose a theory of transmodality or transmodal elements, to enable the identification and study of complex modal structures.

These insights are then parlayed into practice. That is, I investigate how a transmodal perspective illuminates some of the issues transmedia practitioners face. For instance, how do practitioners design a fictional world that is meant to be told *and* played? I also continue my discussion on the role of documentation in the meaning making process, explaining how flowcharts developed in interactive and gaming sectors are being adapted for the transmedia realm. Also, an important question related to interactivity in transmedia practice is that of how an interactive system is upheld in non-computational and distributed media? Digital media affords interactivity because it enables a feedback mechanism where input can be tracked and responded to. Digital games do this, and even dungeon masters in table-top role-playing games. But how does this occur in the transmedia domain, where each distinct media is not necessarily managed by a computer? I therefore discuss how some non-computational game mastering occurs in transmedia practice. Related to this is the question of *how* participants contribute to a transmedia fiction. I do not outline all of the methods, but show how manual game mastering facilitates a truly responsive form.

The final part of this chapter then delves into some of the ramifications of distribution or fragmentation. Once elements are expressed across distinct media, beyond the single

work, the likelihood of people engaging with all the elements lessens. I discuss in this section how practitioners address this issue and even at times facilitate it, with various design methods. It propose a theory of "tiering" to explain these practices and a phenomenon that once again belies attempts at defining it according to purely interpreter-oriented methods. If people do not, for instance, attend to every element in each distinct media then familiarity is not present. Familiarity, a trait put forward by transfictionality theorists, is therefore not always possible. But irrespective of the experience of a person, there is nevertheless a transmedia practice to observe. Firstly however, it is important to attend to some of the assumptions that have historically and currently take place regarding interactivity and transmedia practices. The next section, therefore, discusses some of the ways interactivity and transmedia have been theorised and how this thesis privileges a literacy approach.

## *From Ideologies of Interactivity to Literacy*

The notion of interactivity has been prevalent in media, narrative (and game) scholarship in the last couple of decades in particular. This is in part due to the rise of digital technologies and their apparent ability to afford consumers, audiences and readers the power to destabilize existing structures. Indeed, there is oftentimes an ideology attached to the notion of interactivity. That ideology can informs arguments against interactivity as well, where interactivity is viewed as a new form of consumerism, manipulating consumers to act for the ultimate goal of sales. Beyond such ideologies, some argue that everything is interactive, and so any discussion of interactivity miscasts non-digital media as passive. In this section I discuss challenges to these discourses with the aim to resituate this inquiry from notions of passivity, consumerism and control to that of knowledge and skills (literacy).

I shall begin with the claim that all works are interactive, a claim that often emerges from scholars (and practitioners) that are beginning to reflect on the notion of interactivity or participation. For instance, the argument usually put forward is that theatre, film and books are interactive because the audience or reader has to work to understand the work. While a reasonable response to the hype around interactivity, this view plagued

discussions about interactivity for years until 1997, when Aarseth carefully articulated the difference in a manner that resonated with many (Aarseth 1997). His theory of "ergodics" was introduced in the context of the rise of so-called interactive stories on computers, CD-Roms and websites, which provoked a wide range of scholarship championing the "death of the author" and the "birth of the writer-reader". A common retort to these overstatements was the interactive nature of reading and watching. A reader and audience member does not merely passively consume, they actively engage with (for example) plot propositions. What Aarseth helped explain was the difference between internal and external activity:

> The performance of their reader takes place all in his head, while the user of cybertext also performs in an extranoematic sense. During the cybertextual process, the user will have effectuated a semiotic sequence, and this selective movement is a work of physical construction that the various concepts of "reading" do not account for. […] In ergodic literature, nontrivial effort is required to allow the reader to traverse the text. If ergodic literature is to make sense as a concept, there must also be nonergodic literature, where the effort to traverse the text is trivial, with no extranoematic responsibilities placed on the reader except (for example) eye movement and the periodic or arbitrary turning of pages.
>
> (ibid., 1)

For many, Aarseth's thesis of ergodics helped move the discussion about interactivity away from an emphasis on "what was being read" and how a person actively constructs and negotiates in their mind, to "what was being read *from*" and what a person has to do to actuate a work (ibid., 3, original emphasis). Among other functions, Aarseth's theory removed the dichotomy of passive and active to acknowledge different kinds of significant activity, some internal and some external. The latter of which is defined by its emphasis on "nontrivial" activity.

Understanding this difference, scholars of 1980s and 1990s franchises noticed an increased presence and role of interactivity. For Kinder, this meant that transmedia intertextuality prepares children for "full participation in this age of interactive multimedia […] by linking interactivity with consumerism" (Kinder 1991, 6). Likewise, Marshall observes commodification and the "heightened value of both interactivity and

play for audiences" (Marshall 2002, 69). While Buckingham and Sefton-Green observed the primary role of "activity" in the *Pokémon* franchise:

> The second area of novelty here centers on the notion of "activity." As we indicate in the following sections, there are several key characteristics and themes that cut across the range of Pokémon texts; but activity—or agency—is an indispensable part of the process, rather than something that is exercised post hoc. Here again, the difference between Pokémon and earlier phenomena may be a matter of scale or degree, rather than of kind. Nevertheless, we would argue that Pokémon positively *requires* and *depends upon* "activity" to an extent that many other forms of media consumption do not; and in this respect, it casts an interesting light on the familiar debate about structure and agency.
> (Buckingham and Sefton-Green 2004, 19, original emphasis)

While the rise of interactivity in all forms was observable in a range of cultural phenomena during that time, and has now reached the point where the game mode is a significant semiotic resource employed by many, the bundling of consumerism and interactivity is more project-specific. That is, all because people need to actively pursue content that is (sometimes) spread across commoditised media, and that media is (sometimes) predominantly interactive, it does not mean that consumerism and interactivity are irrecoverably entwined. But embedded within these arguments is the view that interactivity is another form of control. Interactivity is merely another way for "consumers" to be directed and manipulated. While this is the case at times it is not the only way we can understand interactive ecologies. This view demands a different paradigm that involves, as Jenkins argues, political economy theories (for example) "shed its assumption that all participation in the consumer economy constitutes cooptation" (Jenkins 2004, 36).

A counter-claim has been that interactivity signals an inverted control, where the consumer supplants the authority of the producer. This is particularly evident in discourses that argue participation is equated with democracy. But as Aarseth argues, the "belief that new (and ever more complex) technologies are in and of themselves democratic is not only false but dangerous" (Aarseth 1997, 167–168). "New technology creates new opportunities," Aarseth continues, "but there is no reason to believe that the increased equality for all subjected to the technology" (ibid., 168). To paraphrase

Aarseth, passivity is not equivalent to repression and activity is not equivalent to liberation (ibid., 167). But still, many argue that if consumers have agency then producers do not. Buckingham and Sefton-Green were quick to address this dichotomy in their discussions of agency in *Pokémon:*

> [D]ebates about media and their audiences are often implicitly perceived as a zero sum equation. Despite all the talk of complexity and contradiction, we often seem to be faced with either/or choices: either the media are powerful, or audiences are. Most significantly, such debates often seem to presume that structure and agency are fundamentally opposed. Asserting the power of agency necessarily means denying the power of structures. Proclaiming that audiences are active necessarily means assuming that the media are powerless to influence them; and asserting the power of the media necessarily seems to involve a view of audiences as passive dupes of ideology. This is, we would argue, a fundamentally fallacious opposition.
>
> (Buckingham and Sefton-Green 2004, 23)

These views of control persist in discussions of contemporary transmedia phenomena. For instance, in his study comparing the alternate reality games produced by the creators and fans of ABC's *Alias,* television scholar Henrik Örnebring (Örnebring 2006) found the fans developed the narrative outside of the TV show events and included interactivity, unlike the ARGs created by the show producers (see Table 2).

| Point of comparison | *Alias* ARGs Season 1-2 | *Omnifam* ARG |
|---|---|---|
| **Fictional world** | Based directly on the TV show. | Based on the backstory of the TV show; fills in syntagmatic gaps. |
| **Narrative extension** | No or little overall narrative in ARG. Narrative extension explicitly tied to specific episodes, events and characters on the TV show. | Strong overall narrative in ARG. Narrative extensions based on the backstory; specific episodes, events and characters rarely (if ever) mentioned. |
| **Interactivity** | Online only. No opportunity for participants to affect the narrative. | Online and offline. Opportunity for participants to influence the narrative (ending in particular). |

Table 2. Henrik Örnebring's 'Comparison between Alias ARGS Season 1-2 and the Omnifam ARG' (Örnebring 2006)

Örnebring argues that "the season one and two *Alias* ARGs [those by the producers] did not provide any insights into the backstory that could not also be gleaned from watching the show, and neither did it provide much of an opportunity for fans and participants to interact with the full fictional world of *Alias,* providing more backstory and filling in syntagmatic gaps" (ibid., 14). These traits are not specific to *Alias* either. They have been discussed in light of the transmedia projects produced to expand the fictional world of the *Lost* television series. The lack of critical information and interactivity in the alternate reality game *The Lost Experience* caused issues for the players, as alternate reality game practitioners Andrea Phillips and Adam Martin explain:

> Games such as *The Lost Experience* show some of the potentially fatal dangers
> inherent in this: provided as a link between successive seasons of the TV show
> *Lost*, the ARG did not in any way significantly advance the plot and provided
> only very limited interaction with the few core characters that were even present.
> (Phillips and Martin 2006, 55)

ARG practitioner Michelle Senderhauf added to this in light of another producer-created ARG launched between seasons three and four: *Find 815,* by Hoodlum for ABC in 2007:

> [*Find 815*] was potentially better because its main character only had a tangential
> connection to the show and the story coincided with that season's fake plane crash
> reveal. Unfortunately, though, ARG players' action in the game didn't matter.
> "They basically watched some videos and played flash games." A show with
> built-in alternate reality and a huge cast like *Lost* could have produced a great
> ARG, she says, but it seems like the creators of the *Lost* ARGs are "scared of
> letting players interact with the world."
> (Michelle Senderhauf, quoted in Fermoso 2009)

The differences between the limited offerings from producers compared to the rich offerings by fans prompted Örnebring to conclude their respective actions "could be viewed as part of an ongoing *contestation of narrative*" (Örnebring 2006, 15, original emphasis). He continues:

> We can already see signs of an emerging cultural economy (as described by Fiske
> 1992, following Bourdieu 1984) around ARGs—participants and producers alike
> invest and accumulate (cultural capital), and just like in the economic system this

cultural capital is unevenly distributed. I suggest that a particular manifestation of this cultural economy is the emergence of ARGs as part of an ongoing contestation of narratives, where producers, consumers and producer/consumers apply different narrative models, structures and strategies *in order to maintain control over the text and the (economic and cultural) capital it represents.*

(ibid., 16, my emphasis)

Örnebring's discourse of struggle for ownership and control of a text perpetrates those discussed and challenged earlier. Beyond the overblown nature of such dichotomies, there is another view that complicates the situation. The lack of interactivity provided by producers compared to fans can also be read as an issue of *practice*. That is, the constraints of existing *mono-medium production cultures* and questions of *literacy*. On the former, television writing, for example, involves short production cycles with ongoing, impending deadlines. To write a whole new narrative that exists outside of the television show involves writing an entire episode or multiple episodes on top of the television episodes already in production. Television production is, by definition, concerned with television production and is therefore generally not structured to facilitate "other media" work. While this is changing, it does not currently have processes that facilitate "content" production across media. Further to this, the status of that "other" content in production processes is in transition. As the US Writer's Strike revealed, writers are not always paid for their work in "other" media, because it is deemed promotional:

> First, one of the major sources of contention in the 2007-2008 Writer's Strike was distinguishing between promotional and original content. Because they considered streaming video and ancillary content to be promotional, studios did not provide television writers adequate residual rates for online content. For example, NBC Universal asked the writers of the *Battlestar Galactica* to develop a webisodes series, but the network did not want to pay the writers for their work, claiming such content was "promotional." This debate continues to hinder the possibility of fully canonized transmedia stories. Television writers are not willing to devote their time and energy to produce content that might be considered promotional and thus not worthy of compensation.
>
> (Smith 2009, 35)

It is evident that there is an incompatibility between previous logics of production: between mono-medium production (TV) and multi-medium production (transmedia). While the promotional aspect (the motivation to draw people to the television show) in many works is not contested, what is contested is the assumption that the writers *choose* to not produce interactive works for purely *control* reasons. I argue the writer's lack of providing opportunities for interaction can also be assessed according to their lack of knowledge and skill in creating interactive works. Screenwriting is a skill that traditionally does not demand an understanding of interactive poetics. While the writers in question may be hard-core gamers or fans of interactive stories, it does not mean they are capable of designing, writing and executing interactive works. This literacy question is an important viewpoint that is rarely considered in interpretation-oriented theories of transmedia projects. It is a viewpoint that emerges when the inquiry is resituated to consider the knowledge and skills involved in the construction rather than the interpretation of meaning across media.

It is noted there are times, however, that practitioners themselves also perceive interactivity through the lens of control. In his study of media workers, and industry responses to participatory culture, Deuze reflects on how organizations are "cautiously courting the consumer in her (historical yet only recently acknowledged) role as co-producer of commercially viable and creatively inspiring content and creativity" (Deuze 2007, 236). Deuze observes that "research among media workers directly involved with two-way interactivity and a more empowered role for the consumer suggest they are often reluctant and at times outright hostile towards exploring ways to share control with members of the audience" (ibid.). Such fears are not uncommon with practitioners of any artform who are faced with or consider interactivity for the first time. But this reluctance also reveals, I argue, the degree of lack of understanding of interactivity as a skill. It is not an either/or proposition of having full control over a work or seceding control over to the audience. There is knowledge, skill and effort involved with interactive design.

Therefore, this chapter is concerned with just what that knowledge and skill involves in transmedia practice. It is concerned with understanding how interactivity, narrative and

game modes operate in transmedia projects. To do this, the methodology of this thesis is to recognise that all of these modes can and do operate in transmedia projects. It is therefore crucial that any theorisation recognises and attends to these complexities. The next section explains how this diversity of modes is not addressed in current theories, and proposes a method to make it so.

## *Problematising Narrative and Game Elements*

Transmedia projects involve a combination of media platforms that oftentimes have both narrative and game modes. For instance, Douglas Adams created many adaptations and extensions of the *Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy* fictional world: the 1978 BBC Radio 4 radio play (partly co-written with producer John Lloyd), novels, and the story and puzzles for the 1984 Infocom interactive fiction game. Max Barry created his own Internet simulation game, *Nation States*, to complement his 2004 novel *Jennifer Government*. The 2006 computer game, *The Sopranos: Road to Respect*, was co-written by the creator of the HBO TV show, *The Sopranos*, David Chase. Independent filmmaker Lance Weiler wrote and directed his feature film *Head Trauma*, as well as designed and executed the accompanying alternate reality game *Hope is Missing*. On the face of it, these transmedia projects have narrative and game modes in operation at both an intercompositional (each work appears to be narrative- *or* game-based) and intracompositional level (some works appear to have narrative- *and* game-based elements operating within it). It makes sense then, that the phenomenon is not characterized as being narrative or game, and theories from both narrative and game studies would be utilised. Currently however, theories defining the area privilege either the narrative or game mode.

## Current Narrative- and Game-Based Theories of Transmedia Phenomena

The majority of narrative and media researchers in this area describe the phenomenon as being either a predominately narrative phenomena, or at least experienced narratively. Walker Rettberg proposes a theory of distributed narratives to describe "stories that aren't self-contained" (Walker 2004, 91); Ruppel has proposed what he calls cross-sited narratives, which have a "narrative sequence [which] is distributed across varying media

channels (film, web, music, video games, print, live performance, etc.)" (Ruppel 2005b), a "truly multimedial method of storytelling" (Ruppel 2005a); and Jenkins describes the phenomenon of a "transmedia story [that] unfolds across multiple media platforms with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole" (Jenkins 2006, 95–96).

What is especially interesting in the context of this discussion is all of the researchers refer to alternate reality games as part of their phenomena. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, the prototypical alternate reality game employs multiple media platforms, usually everyday media such as email, websites, phones, faxes and billboards. They are usually collaborative and involve both narratives and gameplay aspects. For instance, players can read the narrative unfolding through blogs and interact with characters, as well as solve puzzles, and engage in mini games and live events. The variety of narrative and game elements in alternate reality games is one reason why theorists from both narrative and game studies refer to them. Indeed, Walker Rettberg, Ruppel and Jenkins all refer to alternate reality games in their narrative-based theories; and McGonigal and Montola refer to them in their game-based theories. In the game theories, the focus is likewise on the presence of one primary (game) mode with little or no mention of the co-presence of game and narrative modes[14].

So, it appears the same practice, alternate reality games, can be an example of distributed narrative, cross-sited narrative, transmedia storytelling, pervasive gaming and ubiquitous gaming. What this situation raises for me is the question of why a phenomenon that has narrative *and* game modes is framed in a theory as being either a narrative *or* game phenomenon? Are these researchers studying the nature of narrative, game, media, or the nature of the phenomenon? Their mode-specific labels are perhaps warranted if they are investigating the nature of narrative or game. But why then define a phenomenon according to a narrative or game mode, why not just investigate either mode within a

---

[14] McGonigal does discuss "the novel recombinations of play and performance that ubicomp enables and provokes" (McGonigal 2006, 41). But performance, for McGonigal, is the result of "ludic" design. So while there is a leaning towards recognizing more than a game mode in McGonigal's ubiquitous gaming, it is not an overt part of her nomenclature or study.

phenomenon that is defined in a different way? Indeed, there may still be harm in investigating the nature of narrative *or* game in isolation. These mode-specific approaches are of course not peculiar to these researchers. They represent a deeply embedded belief and methodological approach that informs most research into contemporary phenomena, but which has been challenged by contemporary scholarship. The next section will interrogate this situation in the greater context of game and narrative studies.

## *Game and Narrative Studies*

The nature of narrative has such a long history so it would be foolish to attempt any overview. Some may assume that after all this time the nature of narrative should be clear, but time facilitates complexity and insight, properties which are fluid and unending. However, many would be familiar with the traditional rendering of narrative as, for example, the "recounting […] of one or more real or fictitious events" (Prince 1987, 58). But as Ryan explains, narrative has been explored in existential, cognitive, aesthetic, sociological, and technical terms (Ryan 2004a, 2). It is the recent challenge of transmedial narratology[15] that has led Ryan (and others) to develop a definition that can operate in both verbal and non-verbal media (ibid.). To do this, Ryan has leaned towards narrative as a "cognitive construct, or mental image, built by the interpreter in response to the text":

- A narrative text must create a world and populate it with characters and objects. Logically speaking, this condition means that the narrative text is based on propositions asserting the existence of individuals and on propositions ascribing properties to these existents.
- The world referred to by the text must undergo changes of state that are caused by nonhabitual physical events: either accidents ("happenings") or deliberate human actions. These changes create a temporal dimension and place the narrative world in the flux of history.
- The text must allow the reconstruction of an interpretive network of goals, plans, causal relations, and psychological motivations around the narrated

---

[15] As I explained in chapter one of this thesis, transmedial narratology is not analogous to transmedia storytelling or transmedia fictions. Transmedial narratology is the study of the medium-specific and medium-independent nature of the narrative mode in general, not the phenomenon of fictional worlds being expressed across distinct media.

events. This implicit network gives coherence and intelligibility to the
physical events and turns them into a plot.

(ibid., 8–9)

The nature of game, on the other hand, is a young research area that has not yet been
turned completely upside down by the ravages of reflection. Gonzalo Frasca has
suggested the difference between narrative and game is the difference between
representation and simulation (Frasca 2003b)[16]. To Frasca, a "simulation semiotics" or
"simitiocs" recognises the peculiarities of the ludic mode: "[s]imulations are laboratories
for experimentation where user action is not only allowed but also required," they
"always carry a certain degree of indeterminacy that prevents players to know beforehand
the final outcome" and "going through several sessions is not only a possibility but a
requirement of the [computer game] medium" (ibid.). In a similar vein to Frasca, Juul
focuses on game (*ludus*) as a "rule-based activity" (Juul 2005, 28), saying that a "game is
a rule-based system with a variable and quantifiable outcome, where different outcomes
are assigned different values" (ibid., 36). Likewise, Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman
describe a game as "a system in which players engage in an artificial conflict, defined by
rules, that results in a quantifiable outcome" (Salen and Zimmerman 2004, 96).
Unsurprisingly too, early game theorists not only endeavoured to make the difference
between narrative and game clear, but also argued it deserves its own discipline:

At this early stage, digital game studies is necessarily and self-consciously
concerned with its own formation, and is heavily engaged with an argument about
whether this new phenomenon is to be swallowed by already existing disciplines,
or whether it needs to and could develop into a discipline of its own, with a
coherent object of study and institutional support.

(Douglas 2002)

---

[16] When speaking of the game mode in this dissertation, I am usually referring to ludic qualities. Game
scholar Roger Caillois introduced two extremes of play: *paidia* to denote "free improvisation" and *ludus* for
those works that require "ever greater amount of effort, patience, skill, or ingenuity" (Caillois 2001). The
latter, ludus, is now commonly associated with game and rules. Frasca has further distinguished them,
stating that "the difference between *paidia* and *ludus* is that the latter incorporates rules that define a winner
and a loser, while the former does not" (Frasca 2003).

Indeed, many game scholars have been developing methodologies that are game-specific (Aarseth 1997; Eskelinen 2001; Aarseth 2003; Aarseth 2004a; Aarseth 2004b; Eskelinen 2004a; Eskelinen 2004b; Juul 2005); and some have also started developing game-specific versions of existing narrative studies, like Markuu Eskelinen's exploration of an intertextuality for games: a study of inter- or transludic networks (Eskelinen 2005).

While the distinct nature of game and narrative is now fairly understood by many theorists who have reflected on these issues, some researchers still slip into what could be called a game-mode-blindness. Eskelinen, for example, criticises the "detriment of the narrativist approach (or ideology)" in media studies (Eskelinen 2005) and Aarseth laments the "use of unfocused terms such as *emergent narratives*" to describe games (Aarseth 2004b, 366, original emphasis). This game-mode-blindness is actually quite pervasive, and therefore has been described as a particular view of the world, as "narrative colonialism" or "narrativism":

> This is the notion that everything is a story, and that story-telling is our primary, perhaps only, mode of understanding, our cognitive perspective on the world. Life is a story, this discussion is a story, and the building that I work in is also a story, or better, an architectural narrative.
>
> (Aarseth 2004a)

While narrative (and game) metaphors help some people understand the world, they can also impede understanding of it. It is important, game scholars argue, that games are analysed differently to narratives, for "[w]hen games are analysed as stories, both their differences from stories and their intrinsic qualities become all but impossible to understand" (Aarseth 2004b, 362). Likewise, it is also important, I argue, that transmedia phenomena are not always analysed as story *or* game, for its intrinsic and modally complex qualities become all but impossible to understand. So, how do theorists describing transmedia fit into these discussions? Firstly, Walker Rettberg has defended her use of the term "narrative" to describe this medially-diverse phenomenon:

> In earlier work, I have proposed the term distributed narrative to describe the increasing number of texts where elements of a story are distributed in time or

space. By using the term narrative, rather than discussing the larger group of texts variously called "contagious media" or "crossmedia", I wish to emphasize the ways in which our basic knowledge of narrative structures allows us to see connections between fragments that may have no explicit links.

(Walker 2005)

It is here we can see, I argue, the same narrativism being applied to the transmedia phenomenon. Indeed, Walker Rettberg's argument raises two issues: 1) describing a phenomenon according to what is considered the primary way it is perceived, and 2) equating "see[ing] connections between fragments" with narrative knowledge. On the former: to describe a phenomenon according to the way it is presumed to be perceived, irrespective of its qualities, is problematic. It may be that people are exercising what narrative theorist Monika Fludernik describes as naturalization: a reading process that imposes narrative stability to non-narrative or unstable works (Fludernik 1996), which correlates somewhat with narratologist David Herman's notion of narrative being (among other things) a cognitive style (Herman 2002). But while the subjective nature of realities is not contested here, what is contested is the merging of an audience or reader-response theory with a theory of a work. That is: distributed narratives are narratives because they are interpreted or experienced as narratives. Granted, there is no work outside its perception, but claiming one perception accounts for everyone's experience of it is perhaps not the intention but is the logical outcome of such a claim. One may argue, however, that a narrative reading is the only mode available to perceive such works. This brings me to the second point: the ability to perceive connections between things is not necessarily narrativistic. While "the ability to infer causal relations is essential to narrative understanding" (Ryan 2004, 11), the reverse is not. This argument will be taken up shortly.

As I stated earlier, Walker Rettberg is not alone in this narrative framing: Ruppel's cross-sited narratives, Jenkins's transmedia storytelling, and my own previous terms—cross-media narrative (Dena 2003), multi-channel storytelling (Dena 2004c), cross-media storytelling (Dena 2004a) and polymorphic narrative (Dena 2004b)—could all be seen as lapsing into game-mode blindness. However, Jenkins's use of the term storytelling to describe a range of phenomena that includes computer games and alternate reality games,

could also be strategic: championing an aesthetically- rather than economically-motivated approach to his industry readers and other scholars, and highlighting a new focus on "aesthetic implications" in media studies (Jenkins 2004, 40). But, as Eskelinen argues, the use of "storytelling" is still inappropriate:

> As there are different modal contexts and origins (films and games for starters) for cross-media franchises such as Star Wars or Tomb Raider, it is old-fashioned and inaccurate to rename or indiscriminately label these franchise economies and strategies as mere or pure storytelling ecologies or transmedial storytelling.
>
> (Eskelinen 2005)

The recognition of narrative and game modes is not without its complications. We don't yet have shared terms to describe phenomena in ways that are not mode-specific, and in many cases not medium-specific. But if we recognise that game is "a formally different transmedial mode and cultural genre of expression and communication than stories" (ibid.), then defining a phenomenon that includes game and narrative elements as either a narrative or game corrupts understanding of the phenomenon and the research process. A methodological goal for the study of transmedia practice, then, has been to develop a model that facilitates the identification and interrogation of the nature of both narrative and game elements. How can this be done? On the one hand one can take (what may be called) an interdisciplinary approach, where the theories of narrative and game are both utilized to illuminate understanding of the phenomenon. Indeed, Frasca has argued that the "basic concepts of ludology could be used along with narratology to better understand videogames" (Frasca 1999; 2003a) and Ryan has called for a "ludo-narrativism" to acknowledge the "dual nature of video games" (Ryan 2006, 203). But on the other hand, there is the greater issue of how to theorise the presence and nature of both narrative and game modes in the object of study: the nature of the compositions themselves.

One approach is to consider what can be called *parallel-presence*. There are times when one can (apparently) easily say: this is an example of narrative operating and this is an example of game. But parallel-presence is a difficult formula to ascertain when the nature of narrative and game is still unclear. Indeed, some conflate game and narrative tendencies with media. The text in book X, for instance, would be considered to be

primarily narrative-based, whereas computer game Y would be considered primarily game-based. But it is possible that computer game Y could have both narrative and game elements present. Those that argue narrative can only exist in static or even verbal media would consider dialogue and cut-scenes as the narrative-based expression, while the gameplay a game expression. But as Aarseth showed with his theory of ergodics, non-trivial actions can be observed in books, artworks, and digital games (Aarseth 1997).

Further to this, while a game may be distinct because it has rules (with a win or lose stake attached to it), the dialogue could have a role in the gameplay, and the gameplay could have a role in the plot development. Indeed, a media-based approach to this problem falls down very quickly when one invokes the understanding that both narrative and game elements are transmedial, and importantly, that modes can modulate meaning for each other in complex ways. For instance, the CEO and Founder of Gas Powered Games, Chris Taylor, explains how they blended story, gameplay (and difficulty) in their digital game *Space Siege*:

> We wanted to make the game playable by a large audience, but we still wanted to make the game challenging for expert players. We came up with a concept that made it more difficult to play if the player wanted to keep their "humanity" intact, but if they allowed cybernetic upgrades, they would have an easier time of it. This was a perfect way to blend story and gameplay *and* difficulty into one seamless solution. If you play through the game and win but become a horrific machine in the process, you can always play again, this time with the goal of keeping your humanity.[17]
> (Taylor, quoted in Fullerton, Swain and Hoffman 2008, 408, original emphasis)

There are many elements that make up the experience of a game and narrative and often their functions are not determinable by isolated signs. The story of a film, for instance, is not just communicated with dialogue or plot. Film theorist, educator and consultant Jennifer van Sijll outlines one-hundred conventions screenwriters use to communicate meaning beyond dialogue, such as sound, match-cuts, lenses, lighting, props (Sijll 2008).

---

[17] I should note that the implementation of this idea did not actually work well. As one reviewer lamented, the cybernetic upgrades did not significantly improve gameplay and the costs were simply communicated with warnings and complaints from characters (Miller 2008). "It was a good idea" but "but ultimately failed in the final execution" (ibid.).

So called extra-diegetic elements can also be a part of the meaning-making process. In his discussion about the relationship between narrative and technology in MMORPGs, Eddo Stern cites examples of games that attempt to turn necessary technological activities such as saving a game into a diegetic metaphor (Stern 2002). The semiotic theory of multimodality is based on this understanding: that communication occurs through a number of modes beyond text. While this knowledge is somewhat well understood, what isn't necessarily is the implications of this in understanding how different semiotic elements work together. As I stated earlier, narrative and game are transmedial and they interact with each other in complex ways, modulating meaning for each other. The notion of parallel presence requires each narrative and game mode to be seen as entirely distinct categories of influence. One could say that parallel-presence, therefore, perpetuates the problem.

Another approach is to interrogate how narrative and game modes *transform* across media. In the context of the early days of establishing the identity of the game mode, Juul explored the difference between narrative and game through the notion of translation and "the problem of what we actually mean by saying that something can be translated from one medium to another" (Juul 2001). To illuminate the point, Juul offers a table of "narrative–game translations," with examples such as the translation of a character in a cut-scene (non-interactive video) to player position in a game (ibid.). Following on from Juul, Eskelinen argues that what is missing from content-media studies is an understanding that

> when bits and pieces of content move across media they change context, function and position which may affect and usually also affects their modal status. In novels and films characters are not the tokens for interaction that they usually become in video games. Likewise, the other stock source for cross-media franchises, the diegesis or the spatiotemporal setting of novels and fiction films changes its status from fiction to simulation when it is transformed into the game world. And in both cases the consumer's role changes as well, which may be a good enough reason to foreground differences between ergodic and non-ergodic entertainment […].
>
> (Eskelinen 2005)

Eskelinen offers a chart (see Table 3) to illustrate how transformations can occur within a mode (intramodal), between modes (intermodal), and how they can be homomodal (retaining their modal status in transformation) or heteromodal (elements changing their modal status in transformation)[18]. He offers examples of intermodal transformations between story/narrative elements and game elements: such as the shift from an episode to a cut-scene (homomodal), or a film character to a player-character (heteromodal). Among other functions, this approach assists in understanding of the nature of narrative and game as peculiar semiotic elements.

| From | To | Type of Transformation |
|---|---|---|
| episode | cutscene | homomodal |
| episode | subgoal or goal | heteromodal |
| plot | backstory | homomodal |
| plot | series of consecutive challenges | heteromodal |
| film character | NPC [non-player-character] | homo- or heteromodal |
| film character | PC [player-character] | heteromodal |
| film character | adversary | heteromodal |
| setting | game world | heteromodal |

Table 3. Markku Eskelinen's 'Examples of intermodal transformations from narrative/story elements to game elements'
(Eskelinen 2005)

If a "character" can be a film character and a player-character, then perhaps there is another approach? Indeed, a development (or antithesis) of the distinguishing approach is the *similarities* approach. Juul has previously noted that it is possible that "games and narratives can on some points be said to have similar traits" (Juul 2001). Frasca notes that games and stories share "characters, chained actions, endings, settings" (Frasca 1999), and later "characters, settings and events" (Frasca 2003b), and Ryan agrees that computer games and narrative share "characters, events, setting, and trajectories leading from a beginning to an end state" (Ryan 2006, 182). But similarities challenge the nature of narrative and game as they have been articulated, because, according to classical logic,

---

[18] It should be noted that this intermodal interrogation was not the main concern of Eskelinen's essay, but a necessary precursor to his exploration of an "inter- or transludic networks in game studies" (Eskelinen 2005).

they have their own unique identities (game is game, narrative is narrative) that cannot contradict (narrative is not non-narrative). How can game be *like* narrative therefore? Ryan concludes similarities indicate computer games "have integrated play within a narrative and fictional framework" (Ryan 2006, 182). But I find this approach still falls somewhat into what Eskelinen has called "narrativist similarity studies" (Eskelinen 2005), in that the similarities are taken as markers that the qualities are in fact narrative (game is subsumed under the identity of narrative). While it may be that play has been integrated within a narrative and fictional framework in some projects, there is still another conclusion or insight to be gained from the undeniable reality yet irreconcilable problem of narrative and game similitude.

## Rethinking Game and Narrative Similarities

> Transdisciplinarity is the "*intellectual space*" where the
> nature of the manifold links among isolated issues
> can be explored and unveiled, the space where issues are rethought,
> alternatives reconsidered, and interrelations revealed.
> (Lattanzi 1998, iv, original emphasis)

How can there be something that is both narrative *and* game? I propose there is something that can be both, without contradicting the fact each have their own unique nature. There is a notion sympathetic to this idea that has been observed in (among other areas) theoretical physics, and semiotics. Theoretical physicist Niels Bohr has leaned towards this through the lens of "two kinds of truth":

> The old saying of the two kinds of truth. To the one kind belongs statements so simple and clear that the opposite assertion obviously could not be defended. The other kind, the so-called "deep truths," are statements in which the opposite also contains deep truth.
>
> (Bohr 1949, 240)

Quantum physicist Anton Zeilinger has further described Bohr's articulation of the two kinds of truth: "[Niels Bohr] said there were two types of truths: simple and deep truths. He said that a simple truth is a truth where the opposite is not true. A deep truth is where the opposite is also true" (Zeilinger, cited in Bstan dzin rgya, Zajonc and Houshmand 2004, 83). In this context, there is a way of seeing the differences between narrative and

game in a different light, a way that enables contradictions to be upheld: for it to be true that game and narrative are different but also similar. This different way of viewing things is, quite simply, viewing narrative and game modes as expressions of a higher, unifying element, something that Kress and van Leeuwen term a "common semiotic principle" (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001, 2).

In their 1996 book, Kress and van Leeuwen developed their theory of image-specific semiotics (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996). Parallel to this self-proclaimed specialization on the visual, was their pursuit of a sign-independent ontology of meaning. They endeavoured, in other words, to create an ontology that could operate across modes. But it wasn't until their 2001 treatment of "multimodality" that their previous work on medium- or mode-specificity shifted to a semiotics of combinations of modes, to multimodality (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001). As I explained in the introductory chapter, Kress and van Leeuwen theorise multimodality as a practice: where "people use the variety of semiotic resources to make signs in concrete social contexts" (ibid., vii). They are also careful to point out that while the skills involved with this practice are somewhat contemporary, meaning has always been made "in many different modes and media which are co-present in a communication ensemble" (ibid., 111). The past view, they explain, that "meaning resides in language alone" or "is the central means of representing and communicating" is "simply no longer tenable," "never really was, and certainly is not now" (ibid.). Likewise, in 1998, Lemke explained that:

> All literacy is multimedia literacy: you can never make meaning with language alone, there must always be a visual or vocal realization of linguistic signs that also carries non-linguistic meaning (e.g. tone of voice, or style of orthography). Signs must have some material reality in order to function as signs, but every material form potentially carries meanings according to more than one code. All semiotics is multimedia semiotics, and all literacy is multimedia literacy.
>
> (Lemke 1998a)

While this understanding of the modally diverse nature of communication is now prevalent, it is the methodological models that develop this insight which are not. So, in order to understand and communicate the notion of multimodal practice, indeed identify

it as such, Kress and van Leeuwen put forward a theory of multimodal communication. They moved away from their previous work on image-specific semiotics (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996) and "the idea that the different modes in multimodal texts have strictly bounded and framed specialist tasks," towards "a view of multimodality in which common semiotic principles operate in and across different modes" (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001, 2).

Their theory of multimodal communication is enunciated with conceptual and material levels (though they don't describe them as such): principles, modes and media. The top level, if you like, encompasses common semiotic principles, such as action, emotion and framing. Framing principles can be observed with arms in a painting, borders in a newspaper and pauses in speech. Framing is a common semiotic principle, a "multimodal principle" that can be "differently realised in different semiotic modes" (ibid., 3). The next level is modes, which are semiotic resources that "can be realised in more than one production medium" (ibid., 21–22, original emphasis removed). Narrative, they explain, is a mode that "can be realised in a range of different media" (ibid., 22). Media is the final level: "the material resources used in the production of semiotic products and events" (ibid.). Examples of media are paint, cameras, computers and (human) vocal apparatus. To illustrate the relationships between these levels, consider Figure 39.
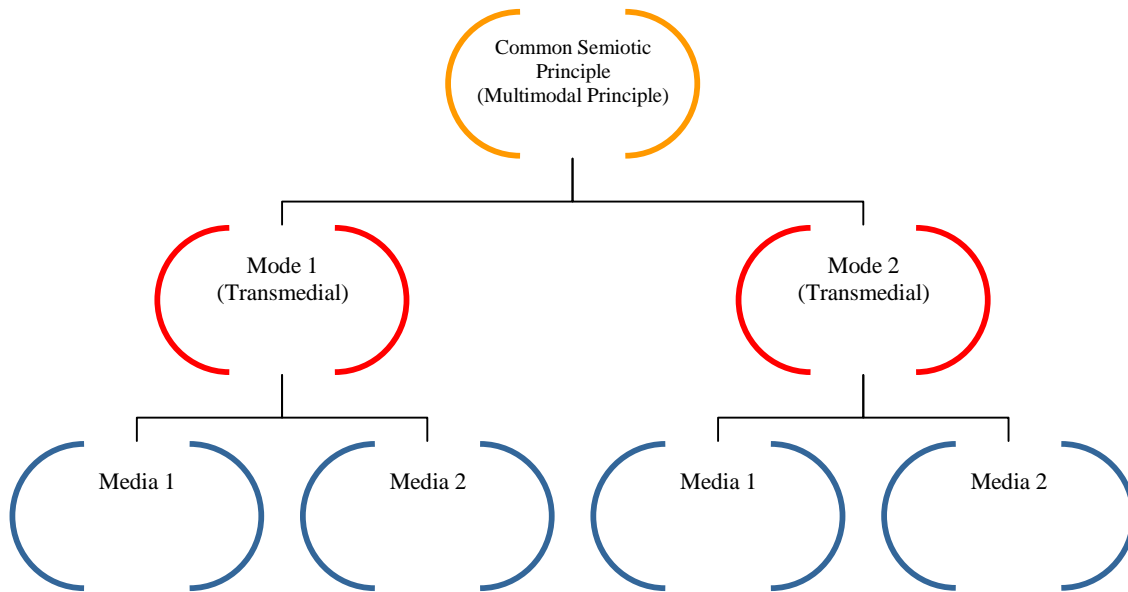
Figure 39. Diagram illustrating the relations between Kress and van Leeuwen's principles, modes and media.

As one can see from this interpretation of Kress and van Leeuwen's relations[19], there are three levels: principles, modes and media. The difficulty with Kress and van Leeuwen's nomenclature, though, is they invoke the term multimodal to refer to a combination of modes and a common semiotic principle at the same time. To illuminate the difference between the two, I have renamed a common semiotic principle a *transmodal element*. The insight highlighted here is that a transmodal element or principle can be "differently realised in different semiotic modes" (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001, 3). This means that similarities between narrative and game modes do not have to be a contradiction (it can't be narrative if it is game)[20], or provoke a demarcation battle (it should be narrative, or it should be game). Instead, similarities between modes indicate an element may be non-

---

[19] This diagram is purely illustrative. It isn't an accurate rendering of the relationships between principles, mode and media. For example, there may be many modes in the same media.

[20] For those proponents of classical logic, the argument of similarities does seem to negate the axiom of the excluded middle or noncontradiction: narrative is not non-narrative (game). Interestingly, in transdisciplinarity studies, theoretical physicist Basarab Nicolescu has developed the notion of the *logic of the included middle*. Nicolescu credits philosopher Stéphane Lupasco as introducing the "logic of the included middle," a notion that was initially rejected because it was viewed as violating the axiom of noncontradiction (Nicolescu 2002, 28). But Nicolescu claims it is when the quantum mechanics notion of "levels of Reality" was introduced and embraced in many areas of philosophy, that the axiom of "the included middle" no-longer seemed a contradiction (ibid., 28).

mode-specific (a common semiotic principle in Kress and van Leeuwen's nomenclature), a deep truth that works for both narrative and game. This may seem quite fundamental when expressed in such a manner, but as evidenced in the discussions noted in this chapter, it is not currently utilised as an approach to understanding narrative and game modes. So how does it change the way transmedia, indeed any creative phenomena, are theorised?

## Theorising a Transmodal Approach

> [F]or *pleasure* in the confusion of boundaries,
> and for *responsibility* in their construction.
> (Haraway 1991, 150, original emphasis)
>
> Here is a principle of chorography:
> do not choose between different meanings of key terms,
> but compose by using all meanings (write the paradigm).
> (Ulmer 1994, 48)

Since a transmodal approach is an unfamiliar inquiry, it is worth exploring further here. To do so, let's return to Walker Rettberg's claim that distributed narratives are described with the narrative mode in order to "emphasize the ways in which our basic knowledge of narrative structures allows us to see connections between fragments that may have no explicit links" (Walker 2005). This bundling of narrative knowledge and the ability to see connections between things has a long history in narratology. Narrative interpretation has long been understood in terms of being able to recognise connections through changes of state (although recent theories like David Herman's "storyworld" (Herman 2002) champion a more complex rendering). Indeed, as mentioned earlier, Ryan has stated that "the ability to infer causal relations is essential to narrative understanding" (Ryan 2004a, 11). What I wish to challenge here is the conflation of discerning connections and narrativity, utilising neuropsychology.

Psychiatrist Eugene G. d'Aquili and radiologist and religion researcher Andrew Newberg's research offers a fruitful challenge to conventional notions of cognitive narrative. In their research into brain activity during a religious experience, D'Aquili and Newberg discovered correlations between thought and areas of the brain and so proposed

seven fundamental functions that "allow the mind to think, feel, experience, order, and interpret the universe" (D'Aquili and Newberg 1999). These seven fundamental functions are described as holistic, reductionist, causal, binary, abstractive, quantitative and emotional value. The holistic operator "allows us to view reality as a whole or as a gestalt" and the reductionist "to look at the whole picture and break it down into an analysis of individual parts" (D'Aquili and Newberg 1999, 52). The causal operator, d'Aquili and Newberg explain, "permits reality to be viewed in terms of causal sequences" (D'Aquili and Newberg 1999, 53). The causal operator (indeed all the operators) implies a cognitive process that is not developed through narrative understanding, but is often interpreted as narrative understanding. Indeed, if we take cause as a possible transmodal principle, then it can be extrapolated out to narrative and game modes equally in the form of plot and game quests respectively. I do not juxtapose narrative quests (such as those espoused by Joseph Campbell and his hero of the thousand faces (Campbell 1949)) with game quests because the issue being discussed here is not the nature of quest, but to discuss similarities between narrative and game modes that rely on causal connections.

A quest, Aarseth explains, can be understood as "a perfect path or 'ideal sequence' that must be realized, or the game/story will not continue" (Aarseth 2004b, 367). They can be understood, Aarseth continues, as a "string of pearls: within each pearl (microworld) there is plenty of choice, but on the level of the string there is no choice at all" (ibid.). Here, one can see a game quest being described according to some chronological conditional structure, much like plot. Indeed, game theorist Susana Tosca has even juxtaposed game quests with plot, with the caveat that one involves action on the behalf of the player and the other narration (Tosca 2003). Here, causal relations are not peculiarly narrativistic or ludic. Indeed, game quests have been rhetorically labelled by Aarseth as a "post-narrative discourse" (Aarseth 2004b). That is, the perception of (causal) connections is perhaps better described as a transmodal principle: one that can be realized in both narrative and game modes. Perhaps that is why such similarities are usually argued to be the province of another, because they appear to operate in a very similar way. But in such situations it is necessary to have a theory that permits similarity

whilst also recognising difference. Indeed, it is exactly these kinds of discussions that illuminate understanding of transmedia practice, narrative and game, possibly more than any discussion of the nature of each mode in isolation.

Other possible examples of transmodal elements—beyond what Kress and van Leeuwen have proposed: action, emotion, framing (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001)—are what Wolf has identified in his research into transmedial phenomena: metalepsis, polyphony, framing, character, event, closure and suspense (Wolf 2005b; Wolf 2008). What about a fictional world? In his theory of games, Juul explains that most video games project a fictional world (Juul 2005, 121). Ryan then interprets this as a "conciliatory move toward narrativism":

> For a narratologist (at least, for a narratologist of the cognitivist school), capturing a fictional world that evolves in time under the action of intelligent agents is all it takes for a semiotic artifact to fulfill the semantic conditions of narrativity—and no ludologist would deny that game worlds present these properties.
>
> (Ryan 2006, 200)

However, rather than a conciliatory move towards narrativism, it is perhaps a conciliatory move towards transmodalism (if there may be such a term). Indeed, the study of transmedia practice is concerned with the employment of multiple distinct media and oftentimes multiple modes. In the previous chapter the theory of transfictionality gave us the notion of a fictional world being a semiotic resource in itself; and in the discussion about world or universe continuity, we saw just how this could and does operate in transmedia practices. Meaning can be communicated in a number of ways, through characters, plot, game mechanics, settings, framing, sound, lighting, spacing, pacing, cursors and code. Indeed, Juul explains that "graphics, sound, text, cut-scenes, the game title, box, or manual, haptics, and rules" are all ways in which "a game cues a player into imagining a fictional world" (Juul 2005, 133). In the context of meaning making, both narrative and game modes can be employed to cue a fictional world. But it should also be noted that narrative and game modes can be employed in both fiction and non-fiction projects. Whether a fictional world is pre- or post-modal (or needs to be either) is therefore unclear at this stage. However, I do argue that a fictional world is not specific to

either the narrative or game mode. That is, narrative and game modes can modulate meaning for the fictional world. The study of this phenomenon has the potential, therefore, to shed light on mode-agnostic thinking.

These insights are why I have defined the phenomena using the mode-agnostic term (transmedia) *practice* (and *fictions*) rather than narrative, storytelling or game. With this strategic methodological move, the investigation recognises intracompositional and intercompositional combinations of modes, and facilitates the study of modal complexity and transmodal elements. In some ways then, the study of transmedia practice is not necessarily embedded *within* narrative, game, film, television, media or art studies. Transmedia projects aren't always narrative-based, they aren't always game-based, and they don't always involve television, film, literature, theatre, digital technologies or artworks either. Since the creative practice can be implemented in any of these forms, and analysed through any of these disciplines, it is inappropriate and methodologically corruptive, I argue, to compartmentalise or identify them as either one. Indeed, it is not just a methodological issue, as practitioners attempt to develop transmedia projects that encompass a variety of modes and media. The next section discusses the implications of transmodality in design.

## *Transmodal Concepts*

Much has been said in many contexts about the importance of *when* a project is approached in what may be called a transmedia sensibility. Long has recognised the importance of this question with his dividing of transmedia storytelling into three types: ones that are designed from the beginning to be transmedia (hard), ones that are then developed as transmedia projects after the success of mono-medium project (soft) and those with a mix of both (chewy) (Long 2007, 20–21). What this question of timing implies is a relationship between a concept, design and its realization. That is, whether a project is conceived as, or designed to be, transmedia. Indeed, Caldwell observes that in the primetime television and franchise context, "story ideas will be developed as diversified entertainment properties that can be seen (as cinema, television, and pay per view), heard (as soundtracks, CDs, and downloads), played (as videogames), interacted

with (as linked online sites), ridden (theme park attractions), touched (cell phones/pod casting), and worn (as merchandize)" (Caldwell 2008, 222–223). This issue is not, of course, specific to franchises or large-scale practices. But just how does the expression of the fictional world across distinct media and narrative and game modes influence the initial concept? This section interrogates that question by exploring the notion of a transmodal concept, beginning with a story of a game.

On July 26, 2006, Big Screen Entertainment Group announced they will be developing a massively multiplayer online (MMO) game that "will incorporate elements of the company's upcoming horror/thriller" *Babysitter Wanted* (Big Screen Entertainment Group 2006). The story of the film involves a tormented young girl who tries to save herself and the child she is babysitting. The response from the gamer community was immediate and unforgiving: Darfvader was confounded by the idea of an MMO about a lone babysitter; Platyphyllum ventured that maybe "you play as a monster and scare babysitters around or something?"; while Chickoverlord tried to make it work by suggesting that maybe "u team up to either kill or protect the baby/child?!?!?!?" (Sinclair 2006). At the time of writing, the feature film has been released but no further news of the proposed MMO is forthcoming. While the implementation is yet to be seen, the gamer reaction to the idea makes clear the misfit of the feature film's premise and an MMO.

What is a MMO? Fundamentally, a MMO involves many players interacting (usually globally) in a shared virtual environment to fulfil missions. A MMO, therefore, needs to provide a large multifarious environment that large numbers of players can engage with; whereas the *Babysitter Wanted* proposition has, on the face of it, a small range of characters and a very small single setting (a home). The range of possible actions for a player, indeed many players working together, is extremely limited. The setting, characters and premise did not lend themselves to a transmodalization (narrative to game adaptation), let alone an adaptation to a massively multiplayer online game. Game designer Richard Bartle has commented on the inappropriateness of such propositions:

> Some mainstream entertainment properties would make poor virtual worlds. The *Harry Potter* universe, for example, doesn't really allow for more than one Harry Potter in it. There are three franchises, however, that are especially well suited to being embodied as graphical virtual worlds and which would produce a guaranteed hit: *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, and *The Lord of the Rings*.
>
> (Bartle 2003, 33)

What the *Babysitter Wanted* attempt at transmodalization reveals is how important the initial concept is. If a transmedia project is intended to be expressed across films and digital games, for instance, or as an intracompositional transmedia project that combines narrative and game modes, the initial concept needs to address the peculiar demands of narrative and game modes. What does this mean? It may mean the initial fictional world abstraction needs to be a good story that also facilitates action. This means that the idea of the fictional world potentially operates at a transmodal level, where there is an overlap between narrative and game concerns. How can this happen in practice? If you recall from the previous discussion, current theorists agree that games and stories share certain elements: Frasca notes that games and stories share "characters, chained actions, endings, settings" (Frasca 1999), and later lists "characters, settings and events" (Frasca 2003b), and Ryan agrees that computer games and narrative share "characters, events, setting, and trajectories leading from a beginning to an end state" (Ryan 2006, 182). Here I explore three possible transmodal approaches that may inform transmedia concepts: setting, character and events.

### Setting

Much has been said about the "worldliness" of J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien spent years developing languages, geography, histories, lore and so on. One of the aspects of this worldliness is the rich spatial descriptions and its geographic breadth. As discussed in the last chapter, Klastrup and Tosca refer to "the setting of the world in a specific historical period and detailed geography" as topos (Klastrup and Tosca 2004). Topos can be described in books and visualised on screen and in games. Virtual worlds are by definition a two- or three-dimensional representation of an environment that a person or many people can explore through a digital device. They usually have skies or stars, mountains or craters, flora and fauna. As established in the previous chapter

discussion on world or universe continuity, spatial environments, therefore, are settings that can be realized in a number of media (virtual worlds, books, canvas) and in narrative and game modes (literature, film, theatre, console game, massively multiplayer online game).

When conceiving a transmodal concept therefore, writers and designers may consider the ability of the setting to be realized in other modes. These other modes (and media) influence the choice of setting. They ask questions such as "shall it be set in a busy small town or across an entire country?" "Shall it be set in some fantastical world where people can travel to locations around the universe or through time?" "Is it a place where players would want to spend forty, sixty, or hundreds of hours in?" "Can I depict these settings in more than medium?" As witnessed in the discussions about virtual worlds earlier, for a setting to be "played" or "explored" in digital media such as virtual worlds, massively multiplayer games and so on, it would seem the spatial environment would need to be vast. Vastness does afford greater dramatic possibilities in that there is more for writers, designers and players to explore. Indeed, Smith argues that "by evoking the presence of a larger spatial structure in the narrative, a transmedia story can support a near infinite amount of plots and characters" (Smith 2009, 44). But once, again, this depends on the specifics of the media chosen to express the world.

"Is it an environment that can be depicted on film?" Indeed, beyond the affordances of each mode and media are the associated industrial implications. Literature and graphic novels afford greater flexibility of imagination, as the cost of actualizing the setting is less than that of a film, virtual world or theatre production. Interactive media typically bare more costs as complex artificial intelligence engines are often needed. But there are also lower cost alternatives, such as using an existing open source game engine or interactive programmes. These would then constrain the choice of setting, as the practitioners may have to utilise stock environments and design from there.

The setting does not have to be fantastical to be transmodal either. The world may be set in the actual world, or, the actual world may be diegetically linked to a fantastical world

that is represented with more low-cost media. For instance, *Perplex City* was set in the near-future on another planet where advanced humans reside. The planet was depicted with maps on the back of cards (see Figure 40 for a compilation created by a player, Daffy), and with artifacts from the fictional world, such as a map of the 'Perplex City Subway System' (see Figure 41). For *Perplex City*, therefore, the players could not enter Perplex City, or even a representation of it with virtual technologies, but they could access artifacts of it, and, as will be explored in the next chapter, feel that their own environments were part of the fictional world too.



Figure 40. Google Map of Perplex City, assembled by Daffy, player of *Perplex City*
(Mind Candy Design, 2005−2007)
Image source: "www.perplexcitymap.com"
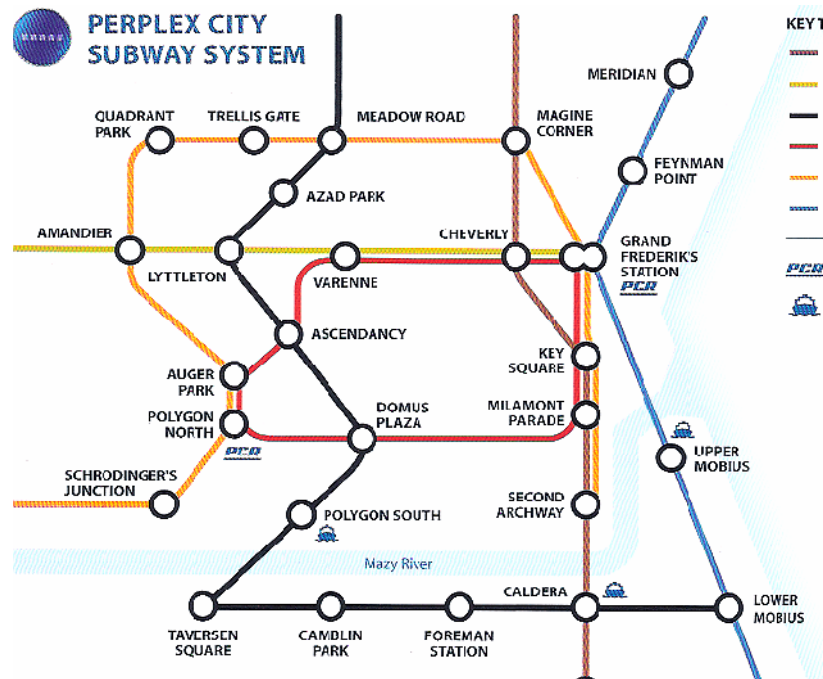
Figure 41. Scan of 'Perplex City Subway System' from '24 Hours in Perplex City Tourist Guide', *Perplex City*
(Mind Candy Design, 2005–2007)

Setting is a semiotic resource that can be expressed in both narrative and game modes. When designing a transmedia project that utilises both of these modes, therefore, practitioners may conceive of a setting that is amenable to being depicted, described, explored and interacted with in some way. Some settings are not appropriate or not as suited to some modes as others. Therefore, when planning a transmedia project, transmodal design considerations can influence the choice of setting. Intrinsically related to setting are characters. The theme of a setting defines in many ways the characters (or vice versa) since they cooperate, modulating meaning for each other. The next section explores how characters can be designed with a transmodal approach.

### *Character and Character Classes*

Characters are transmedial in that they can be realized in a number of media. Characters are also transmodal, in that you can have a Darth Vader or Don Juan realized in literature, theatre, film and games. But, as Eskelinen outlined in his discussion about transformation, characters change in different modes: for instance, in "novels and films

characters are not the tokens for interaction that they usually become in video games''
(Eskelinen 2005). When thinking in transmodal terms then, a writer or designer would
consider whether their characters would afford being played, and on the other hand,
whether their characters are interesting, complicated and perhaps capable of
transformation to afford them being read, watched or listed to. The characters in James
Cameron's *Avatar* project are an example of this principle. The main protagonist of the
feature film, Jake Sully, is a soldier who has lost the use of his legs. Jake is called in to
help humans mining at an alien planet, Pandora, to work with and indeed battle with the
indigenous population, the blue-skinned Na'vi. To do this, Jake is asked to operate, in a
sense, a special cloned Na'vi with his consciousness, with a psionic link. Jake, like a
player with their game character, uses the Na'vi as an avatar to venture into the lush, wild
and fantastical world of Pandora doing things he cannot do in real life. Ubisoft's
computer game, *James Cameron's Avatar: The Game*, gives the player the ability to
operate, like Jake, the Na'vi, and in the console version (not the Wii), a human avatar as
well.



Figure 42. Movie poster with Na'vi from feature
film *Avatar*
(James Cameron, 2009)



Figure 43. Image of Na'vi in console game, *James
Cameron's Avatar: The Game*
(Ubisoft, 2009)
Image source: (Joystiq 2009)

It is important to note that the players are not all playing Jake. The player-character is the
Na'vi species. This is another important aspect to transmodal character design that is
particularly appropriate to massively multi-player role-playing games. Such games

require, by definition, multiple characters that players can assume. Therefore, rather than describing character A or ensemble cast members A, B, C and D, designers of massively multi-player role-playing games often think in terms of character classes. That is one of the reasons why Bartle (in the quote cited earlier) finds *Lord of the Rings* to be a good candidate for an MMOG. While the story focuses on the tales of certain characters (an ensemble cast), those characters represent classes which afford an almost infinite population: elves, hobbits and humans for instance. These classes of characters can then be created by other writers and designers, and of course they can be assumed by an infinite amount of players. In essence, the facilitating of classes of characters not only renders the fictional world transmodal, but also scalable. Players do not, in other words, always need to play the protagonists of a book or film. Those classes are defined by the fictional world abstraction (where and what time is it set?) and the fictional world abstraction is influenced by the need for classes.

To put this in a context outside of virtual gaming environments, consider the technique used in the *ReGenesis Extended Reality Game II*. For this project (which was played across numerous websites, emails and so on), characters in the television series referred to the players as "field agents". With this technique, the players are not the main characters, but have a role in the fictional world, a role that can be realized in the narrative (with references to the field agents in the television series) and game mode (by giving the players missions to fulfil). I should note that not all transmedia projects need player-characters (or even player-objects in highly abstracted fictional worlds). That is, some interactive projects do not represent a participant within the fictional world at all. For instance, some projects entail people discovering information scattered across media platforms; the players do not have a role in the diegesis, instead they are "external" to the fiction, finding and selecting elements. Games, however, because they involve stakes and outcomes, almost always require a player to be represented in some way (whether they are visually represented as a pixilated rocket, Orc, luminous globule, or referred to as field agents, "codebreakers," or "cube-hunters"). Therefore, when thinking about a fictional world that can be told as well as played, transmedia practitioners would think of characters, and even character classes, that would lend themselves to both modes.

## Events and Problems

Another approach to transmodal concepts is conceiving of events that can be realized in narrative and game modes. A writer or designer, for instance, may conceive of an event or series of events that could be told and played. Problems, or obstacles and issues to be solved, are techniques common to both narrative and game modes. Practitioners may think, therefore, about the peculiar demands of each mode and conceive of an event accordingly. With this in mind I explore the notion of marrying narrative and ludic problems.

In 1997, Aarseth explained that the rhetoric of hyperliterature can be understood as a "pair of master tropes": aporia and epiphany (Aarseth 1997, 91). While aporias and epiphanies exist in non-ergodic literature, Aarseth explains they are different in hyperliterature because a person has to act in order to overcome obstacles:

> In narratives, aporias are usually informal structures, semantic gaps that hinder the interpretation of the work. In ergodic works such as Doom, the aporias are formal figures, localizable "roadblocks" that must be overcome by some unknown combination of actions. […] When an aporia is overcome, it is replaced by an epiphany: a sudden often unexpected solution to the impasse in the event space. Compared to the epiphanies of narrative texts, the ergodic epiphanies are not optional, something to enhance the aesthetic experience, but essential to the exploration of the event space. Without them, the rest of the work cannot be realized.
>
> (Aarseth 1999, 38)

What I propose is that the congruencies between narrative and game aporia and epiphanies facilitate transmodal concepts. Indeed, Ryan posits that a text can be a game through "offering a problem to the reader" (Ryan 2001, 179). A problem can be both narrative and ludic, enabling a story to be told and motivating action at the same time. In his discussion on ways in which "a storyteller can propel an audience forward through a narrative [to] increase audience motivation to make the jump from one component to another," Long finds Roland Barthes's "hermeneutic code" to be helpful (Long 2007, 66). Although Long concentrates on what could be called traversal design (how to facilitate

movement across distinct media) and so is not discussing the nature of a transmedia concept, the invocation of Barthes's hermeneutic code is quite appropriate here.

Narrative theorist Michael Kearns explains that "[c]odes enable communication by establishing a common ground on which the producer and the receiver of an utterance can meet," and, interestingly, "they have been compared to other human systems such as the rules of a game" (Kearns 2005, 66). "A code for the reading of narrative can be understood as a loose set of rules by which a person identifies and interprets the essential components of a narrative text" (ibid.). In 1974, Barthes proposed five codes, one of which is the hermeneutic code (Barthes 1974). The hermeneutic code "structure[s] the enigma according to the expectation and desire for its solution" (ibid., 45). It refers to "all the units whose function it is to articulate in various ways a question, its response, and the variety of chance events which can either formulate or delay its answer; or even, constitute an enigma and lead to its solution" (ibid., 17). Oftentimes, it is a question that needs to be answered. As Long explains, "'Where did Han Solo come from?' and 'What will happen to Han Solo?' are examples of the kind of questions posed by a writerly text using hermeneutic codes" (Long 2007, 62).

These narrative questions that need to be answered are enigmas that need to be solved, and so can also operate as an impetus to act, a game goal. For instance, an alternate reality game commissioned to augment the ABC Family TV television show *Fallen*, *The Ocular Effect* by Matt Wolf and Xenophile Media, began with the question: "What is the Oculus?". This was prompted by the launch of a website, "www.00112358.net", featuring the Oculus, which is a strange device that can be rolled and clicked (see Figure 44). The device is designed to imply it can be opened, but the hieroglyphics on the buttons are unknown. At the same time as the discovery of the Oculus, a character, Dr. Kane Winthrop, launched a website to recruit a team of investigators who need to uncover the true nature of the Oculus (see Figure 45). These investigators are the game players.
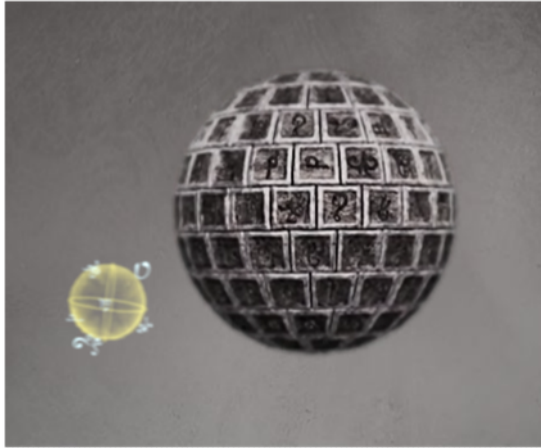
Figure 44. Screenshot of www.00112358.net,
*The Ocular Effect*
(Matt Wolf and Xenophile Media, 2006)



Figure 45. Screenshot of OcularEffect.com,
*The Ocular Effect*
(Matt Wolf and Xenophile Media, 2006)

The enigma of the Oculus sets up the narrative question and provides a motivation to act for the players. That is, on the one hand the narrative reveals at times what the Oculus and its effect is, and on the other hand, players also act to help solve the enigma by engaging in non-trivial actions (Aarseth 1997) such as solving puzzles and role-playing with characters on blogs. It is a problem that can be, in simple terms, read, watched and acted upon with agency.

These narrative and ludic problems are not just techniques that can be used at the micro level (at certain events), but can influence the initial concept. Writers, for instance, may not just think about what problems the characters will solve or overcome, but also consider whether they are ones others can participate in as well. This constrains what can and cannot be represented. Likewise, a game designer may not just think in terms of what players could do, but also whether the questions are able to be narratively explored as well.

The simultaneous experience of both the narrative and game problem may also mean the fictional world would need to be represented in real time, chronologically. This is because anachronies (Genette 1980 (1972)) are in many ways incompatible with reactivity (projects that respond to player actions in some way). Indeed, Juul explains why time in games is almost always chronological:

Flash-forwards are highly problematic, since to describe events-to-come would mean that the player's actions did not really matter. Using cut-scenes or in-game artifacts, it is possible to describe events that led to the current fictional time, but an *interactive* flashback leads to the time machine problem: The player's actions in the past may suddenly render the present impossible. This is the reason why time in games is almost always chronological.

(Juul 2005, 148, original emphasis)

A problem or event that is designed to be experienced in game and narrative modes, therefore, usually demands a primarily "real time" discourse. When creative projects are designed to be expressed in narrative and game modes the implications start right at the beginning of the process, at the concept stage. The theory of transmodality provides an insight into how this happens in practice, and also explains how compositions that have been designed from the beginning to be either predominately narrative- or game-based do not lend themselves to transmodalization. This explains to some extent the problems that arise in attempts to transform a fictional world after the initial mono-modal construction. (This may even account for some of the problems with game-and-film/book adaptations.)

These transmodal discussions develop understanding of narrative and game elements in both practice and theory. Many theorists, such as Aarseth, Frasca, Juul and Ryan, have observed similarities between narrative and game, but have rightly so been concerned with explaining their differences. These discussions have been crucial to understanding the game mode as a distinct semiotic element. The theory of transmodal principles does not negate these insights but builds upon them. One cannot understand transmodal elements without first understanding narrative and game modes are different; and then without understanding how they are at times similar. It does not revert the discussion back to a pre-difference state where all games are narratives, but is peculiarly post-difference (it even challenges the more recent view emerging now where for some the world can be understood purely through a ludic lens, where everything is a game). The theory of transmodal principles endeavours to recognise difference and reconcile similarity.

The theorising of transmodal concepts through problems (events), characters and character classes, and setting provides a method for understanding how the emerging issue of transmedia-specific concepts challenges current approaches and is being addressed. It foregrounds practice issues being faced by practitioners concerned with designing transmedia projects. Indeed, it is the concept development stage is often the point at which practitioners from distinct practices come together. It is at this stage of world abstraction that practitioners can confer, as such conversations, knowledge and skills, can, as has been evidenced in this discussion about transmodal concepts, be the point at which they can operate with a shared language. The actual production of each composition entails distinct production processes, knowledge and skills, but the world abstraction is becoming more a more a shared semiotic resource that unifies modes, media, artforms, industries, and practitioners. This cross-fertilisation results in changes to mono-medium production processes as well. In the previous chapter I discussed the emergence of world or universe documentation practices. In the next section I discuss how interactivity in transmedia practice changes documentation as well.

## *Design Documents, Interactivity and Media*

In the last chapter I discussed design documentation, which, as Kress and van Leeuwen note, is part of the meaning-making process (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001, 50). The specifics of a project design document are relative to the type of transmedia project. That is, while a feature film and digital game have their own peculiar documentation practices that may persist during a transmedia production, if the project is designed to have audiences or players move between distinct media as part of the experience, then a document that outlines how this will be facilitated is needed. Since most intercompositional transmedia projects (a film and console game for instance) are not always designed for cross-media traversal, intracompositional transmedia projects are more likely to develop a design document that is peculiar to this practice.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the game industry is already concerned with interactivity and therefore has design documentation that reflects these issues. For practitioners that explore transmedia practices from a non-interactive background

however, there is a cultural transformation that takes place which is reflected in the design documentation. For instance, when filmmaker James Cameron worked on the *Terminator* attraction *T2: 3-D: Breaking The Screen Barrier*™ in the early 1990s, he developed a script for the theme-park attraction that represented the experience of the people entering the ride. The script (see Figure 46) doesn't just detail the usual information about what will be seen and heard on screen, it describes what the visitor will see and hear at the park. Cameron has obviously adapted the screenwriting method to encompass the audiences' experience of the event: what they will see during the "pre-show" (which is of course part of the show) and the filmic elements as well. Obviously, this type of script is not able to describe different possible paths of experience too easily, but it represents a key shift in thinking that takes the experiencer (the "guest experience") into account.

TERMINATOR 2: 3-D BATTLE ACROSS TIME

by

James Cameron

and

Adam Bezark

January 11, 1995

EXTERIOR/ENTRANCE

As we stroll down the elegant Hollywood Boulevard at Universal Studios Florida, one particular facade catches our eye. It's a 1940s HOLLYWOOD OFFICE BUILDING that might have been commissioned by Howard Hughes in his prime. The SIGN over the ENTRANCE reads:

Cyberdyne Systems

The graphic style is hi-tech modern, indicating that Cyberdyne must be a new tenant. But even more compelling is the SIGN that "morphs" out of the concrete in front of the building. Rising on a pylon, the sign lets us know what we're really here to see:

T2/3D

We walk through the doors into the dark, chilly lobby.

INTERIOR QUEUE: CYBERDYNE LOBBY

Once inside the building, it's as though we've stepped into another world. All traces of the gracious 1940s design have been obliterated by the current tenant.

Figure 46. Screenshot of 'Terminator 2: 3-D Battle Across Time' script, *Terminator* by James Cameron and Adam Bezark

More recently, filmmaker Lance Weiler explains how his experimentations with transmedia practices have changed the way he conceives and designs:

> After the *Head Trauma* cinema game experiments my whole focus around story has changed. I am now considering creating a world around each of my works— worlds that can cross devices, platforms and audiences. In fact, I have been writing game bibles (which overviews games and their rules) at the same time that I am scripting.
>
> (Weiler 2007)

Weiler drew on the existing area of game documentation to realise interactivity and game elements in his transmedia works. But the influence of interactivity on story in production resources is not peculiar to contemporary practices of course. In 1987 Jay David Bolter and Michael Joyce reflected on the way hypertext changes creative writing:

> Electronic writers […] must find new ways to maintain a tension between the reader and the text. The source of that tension will surely be the participation of the reader in making the text. […] The structure of an electronic fiction will change with each reading, because the order and number of episodes will change. Authors must therefore learn to conceive of their text as a structure of structures, and this is a concept that is new in the history of literature.
>
> (Bolter and Joyce 1987, 47)

In transmedia projects, that participation can happen in a number of ways. While I discuss some varieties later in this chapter, there are fundamentally two ways participation is represented in design documentation. They are perhaps best illustrated with two sections of a game document that game practitioner Richard Rouse has outlined: game mechanics and game progression. The first, game mechanics or gameplay, refers to "what sort of actions players can perform" and "how the game is played" (Rouse 2005, 361). In many intracompositional transmedia practices such alternate reality games, pervasive games, ubiquitous games and trans-reality games, this translates to the details of what activities a person or group of people may do across media. For instance, in *I Love Bees* (ILB)*,* a core mechanic was answering payphones, as McGonigal explains:

> [T]he novel core mechanic of ILB consisted of the following sequence of player actions: 1) uncover GPS coordinates on a website; 2) navigate on a specific day and time to the real-world location signified by the coordinates; 3) find a nearby payphone; 4) wait for it to ring; and 5) answer it.
>
> (McGonigal 2006, 300)

Therefore, in a project that involves game interactions, there would need to be a section that outlines how this occurs. Such issues are not new to game designers, but are new to practitioners who are exploring game play. They are therefore not specific to transmedia practices, but like the example cited above, the emerging mechanics are specific to cross-media rather than intramedium action. The section on game progression on the other hand, "is where the game designer breaks the game down into the events players experience, and how they change and progress over time" (Rouse 2005, 371). For instance, each level of the game would "describe in detail what challenges the players will face, what story (if any) transpires on them, and the visual aesthetics of the levels" (ibid., 372). Rouse also notes that beyond a description of what transpires, the game progression section should also explain the gameplay experience: how do you want the players to feel at each level, how their feelings should fluctuate, tension and so on (ibid.). In single author productions such as book writing, such concerns are often not documented as they are considered inside the head of the creator. In collaborative and interactive projects, these concerns are part of the design process and so are often overtly articulated.

In transmedia design, game progression translates to the intended flow of the entire project across media and environments. This is sometimes referred to as a "walk-through," "user experience flow" or "game flow". This notion of flow in relation to participants was in fact identified by Caldwell in his discussion of "second-shift aesthetics" (the employment of television and the Internet), when he observed that "programming strategies have shifted from notions of network *program* 'flows' to tactics of *audience/user* 'flows'" (Caldwell 2003, 136, original emphasis). Documentation of the transmedia flow can include the order in which the media are released (rollout), pacing (timing between them), the various ways in which a person may enter the project (through a website, billboard or email for instance). It can also indicate different paths

people may undertake through the project, and what narrative and gameplay elements are specific to those paths. Indeed, it should be noted that the progression or flow sections outline what is intended and not necessarily what is experienced. As will be discussed further in this chapter, many audiences and players do not experience all parts of a transmedia project. However, practitioners often utilize the process of documenting the project flow or progression to understand and test if the design facilitates the intended experience.

Given the development of such documentation in electronic literature, it is not surprising that transmedia documentation is also likewise utilizing visual formats to help with this design process. Bolter and Joyce describe this shift to a structural and geometric way of thinking in the context of the visual formats of the *Storyspace* software they had developed:

> The electronic medium permits writing of a second order, a writing with narrative units, in which the structure of the text becomes truly fluid and indeed geometric. The author becomes a geometrician or architect of computerized "space" (as computer memory is in fact called by programmers); he fills his space with a special pattern of episodes and links that define a kaleidoscope of possible structures. The success of his work will depend upon the poetic rightness of the way in which the pattern is realized in the act of reading.
>
> (Bolter and Joyce 1987, 47)

"Storyspace," they continue, "provides the author with the opportunity to see the structure of his tale and therefore to use the structural geometry as an aesthetic principle" (Bolter and Joyce 1987, 47). Perhaps influenced by the "nodal structure" of the Internet, electronic writing programmes such as *Storyspace* developed map views that recognise connections and paths between narrative units (see Figure 47), like website maps (see Figure 48). Indeed, in their study of website design practices, user interface researchers Mark W. Newman and James A. Landay found that "designers employ multiple representations of web sites as they progress through the design process," as "these representations allow them to focus on different aspects of the design" (Newman and Landay 2000, 263).

Figure 47. Screenshot of *Storyspace*
Image source: (Eastgate 2007)

Figure 48. Site map for a hypothetical news site
Image source: (Newman and Landay 2000, 268)

Regarding site maps, Newman and Landay explain these artifacts are "high-level visualizations of site structure in which web pages or entire subsections of the site are represented" on which "'primary' navigational paths are reflected" (Newman and Landay 2000, 268), not unlike the maps of electronic writers. Likewise, game designer and theorist Tracey Fullerton recommends that designers flowchart their entire game (and build wireframe interfaces) first, because the designer "will be forced to think through the entire player experience for the game, finding inconsistencies and issues before any artwork or programming has been done" (Fullerton et al. 2008, 400).

In the transmedia context, such visual representations do not necessarily include each page of a website, but distinct websites and other distinct media. The visual representations assist the designers in understanding the ideal order the players should access each medium, which relates directly to the design of the narrative and gaming elements. For example, David Varela explains how they used visual mapping programmes to assist the design of storylines and live events in *Perplex City*:

> Then there was OmniGraffle. A necessary evil. OmniGraffle is a program for creating diagrams and it made planning our storylines a great deal easier. Some of our flowcharts were over ten feet long (using very small text) but they were vital for giving us a clear idea of the plot's logic and how players could influence the story's direction. […] We also created diagrams to outline the structure of our live events where the action was fastest and interaction with the players was at its most direct.
>
> (Varela 2007, 24)

As you can see with this chart they used for the Monica Grand/Advisor arc (see Figure 49), the flow chart indicates what website the player enters, what puzzle they need to solve to get to the next website, unlock a PDF, or find an email address, and the process continues until most of the players are directed towards the ultimate goal of arranging a meeting between two characters.
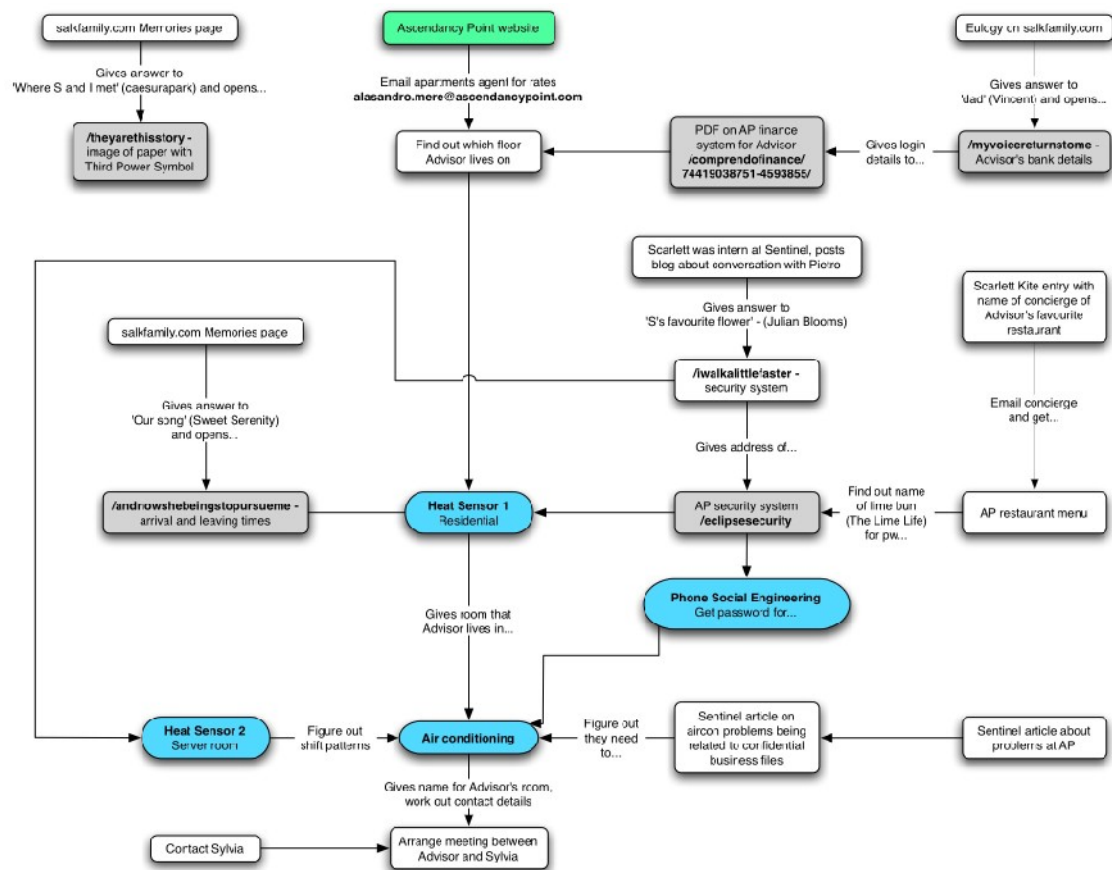


Figure 49. 'Ascendency Point' live event chart for *Perplex City*
(Mind Candy Design, 2005–2007)
Image source: (Mind Candy Design)

Another example is the "Game Flow" chart created during the design of *The Beast*. As you can see with Figure 50, the beginning of the game was indicated visually, representing the various distinct media (printed material, web pages and phones), with arrows indicating the intended path and the gameplay elements (clues) that addressed different types of player skill (easy, medium and hard clues). Here, the designers have

used the chart to help articulate (for themselves) and communicate (to others) the
intended path of the players across the various media, and how their design addresses and
targets players with different skills and knowledge (with easy, medium and hard clues).
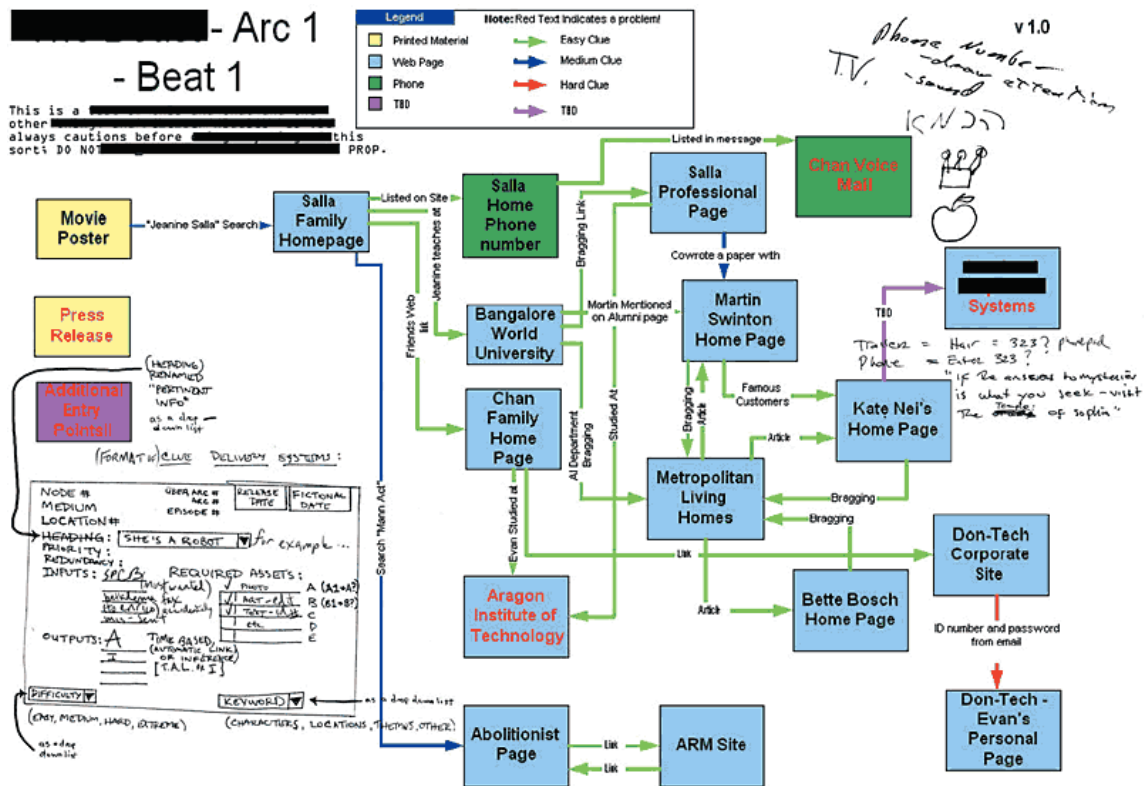


Figure 50. Game Flow Chart, *The Beast*
(Microsoft Game Studio, 2001)
Image source: (avalonian42 2001)

As you can see with the sketches in the lower left-hand corner of Figure 50, the designers
were developing this format and adding more details for each element. This activity
correlates with what Newman and Landay have observed in website design:

> Site maps often evolve throughout the entire life of the project, being updated
> constantly to reflect new understandings of the site structure. Early in the design
> process, site maps will reflect the site's structure broadly and, as time progresses,
> they will be revised to become increasingly detailed. In some cases, where site
> maps are used more extensively, they will evolve until they reflect every single
> page in the site.
>
> (Newman and Landay 2000, 268)

Indeed, charts have developed to visually represent the media overtly (such as a home phone, mobiles, websites, buttons posted to players, and automatic email responder programmes), like this flowchart for a sample alternate reality game created by No Mimes Media (see Figure 51). The development of the appearance of the flow chart is most likely also due to the need to communicate the design of the project to a client in clear manner.



Figure 51. Flow chart of the game flow for 'Mime Academy,' a mini-alternate reality game created to communicate how an ARG operates to prospective clients and newcomer practitioners
(No Mimes Media, 2009)

Likewise, in digital game design, Deuze notes that "the design document is a dynamic piece," that is often kept up to date by assistant designers (Deuze 2007, 222). Varela notes that due to the length of *Perplex City* and the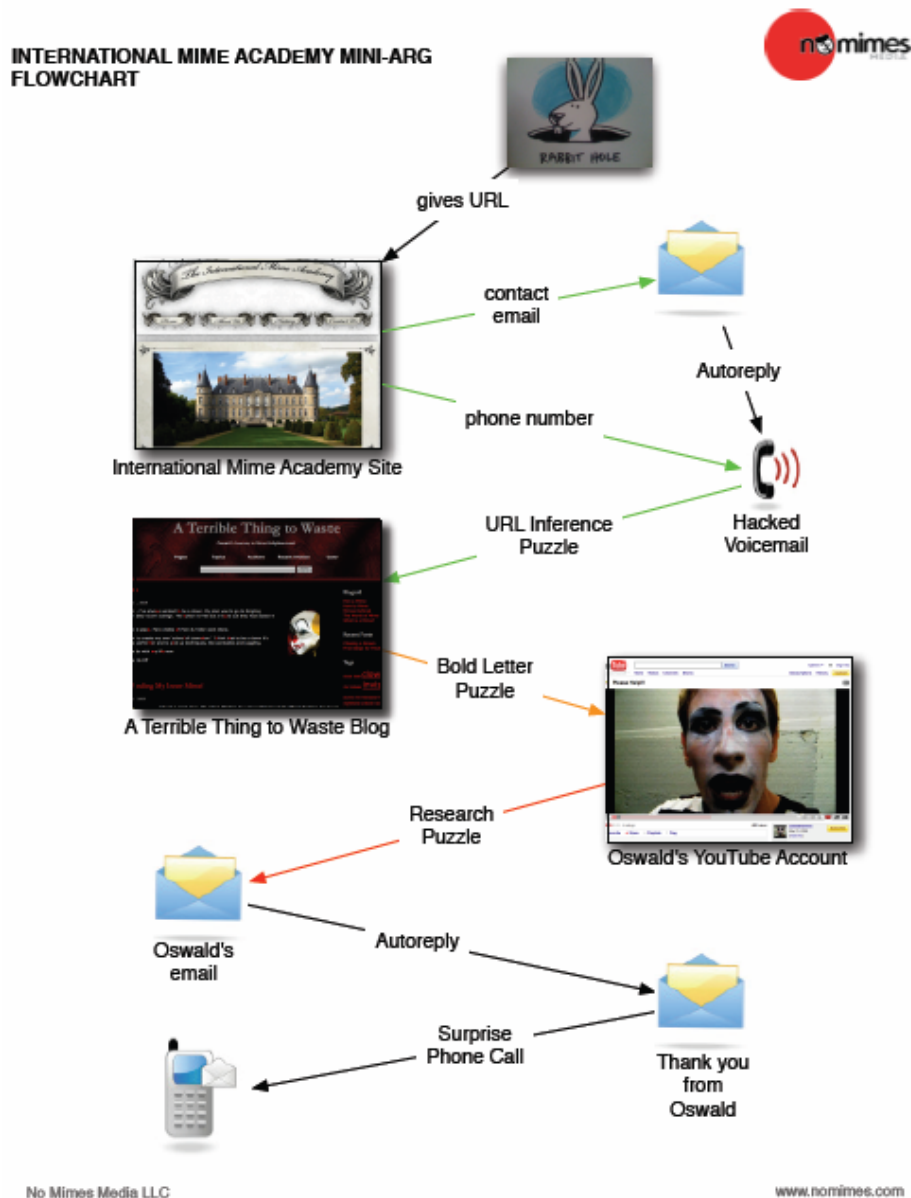 dispersed nature of the production team (with writers in the UK and the USA), they used a password-protected wiki that not only could they all access and update remotely, but could also "cross-reference pages very easily, edit each other's work, keep track of changes and always have the latest draft of every document online" (Varela 2007, 23–24).

From this discussion about design documentation, we can see the emergence of artifacts that recognize interactivity and the various media employed in transmedia projects. While interactivity is already a concern in practices such as gaming and electronic writing, designers who come from practices that have historically not been interactive are undergoing changes that often results in the development of new documentation artifacts. Not all transmedia projects involve gameplay, but many transmedia projects involve a traversal across media in some way, and so documents that assist in understanding and communicating the project flow or cross-media experience are emerging. So far in this chapter I have spoken about high-level transmodal concepts and documentation that recognises transmedia interactivity. What I have not attended to yet is just how an extreme form of interactivity happens in transmedia projects. The next section delves into this question.

## *Reactivity in Transmedia Projects*

All transmedia projects are potentially interactive in that each element or composition is distributed across distinct media and so requires (arguably) non-trivial activity to access and experience. That is, a person acts to retrieve the next element or composition by going to a website, getting and reading a book, or going to a theatre or street event. Other transmedia projects may also include game elements that involve rules that require activity with consequences: with a win or lose stake attached to it. This discussion is not concerned with either of these instances of interactivity. Instead, this section concentrates on *reactivity*: which may be described as when the constructed world responds to player

actions. This notion of reactivity is akin to what the *Oz Interactive Fiction Project* (Carnegie Mellon University, 1989–2002) described as "highly interactive":

> "Highly interactive" is an important phrase of our description. The word "interactive" distinguishes our work from conventional media, while "highly interactive" indicates the interactor is choosing what to do, say, and think at all times, in contrast to other interactive media such as hypertext, where the interactor is given only a small number of fixed choices.
>
> (Kelso, Weyhrauch and Bates 1992)

To resituate their definition in this context: reactivity here refers to creative works where the participant is able to choose what to do, say, and think, and the fictional world responds accordingly. Reactivity is different to an "authored interactive narrative," "where options are pre-scripted" (Mateas and Stern 2000). While there are times when a practitioner surmises what a participant may do, the difference here is that there is a direct response to the input of a participant. But how does reactivity happen?

Interactivity relies on a feedback system of some kind. Aarseth explained this in the context of ergodics: "Ergodic phenomena are produced by some kind of cybernetic system, i.e., a machine (or a human) that operates as an information feedback loop, which will generate a different set of semiotic sequence each time it is engaged" (Aarseth 1999, 32–33). In the past couple of decades, though, reactivity has been discussed predominantly in relationship to the affordances of digital media: "An interactive system is a machine system which reacts in the moment, by virtue of automated reasoning based on data from its sensory apparatus" (Penny 1996). These interactive systems share the feature of being "algorithm-driven" in which the "behavior of digital objects, such as texts, images and sound, is therefore regulated by an invisible code, the machine-language instructions of the supporting software" (Ryan 2004b). What computers enable through the code-driven trope of IF and THEN (if the user does X, then the system responds with Y), is the ability for practitioners to create works that accept inputs—varying from choosing actions and dialogue from a drop-down menu or input commands, to more free-form input such as typing in, saying or moving anything they please—and then having the system respond according to any pre-programmed matches. The holy-

grail of reactivity, if you like, is being able to accept any input and respond in an appropriate, accurate, immediate and significant manner.

While there can be extraordinary experiences facilitated by high- and low-end technologies, at present reactivity is still limited by technological capabilities. But how does reactivity occur in transmedia projects, projects that employ distinct and often non-computational media? There are emerging technologies that can enable a practitioner to automate delivery and response across media. But this reactivity is understandably limited to networked media, such as the ability to issue emails and auto-respond to player emails according to keywords detected in the texts players create; to faxing people if they enter their fax address; and the ability to issue text (SMS) to mobile technologies according to player actions on a website. For instance, Xenophile Media created the *Reactor CMDS* (Content Management and Deployment System) "to support a new form of […] interactive narratives that unfold across multiple media platforms where the story is often affected by the player's interactions" (Xenophile Media). The *Reactor* "deploys game content" and then "tracks the progress of every registered player, creating a customized experience, bringing in-game characters to life using artificial intelligence to simulate communication through email, SMS, instant messages and chat" (Xenophile Media) (see Figure 52).
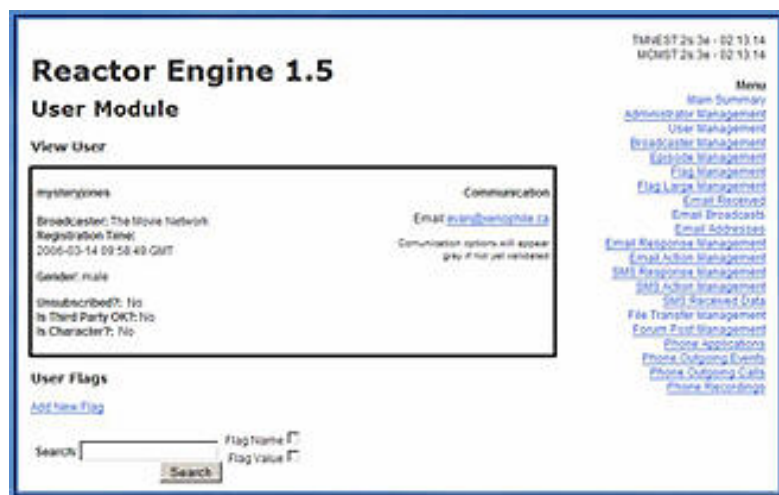


Figure 52. Screenshot of Xenophile Media's 'Reactor Engine 1.5'
Image source: (Xenophile Media)

Other transmedia-oriented companies have developed such proprietary technologies as well, such as Hoodlum's *INCA* (Interactive Net-based Channel Administration) and Fourth Wall Studio's *Rides* and The company P's *The Creator*. The Creator is the next version of the *Game Creator*, a technology developed at iPerG (Integrated Project on Pervasive Gaming): an EU funded projected that ran from 2004 to 2008 researching the creation of pervasive games. The Creator was used by The company P for *The Truth About Marika* (*Sanningen om Marika),* and will be used in their forthcoming project with Tim Kring and Nokia, code-named *Teva*. The technology is described on The Creator website as "a web based authoring (game creation) and orchestration (runtime) for games that is played in the physical domain" ("The Creator" 2008). "Ordo Serpentis" was the name of the web-based technology on the player's side of *The Truth About Marika,* and as game theorists Marie Denward, Annika Waern and Andie Nordgren explain, involved trying to temper automated responses and game master freedom:

> When designing the Ordo Serpentis game play, one of the big challenges was the balance between automation and game master action. A game that is too automated doesn't give much room for the fluid changes requested by a game master trying to tell a story, and also carries the risk of feeling boring and predictable to participants. A system with too little automation requires copious amounts of game master interaction, which is not cost effective to handle in a large scale game.
>
> (Denward, Waern and Nordgren 2008, 13)

Indeed, at present, systems created for the deployment and management of content in transmedia projects do not, understandably, have the complex response capabilities of a console game engine or even experimental interactive story systems such as Chris Crawford's *Storytron*, PJ's Attic's (Corvus Elrod) *Honeycomb Engine*, Nicolas Szilas's *Idtension,* and Michael Mateas and Andrew Stern's *Façade* technology. So how does a transmedia work respond in significant ways to participant actions, beyond the algorithm of IF X THEN Y? In transmedia works that are highly-interactive (not all are, usually relative the interest and skill of the practitioners), reactivity takes place manually, with practitioners using whatever means possible outside of automated responses. In what follows I discuss how such reactivity occurs in transmedia fictions. The first section discusses how *non-computational game mastering* happens, including *improvisational*

*performance and writing*, and the second discusses when participants are *co-constructors* of a fictional world.

## Non-Computational Game Mastering

In their discussion of how pervasive games are managed in a non-computational manner, game theorists Staffan Jonsson and Annika Waern invoke the role of the "game master" in table-top role-playing games as a metaphor (Jonsson and Waern 2008). The game master in such role-playing games takes on the role of a referee, "distributing critical information at the right times," expanding and "maintaining the storyline and content" (ibid., 224). Therefore, while being described as *game* mastering, the role could easily be transposed to duties involved with reactivity in interactive narrative projects too. It could be described as interactivity management. But for now we'll continue with the term "game mastering". The notion of game mastering also needs to adapted to the pervasive gaming context. In pervasive games which involve live events, computational interactivity (a computer programme automating responses for instance) and in some cases one person acting as a game master is not viable. Therefore, game masters of pervasive games need to develop techniques and strategies that enable them to react to player improvisations, facilitate a richer and more coherent experience and adapt not only the story, but also the pacing and difficulty levels (ibid.).

To do this, Jonsson and Waern outline three aspects to successful game mastering: game masters "must be able to monitor the game, influence the game state, and be able to make decisions about how the game should progress" (ibid., 225). This correlates with two aspects of game media that Juul outlined: computation and game state (Juul 2005, 49). Computation refers to "how the game medium upholds the rules and decides what happens in response to player input"; while game state refers to "how the game medium keeps track of the current game state" (ibid.). Relevant to this discussion, Juul observed that computation can be actioned by a computer (CPU) or by the human brain (in card and board games for example), and likewise with the game state by a computer (RAM) or human brain (board games), or even pieces (cards, board game pieces) (ibid., 50). To help illuminate how non-computational reactivity occurs in transmedia projects, I draw on

Jonsson and Wearn's insights about how these operate in pervasive games, and add further examples beyond the live event context of their essay.

### *Game Master Monitoring*

Game monitoring facilitates game masters being able to "understand what the players are feeling, if they are bored and excited, focused or confused, what they are planning to do next and what they are focusing on at the moment" (Jonsson and Waern 2008, 226). They can gather this information in a number of ways. Jonsson and Waern list talking directly with the players, using informants or plants within players and technological monitoring devices such as video and audio surveillance systems and GPS.

Outside of an actual event, game masters—or anyone who performs this whether they be writers, designers, producers or community managers—monitor participants by checking usage data, correspondence between participants and characters, all public correspondences between participants, and any correspondence between the participants and game masters. McGonigal was hired by 42 Entertainment to fulfil such a role for the alternate reality game *I Love Bees:*

> In June 2003, six weeks before *I Love Bees* launched, I joined 42 Entertainment as their in-house, realtime community researcher. I was invited to work with them during the game as a result of research I had previously conducted and published on the player community of *The Beast* (see McGonigal 2003). Lee and Stewart expressed a desire to have similar research available to them during the game. […] During *I Love Bees*, my job was to study player discussions as they unfolded on various forums, chat rooms, blogs, and wikis. I also read emails, opened real world mail, and listened to voice mail messages received by the game characters, from the players. I went to ringing payphones to observe directly how players were approaching the core challenge of the game.
>
> (McGonigal 2006, 302)

In transmedia projects that entail multiple compositions (intercompositional), there are methods to monitor participants (or audiences) through observing community forums, direct mail and usage or sales data. But for projects that involve multiple mono-medium compositions such as a film and digital game, all information gathered will most likely not be utilised in any of the current projects. That is, unless they can be updated (a game

update for instance), the work cannot change. This means any information gathered during monitoring may be utilised to inform future projects or episodes, not current ones. ARG designer Szulborski explained this difference:

> […] ARG creators are able to watch the players virtually in real time, as they experience the game, and react to what the players are doing and feeling, immediately if necessary. […] ARG creators can change their content overnight if necessary, whereas TV shows and most other media require a much greater reaction and production time.
>
> (Szulborski 2005, 60–61)

### Game Master Influence

The ability to respond is linked closely with influence. That is, game masters need to establish a means to be able to affect the game state (or more appropriately the constructed world state). To Jonsson and Waern, game masters can influence players in a variety of ways, including "switching on a smoke machine, sending emails to players, to enabling or disabling a game quest" (Jonsson and Waern 2008, 228). In transmedia projects that are made up of mono-medium fixed media compositions, there is no ability to dynamically influence the participants' experience of a fictional world. But with artforms such as performance, practitioners do have the ability to alter the mood and setting of an environment (change lighting, temperature and so on) in order to influence people.

Some projects are therefore planned with mechanisms that enable influence to occur. For instance, they may have a device that issues communication to the participants in some way, at certain times; such as a newsletter that participants read each week and therefore that enables crucial information to be disseminated. Another method is to have non-player characters (NPCs). These are characters that are controlled by the game masters (or authorial body). In computational media, a NPC is a common method to influence players, but is limited by the technology, as Eddo Stern explains:

> NPCs always stick out as peculiar technological anomalies focusing attention more on their technical shortcomings than on their "character". NPCs often find themselves a ripe topic for ridicule and mockery. In fact, most game players do

not accept these characters' role as performing any emotional function in the narrative.

<div align="right">(Stern 2002, 265)</div>

Because they do not rely on the high-end sophistication of computational media, non-computational NPCs can therefore be more reactive. How? Oftentimes it is simply a case of actors improvising character actions at live events, and other times it can mean the writers improvise, as Hon explains:

> One of the things our writers really did enjoy however was basically improvisational writing. When we have these live events there is no script for the actors, or for anyone like that, we kind of have to invent the story on the fly. There is really no comparable form of fiction where a writer writes something and seconds later they can see the result or seconds later they can see thousands of people saying wow that was amazing. [...] The epitome of this was something called Receda's Revenge which was a live-action text adventure. [...] And we came up with this idea that in Perplex City they're so smart they've figured out how to do artificial intelligence. Their text adventures are run by artificial intelligences. So unlike in *Zork* and *Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* where you type "Put pot on head" and it will say "I don't understand that" this one will understand what to do. And of course the way it was powered in reality was basically our writers writing responses in real time. And the players didn't realise this until a few minutes in and they loved it. So the players would take turns taking the steering wheel and they'd watch the other players. It was great to watch, mainly because of the writing. It was a real fan favourite.
>
> <div align="right">(Hon 2007)</div>

These are just some methods practitioners utilise to facilitate non-computational monitoring and influence structures in transmedia projects. A pivotal part of the game mastering approach is the decisions practitioners make based on these interactions.

### *Game Master Decisions*

What decisions practitioners make depends entirely on how much information they gather from their players and to what degree they are able to make changes. Hon explains that sometimes they would respond to mistakes or faults players may find: "Sometimes the players, when they're going through the story, they spot holes in it or they like particular characters a lot more than what we expected and then we'll respond to that and we'll go and change the story according to that" (ibid.). Other times it may involve altering the

plot and pacing to accommodate player interest and ability, as Varela explains: "We sometimes adopted their suggestions for short-term plot changes but more often, we needed to trim or lengthen the timeline of our planned story to match the speed with which the players progressed" (Varela 2007, 23). Either way, this emphasis on reactivity involves a different kind of literacy, as Hon explains regarding the difference between writing for digital games and writing for alternate reality games:

> Writing was of course was also done in response to player feedback and so this would have to go from spec to live within a few days or hours. […] As a result what we've learned is that Alternate Reality games require very different skillsets to other games. The programmers need to be able to move a lot faster—be able to mock up things a lot faster and prototype things a lot faster—and the writers have to also do the same. It is more like working on something like Saturday Night Live or a soap opera, you always have to generate new stuff, there is a constant deadline.
>
> (Hon 2007)

Another aspect of reactivity is how the constructed world changes according to elements participants have contributed. While any person who is involved in a live event, chats with characters and in some cases enacts the rules of the game is automatically part of the fictional world, what I focus on in the next section are the times when *content* created by participants (beyond their embodied actions) become part of the primary discourse of a fictional world.

## Players as Co-Constructors

One of Walker Rettberg's traits for distributed narratives is the "distribution of authorship": where "no single author or group of authors can have complete control of the form of the narrative" (Walker 2004, 94). Here, Walker Rettberg refers to situations when a "story is told by several different narrators, on their independent sites" or when there is "an algorithm or search" that aggregates content (such as Flickr.com) and as such a narrative emerges when people impose a narrative reading on it (ibid., 100). Walker Rettberg notes that the latter are not stories per say, as they "are gathered by algorithms rather than by authorial intent," but nevertheless "something we can see as 'narrative'

emerges" (ibid.). The latter "radical distribution of authorship" is not the concern here for it describes a narrative-reading process, not the nature of a practice (ibid.). Instead, it is the efforts of participants that I wish to highlight in this discussion: how their contributions can sometimes be part of and intrinsic to a transmedia fiction.

There are many ways a person can co-create a transmedia fiction: from the extreme end of live-action role-playing in which there isn't necessarily any script at all, just people taking on roles and a narrative experience emerging from their contributions; to the other extreme where one can click a button or call to vote for a character or event. Ryan, for instance, outlines nine ways a person can participate with a "text": they can determine plot; shift perspective; explore field of possible; keep the machine going; retrieve documents; play games or solve problems; evaluate the text; contribute to writing; and engage in dialogue and play roles (Ryan 2001, 210–212). In this section I briefly explore some of the ways participant contributions become permanent aspects of the material expression of a fictional world, when their efforts become part of the defining discourse. To explain, I draw on Aarseth again.

Aarseth observed with his theory of ergodics that there are times when the contributions of a participant can be subsumed in a composition, at times permanently. He described these instances as two user functions: configurative and textonic (Aarseth 1997, 64). The former function (configurative) occurs when what is seen in the work is "in part chosen or created by the user," and the latter (textonic) occurs when those contributions "can be (permanently) added to the text" (ibid.). Aarseth continues, explaining that "in some cases the users can extend or change the text by adding their own writing or programming" (ibid.). Transposing this theory to the transmedia context, it is when a participant contributes permanently to the expressive aspects of a transmedia fiction that they move into what I term *co-constructor* status.[21] That is, they are considered to be co-creators of a fictional world.

---

[21] Note that "constructor status" is different to Doležel's "world-constructing texts," which are analogous to fictional texts that create imaginary worlds as opposed to representations of the actual world (and all the truth-values associated with such texts) (Doležel 1998, 24).

With the term co-constructor I am positioning a certain activity between apocryphal and primary producer content. That is, individuals that contribute content that has a role in *defining* the fictional world for all. Anyone can create content that contributes to a fictional world. Fans create works, licensees create works. But only some of these creations are considered to be primary material that is responsible for defining a fictional world. I also make a distinction between contributions that are encompassed in the short-term or during the "presentation" or "run time," and those that are integrated in the long-term, long after an initial "run time". The latter can include fan works, parodies and the like that, as Bakhtin observed, provides "the corrective of laughter and criticism to all existing straightforward genres, languages, styles, voices" and ultimately influences the development of those straightforward genres (Bakhtin 1981 [1930s]c, 59). Here I am referring to the influence of fans, critics and peers on subsequent productions. For instance, in his book on fan cinema, Clive Young cites an example of the inclusion of a fan-created character in the *Star Wars* canon (Young 2008). Trey Stokes's character Stacey (aka Pink Five) from his *Pink Five* series was made into canon when Timothy Zahn's 2007 novel *Star Wars: Allegiance* features a conversation with Stacey. In this case the efforts of a non-commissioned creator became subsumed into canon, making it content that defines the fictional world. But this process of co-creation occurred through the somewhat gradual processes of dialogism. What I wish to discuss in this section is how the contributions of participants become part of the defining work *during its run time*.

Examples of the contributions of players being regarded as constructors in transmedia fictions is evidenced in many pervasive and ubiquitous games. I have chosen some examples from alternate reality games because they are often episodic and so involve practitioners carefully monitoring and responding to player actions over time in ways that can entail alterations to plot, mechanics and production output. As Bakio lu explains:

> What makes an ARG a de-facto *performative narrative* is that it is primarily about telling and producing a story while the audience interacts with it. Within the context of ARG, this means that audience members may converse and interact with fictional characters, in other cases, it means that ideas produced by players as

they brainstorm in IRC channels, Web sites, and other platforms may be
incorporated into the plot.

<div align="right">(Bakio lu 2009, 161–162, original emphasis)</div>

In the prototypical ARG, the project is played in real-time and is reactive, in that it
responds to the players (and so is usually non-replayable). In an interview with the lead
designer of *The Beast*, Elan Lee, artist and author Mark Meadows asks about "the
interaction between the authors […] and the readers, or players" (Meadows 2003, 135).
"Was there an instance," Meadows poses, "when you didn't know what the outcome
would be but had to keep writing anyway?" (ibid.). "Oh definitely," Lee responds:

> There was one puzzle where there was no answer. We had no idea how it was
> going to resolve. There was an artificial character that thrived on nightmares and
> was born in a psychological institute that had become so addicted to nightmares, it
> was looking for what scared people the most. See, it had to generate more
> nightmares to feed itself. We opened up the doors to the players and wrote out a
> distress call: "Help me" came from a character that the players liked who Loki
> had overwhelmed, but we didn't know what the response would be. We wanted to
> leave it to the players to come up with something creative. They wanted to find a
> way to trap Loki and put out bait and destroy him, so they all got together—
> thousands of people—and they made a dream database and put all of their own
> nightmares into this database (it was beautiful to see them all work together like
> that), so we directed Loki toward the site and there he died.
>
> <div align="right">(Lee, quoted in Meadows 2003, 135)</div>

The call to players actually went out via the characters Laia, Mephista and Beelzebub,
who sent emails and phone calls to different players (which they then shared with the
other players) (Hon 2001). As Lee mentions, players from all over the globe then
collaborated online to create the database of nightmares. The designers then used the text
of the players' database to create a short video sequence representing the fact that Loki
(the form of artificial intelligence that had gone rogue) had been lured by their
nightmares (see Figure 53). The subsequent destruction of Loki was then represented in
shards of an image of Loki scattered across twenty-one websites (Hon 2001) and reported
(see Figure 54) on the fictional company website: the *Sentient Property Crime Bureau*.

I grew up in a house high on a hill. When I was three or four, I
dreamed I reached the kitchen stairs and looked back. Suddenly,
I hear Miss Sally callin' and I have a strange feeling about the
kitchen, a dark room with a tall ceiling. I felt an evil
presence near me. Looking into a mirror, I see someone standing
behind me. It has a mask of my mother's face on its head. It
grabs me and pushes me down. Instinctively I grab my sister. She
is naked and shackled to the floor. She does not respond when I
call her name. The pinkie on her left hand has been chopped off
and replaced with a metal one. I can't bring myself to touch
her. One of the other kids runs and gets scotch tape to tape my
fingers down. My mom called to us, "You can be forced to like
it." All I can remember is knives and saws and things cutting me
apart, limbs all torn asunder by the hands of death. My parents
could see layers of skin being lifted off, limbs floating away.
They smiled and waved goodbye, and then I woke up. I then awoke
incredibly frightened and weeping. I woke from the nightmare. I
woke up crying. Then I wake up. I wake up shivering. Then, I
wake up.

I see a white flash, and the dream ends.

Figure 53. Screenshot of Loki nightmare video, *The Beast*
(Microsoft Game Studio, 2001)
Image source: (Cloudmakers 2001a)

Figure 54. Screenshot of report of Loki's destruction on the Sentient Property Crime Bureau website, *The Beast*
(Microsoft Game Studio, 2001)
Image source: (Cloudmakers 2001b)

In this example, the players responded to an open-ended problem (to help the characters Loki had overwhelmed) with a solution (the idea to lure and overwhelm the character Loki with nightmares), which they created the content to execute (the nightmare texts) and the designers implemented the players' idea, using the players' content. This resulted in a change to the plot (an evil character that was affecting other characters was destroyed, something the designers did not conceive) and was further acknowledged in the fictional world with the report by the *Sentient Property Crime Bureau*.

Another example is a challenge in an ARG created by two of *The Beast* player-community leaders. Adrian and Dan Hon were high-profile players in the self-organized community called the Cloudmakers. They created the first ever gameplay resources for *The Beast,* resources such as "The Trail" and "The Guide" that have been used in ARGs ever since. The Hon brothers went on to co-create *Perplex City*. In this ARG, a character, Violet, needed access to a (fictional) library so that she could read a diary that contained vital clues. The library, however, only allowed entry to published authors. Violet called on the Earth "cube hunters" (the players), to write a book so she could access a (fictional) library to view a diary (Kiteway 2005). A group of players answered that call and collaboratively wrote a book, *Tales from the Third Planet* on their wiki (see Figure 55).

The designers responded by announcing the book will be published by the in-game (fictional) press, *Seaside Press* (see Figure 56), announced (see Figure 57) and reviewed (see Figure 58) the book in the fictional online newspaper *Perplex City Sentinel*, and made it available for sale in the actual world at the online print-on-demand store Lulu.com (see Figures 59 and 60).



Figure 55. Screenshot of 'Tales from Earth' chapter contributions in player wiki, *Perplex City*
(Mind Candy Design, 2005–2007)
Image source: (Perplex City Wiki 2005)



Figure 56. Screenshot of fictional publisher 'Seaside Press', *Perplex City*
(Mind Candy Design, 2005–2007)
Image source: (Mind Candy Design)



Figure 57. Screenshot of book announcement in fictional online newspaper 'Perplex City Sentinel', *Perplex City*
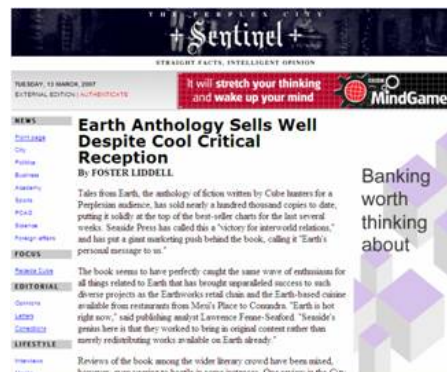(Mind Candy Design, 2005–2007)
Image source: (Mind Candy Design 2005)



Figure 58. Screenshot of book review in fictional online newspaper Perplex City Sentinel, *Perplex City*
(Mind Candy Design, 2005–2007)
Image source: (Mind Candy Design 2006)

Figure 59. Screenshot of 'Tales from the Third Plant' available for sale at online print-on-demand store Lulu.com, *Perplex City* (Mind Candy Design, 2005−2007)
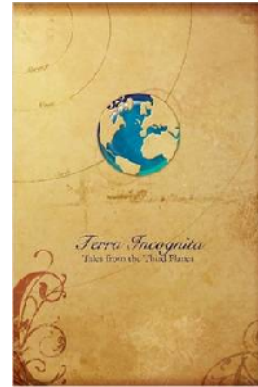Image source: (Lulu 2006)

Figure 60. Cover of 'Tales from the Third Planet' book created by players of *Perplex City*, (Mind Candy Design, 2005−2007)

These examples point to just a sampling of the various ways participants can become co-constructors of a fictional world either through their invited or uninvited writings and designs. What this means in the context of this thesis, is that while transmedia fictions have been theorised as a practice and so is concerned with the efforts of practitioners rather than interpretation of audiences, this does not mean practitioners are the sole constructors of the fictional world; and further to this, the peculiar knowledge and skills needed in transmedia practice often involves facilitating such participation. So far I have discussed some ways in which reactivity occurs in some transmedia fictions. Another aspect of interactivity that is peculiar to transmedia practices is the medially-distributed and often geographically-dispersed nature of the form. This provides both design challenges and opportunities for practitioners.

## Tiering: Understanding Distinct Media and Fragmented Audiences in Transmedia Projects

In the previous chapter I referred to arguments that had been put forward about the expansion trait of transmedia storytelling (Ruppel 2005a; Jenkins 2006; Long 2007; Smith 2009). I noted Jenkins has argued that "[e]ach franchise entry needs to be self-contained so you don't need to have seen the film to enjoy the game, and vice versa" (Jenkins 2006, 96). In light of the greater context of intercompositional relations theories (theories about the relations between works), I explained how intercompositional

transmedia phenomena can be differentiated as peculiar practice. I also argued that the prescription for self-containment is specific to intercompositional and not intracompositional transmedia phenomena (single works that are themselves transmedia). In this section I now delve into the argument for expansion and self-containment, explaining it in light of the peculiar experience of transmedia projects. That is, the practice of expansion and self-containment needs to be analysed in light of the fact that not all parts of a transmedia project are experienced by the same person. Sometimes this is the case because it is a physical impossibility, because of personal preferences, access issues, skills, monetary constraints, or the design of the project. In what follows, therefore, I discuss how in projects that involve multiple compositions, practitioners are beginning to attend to the issue of distinct audiences with distinct content. I then discuss how in intracompositional transmedia practices such as telematic arts, pervasive games and ubiquitous games, there is an attempt to address participants with varying skills and levels of engagement, facilitate social interaction, and address remote participants. These practices are illustrated through the notion of *tiering*.

## Introducing Tiering

The addressing of different audiences with different content in different media and environments is described as tiering (Dena 2008). Tiering denotes the design of projects that facilitate different points-of-entry into a transmedia fiction through targeting different content (and in many cases media) to different audiences. It is akin to the notion of "polysemous address," which Jenkins recognizes in television programs that combine genres with the aim of appealing to different audiences (Jenkins 1992, 125). It has affinities with children's literature that addresses both parent and child, as recognised in narrative theories of "dual audience," "crosswriting" and "crossover literature" (Beckett 1999); "dual implied addressee" (Sell 2002) and "double narrate" (Hansen 2005). In industry as well there is the term "four-quadrant film", which is used to describe a film that (is designed to) appeal to males and females above and below the age of twenty-five (young and old). While the strategy of addressing different audiences or players remains the same, the difference between tiering and these practices is that different audiences are

addressed with distinct media elements, a phenomenon that is particularly pronounced in early transmedia projects.

The reasons for tiering vary, but for this discussion I explain three rationales for this approach. The first is practiced in both inter- and intracompositional transmedia projects: it involves the recognition that people have their own *artistic and media preferences and literacies* and so addresses them accordingly. The second two are practiced predominately in intracompositional transmedia projects, and they include attempts to *facilitate social interaction* and *bring remote participants* together.

## Tiering to Address Artistic and Media Preferences and Literacies

Any time a creative project is moved beyond the singular—whether it be episodically delivered within a media platform or expressed across distinct media—the likelihood of people not experiencing all the elements is increased. This is why producers of television shows go to great pains to make sure each episode is understandable to those who haven't seen previous episodes (through techniques such as recapitulation), and endeavour to persuade audiences to come back (through techniques such as cliff-hangers or hermeneutic code (Barthes 1974)). The same situation not only applies to transmedia practice, it is amplified.

Indeed, the scope of some large-scale intercompositional transmedia projects is almost infinite. Jenkins acknowledges that in many cases such projects "demand too much effort for 'Joe Popcorn,' for the harried mom or the working stiff who has just snuggled onto the couch after a hard day at the office" (Jenkins 2006, 130). He argues that people are "learning to adapt" to this new type of storytelling, but in the meantime, "going in deep has to remain an option" (Jenkins 2006, 130). That is one of the reasons why Jenkins recommends that "[e]ach franchise entry needs to be self-contained so you don't need to have seen the film to enjoy the game, and vice versa" (ibid., 96). In cases like *The Matrix*—which involved at least three feature films, nine short anime stories, two graphic novels, a computer game and an online multiplayer game—the requirement of familiarity is not so much a question of whether the person is "well-read" (as is the historical context

of a literary reading)[22], but a question of whether they have the money to purchase all these compositions[23]; "resistance to tracking down unfamiliar content types" (Long 2007, 147); or even whether they are immune from what may be called "franchise fatigue". Indeed, in the case of *The Matrix,* "[n]o film franchise has ever made such demands on its consumers" (Jenkins 2006, 94).

Even on a smaller scale other obstacles arise. For instance, consider the Canadian television series *ReGenesis* and it's accompanying 'Extended Reality Game' (ERG). The television series was only available on the pay-tv channel of The Movie Network/Movie Central in Canada. The ERG, however, was designed to be played by anyone on the Internet alongside the series (it was not posterior or anterior to the broadcast season). For those who did not watch the series, either on-air or illegally, the ERG was playable because the narrative of the ERG was a self-contained work in itself, and because of a specially created ERG podcast. The podcast gave a summary of the events of the latest episode and a summary of the ERG events. This provided important feedback to the players about how their efforts had impacted the storyworld (as represented in the series), and provided context and impetus for upcoming missions.

According to Jones in a personal email communication to me on January 29, 2007 (reprinted with permission), ninety percent of the entire audience watched the television series only, 10% of the audience continued to each composition: so 10% of the audience went from the television show to the website, 10% of those participants then signed up for the ERG, and then "10% of all ERG players became hardcore players" (which means they actively participated in just about every aspect of the gameplay and narrative). These approximations do not account for the people that played the ERG from outside of Canada. They do, however, indicate the varieties of the combinations experienced (not everyone who watched the television show played the game). In this case access was a

---

[22] Hutcheon has proposed the term "knowing audiences" to "undercut[s] some of the elitist associations of the other terms in favor of a more democratizing kind of straightforward awareness of the adaptation's enriching, palimpsestic doubleness" (Hutcheon 2006, 120).
[23] Apperley has examined financial constraints in the context of the consumption and participation of transmedia storytelling in Venezuelian culture (Apperley 2007), and Brooker noted the socio-economic status of those who participated in early television "overflow" practices (Brooker 2001).

major a factor: the television series was only available in Canada, while the ERG was global and free.

Beyond access to information, though, is the issue of literacy and preferences. That is, some transmedia projects have narrative-driven and game-driven compositions, and sometimes compositions that evenly operate with both. Not all audiences and players are interested, willing, have the time, resources or knowledge and skill to engage with compositions that have a different mode from what they are familiar with or interested in. This is particularly marked in predominately narrative-driven works that then include gaming works that require peculiar knowledge and skill, such as console games, alternate reality games and the like. As Long observes, audiences may not engage with all compositions due to "resistance to tracking down unfamiliar content types" (Long 2007, 147), as "[c]hanging media forms will almost always meet with more resistance than simply continuing on in an established media form" (ibid., 67).

Therefore, at times when practitioners choose to expand their fictional world across media and modes (not adapt, as adaptations can address different knowledge and skills with different compositions without worrying about coherence), practitioners are not just concerned with what order compositions will be accessed, but importantly whether they will be accessed at all. Indeed, in many cases each of the compositions of a transmedia project are not accessed by the same person. What practitioners have so far done to address this issue is to create new content (expand to lure), ensure that it is canon (primary to the meaning-making process), but made the content of secondary importance to what they consider a "primary" story or game. Narrative theorist Seymour Chatman's theory of "kernels" and "satellites" is helpful to explain this approach (Chatman 1978, 53–56).

Drawing on Barthes' notion of a *noyau,* Chatman describes story events in terms of a hierarchy, where kernels (*noyau*) are "major events [that] are part of the chain or armature of contingency," they "are narrative moments that give rise to cruxes in the direction taken by events" (ibid., 53). "Kernels," he continues, "cannot be deleted without

destroying narrative logic" (ibid.). The function of kernels is that of "filling in, elaborating, completing the kernel; they form the flesh on the skeleton" (ibid., 54). On the other hand, satellites "can be deleted without disturbing the logic of the plot" (ibid.). While Chatman is discussing plot events within a story within a medium, the notion is nevertheless applicable across media and modes. But while there can be kernels *and* satellites within a composition, I transpose the notion to relationships between compositions. That is, while each composition may be self-contained, and expand the fictional world, each of the compositions may have varying hierarchical status in terms of what is essential for coherence. Some compositions can expand the fictional world but may not be critical for understanding content in another composition. This is particularly pertinent in the current context of transmedia practices as not all participants engage with all media, and the medium that has the most participants will often become the primary expressive medium for practitioners and audiences alike.

ABC's *The Lost Experience*, for instance, involved an ARG expansion of the television series that only a portion of the television fans would have participated in (and new audiences as well). Senior vice president of marketing at ABC Entertainment Mike Benson explained that the game was "designed to allow individuals the clues needed to put the story together on their own, whether they're new to the show or devoted Losties" (Mike Benson, quoted in Gaudiosi 2006). Each composition was therefore self-contained. However, as television theorist Jason Mittel warned, such works need to involve "two storytelling modes":

> Producers must ensure that whatever is revealed in the ARG is not needed to comprehend the TV series, as the audience of millions for the latter will certainly dwarf the number of players who will stick through "Experience" until its conclusion this fall. Additionally, "Experience" is running simultaneously across the globe, but *Lost*'s schedule outside the US is significantly lagged—for instance, the UK is just now getting episode 7 in the already completed season 2—meaning that any plot revelations in the ARG must be sure not to spoil mysteries within the television series. Thus "Experience" must offer only supplementary inessential narrative information to *Lost*, allowing the television series to retain centrality within the storyworld.
>
> (Mittell 2006)

This hierarchical approach (of providing nonessential or secondary information) is just what they did, as Co-Creator and Co-Executive Producer Carlton Cuse explained:

> The details of the Hanso Foundation's demise [what is revealed in *The Lost Experience*]…it's tangential to the show but it's not unrelated to the show. We sort of felt like the Internet Experience was a way for us to get out mythologies that we would never get to [...] in the show. I mean, because this is mythology that doesn't have an effect on the character's lives or existence on the island. We created it for purposes of understanding the world of the show but it was something that was always going to be sort of below the water, sort of the iceberg metaphor, and the Internet Experience sort of gave us a chance to reveal it.
>
> (Cuse, quoted in Lachonis 2007)

What they created, therefore, was more backstory. Co-Creator and Co-Executive Producer Damon Lindelof also confirmed that although the information was "tangential," it was nevertheless canon (ibid.). This tangential approach is a fairly common. For *Battle Over Promicin*, agency Campfire had the brief to "excite the existing *4400* fanbase while also creating interest among non-fans and lapsed viewers" (Campfire 2007). "The challenge," they continued, "was finding a way to create a compelling marketing story that would engage an audience already schooled in The 4400 mythology without chasing away potential Season 4 fans who might see the first three seasons as an imposing barrier to Season 4 viewership" (ibid.). Their solution was to fill in gaps not addressed in the TV narrative:

> At the end of Season 3, Promicin was being distributed to the general public. In Season 4, we will find the characters dealing with the repercussions of a world overcome with Promicin use. So, we built a bridge in the story that would generate excitement for the season premiere without divulging too much of the new season's plotline.
>
> (ibid.)

Still, the narrative information was "secondary" to the primary narrative of the television in that the *Battle over Promicin* experience was not essential to understanding the plot of the television series. Indeed, such projects are often created *after* a mono-medium production has been written and produced but not necessarily released. This is another

reason why many so-called augmentations or extensions explore backstories and have a satellite status.

These are just some of the ways practitioners address the issue of fragmentation or nonlinear paths of entry with tiering in transmedia projects that entail multiple compositions. But intercompositional transmedia projects are not the only forms that have tiering practices.

### IntraCompositional

> [Alternate reality games] encourage players to create new media tools
> which they can use to process and communicate information.
> And . . . they can only be solved by people working together as teams
> and tapping the power of social networks to solve problems.
> (Wallis and Jenkins 2006)

In the previous section I described some of the ways in which practitioners are endeavouring to address participants who experience *some compositions* within a fictional world. In this section I describe the ways in which practitioners address different participants of an intracompositional transmedia project. That is, how different participants are addressed with distinct content (which is oftentimes in distinct media) *within a transmedia composition*.

This addressing of different audiences within a transmedia composition is related to the previous discussions because the same issues of narrative and game literacy and preferences still apply. But unlike a mono-medium composition such as a console game, participants in a transmedia composition can actually engage in elements they choose. They don't need to experience all of the elements. The desire and need to experience different elements often emerges for a variety of reasons. Sometimes it is because a transmedia project may entail a lot of time and effort and so while the participant may be skilled and interested in pursuing, they cannot due to the time and effort involved. At other times it is because they are interested in engaging with those elements that appeal to them or they are versed in. Indeed, the phenomenon of players having different motivations and skills is observable in almost all interactive projects. While people can read or watch a non-interactive work with varying motivations and understanding, the

differences in interactive forms are pertinent, because the motivation to act is crucial to the design and experience.

Based on his analysis of MUD players, Bartle observed that "a pattern emerged; people habitually found the same kinds of thing about the game 'fun,' but there were several (four, in fact) sub-groupings into which opinion divided" (Bartle 1996). Bartle observed that some players typically enjoyed achieving in the game context, exploring the game, socialising with others or imposing themselves upon others (ibid.). This led Bartle to outline "four player types": achievers, explorers, socialisers and killers (ibid.). In the D&D Dungeon Master Guide, it is explained that "players enjoy many aspects of the game at different times" (Wyatt 2008, 8). Based on their experience with such table-top games, the "primary player motivations as types of players" can be grouped as: actors, explorers, instigators, power gamers, slayers, storytellers, thinkers, and watchers (ibid.). More recently, game practitioner Nicole Lazzaro has studied player behaviour and observed that "people play games in essentially four distinct ways, and each of these play styles is associated with a different set of emotions": hard fun, easy fun, serious fun, and people fun (Lazzaro 2009, 20). Lazzaro found that "rather than having one favourite play style, players rotated between any three of the four during a particular game session" and that "blockbuster games containing the four play styles outsold competing similar titles that imitated only one kind of fun" (ibid.).

All of these player types and styles indicate a diversity of skill and motivation that, given Lazzaro's last statement, mean a game that addresses all or at least some of these is more likely to appeal to more people. But all of these styles and types have been observed in mono-medium games and experiences. How do they translate to the transmedia context? Alternate reality game practitioner Brooke Thompson has observed different player roles that "mirror their game play style" (Thompson 2006, 46). They include character interactors, community support, information specialists, puzzle solvers, readers, story hackers and story specialists. For instance, some players find character interactions appealing, while others find solving puzzles appealing:

> Character interactors are intrigued by the possibilities of interacting with the characters from the story world. They enjoy sending email, making phone calls, and even participating in live game play events. Taking part in the performance nature of the alternate reality experience is highly motivating for character interactors. […] Puzzle solvers enjoy the mental exercises provided by the mystery. Many puzzle solvers will only follow the story enough to be able to work through the puzzles, and some may not visit the related websites unless it has a puzzle that has been brought to their attention.
>
> (Thompson 2006, 46–47)

Akin to the player types mentioned earlier, there is obviously a diversity of styles. But what is different about the transmedia context is that these players types (and levels of engagement) can be presented in a way that is materially distinct, distributed or fragmented across distinct media. For instance, McGonigal has explained how in ARGs, different participants are targeted with diverse elements:

> First, you try to create an extremely diverse range of participatory opportunities. Some are online, text-based. Some are through vocal interaction, like phones or Skype. Some are real-world, face-to-face. Some are puzzles. Some are stunts. Some are problems. Some are literary. You just throw out a really wide range so people feel hailed by something, and something specific.
>
> (McGonigal, quoted in Terdiman 2006)

To explain how transmedia practitioners enable these diverse offerings with distinct media, consider the following example to see how tiers can hail, indeed directly address, puzzle players. Ever since *The Beast*, cryptography has been utilized as a challenge in all its guises: stenography, morse code, caesar, vinegere, ROT, braille, anagrams, ASCII and more. Some players are also skilled in finding text hidden in webpages or servers, finding hidden clues in text, image and sound files. An example of how such players are addressed separately with distinct content is in the *ReGenesis Extended Reality Game II*. Evan Jones, the then Creative Director of Xenophile Media, was quoted by Waite describing their design approach:

> According to Evan Jones [. . .] the way the game has been created is very much a "tiered experience" [. . .] Jones compares this to "funnel" where only a certain part of the player base will take the journey into the deeper levels, but at the same

time, a larger audience will be able to get entertainment from other parts of the experience that don't necessarily involve immersion.

(Waite 2006)

For the third mission in the ReGenesis ERG, all players (field agents within the fictional world) were issued with a directive to infiltrate an anarchic institution, the "Ocktopods," and report back with any information about their agenda. The front page of the Ocktopods website is an almost bare screen with a logo, text box and submit button. The button takes the player to an exam. Once the exam is correctly completed, the player is rewarded with "The Ocktopod Redux" and a video. The redux explains, conveniently, their agenda and therefore provides the information the player needs to fulfil the mission, which they then deliver to characters in the fictional world via email. This is one route through the game episode. There is another that is not signalled on the surface text, literally.

If a player highlighted the text on the page and/or looked at the source code they would be privy to another challenge. Alongside the exam questions were single letters distributed vertically. Each of these letters was placed alongside html color code. The message, once decoded, told the players to "rescue ana from our url". Players that removed the letters ana from the URL discovered a webpage that invited them to join the Ocktopods. The anarchic hacker group so feared in the story was now cast, by players. The players of the ERG that discovered that content then took on the role of an antagonist against the characters in the series and against the field agents, their fellow players. This example illustrates how the puzzle-oriented players were given their own challenge with unique content, and in a manner only they could recognize. Completing that challenge led to a very different experience of the work.

There are many more examples of how this operates in transmedia practice (I have covered some others in (Dena 2008)), but the point remains that player skill and motivations can be targeted with discrete content in distinct media. As noted earlier though, player skill and motivation are not the only impetus for tiered design. In the next

section I explain how social interaction, one type of interaction that is appealing to some players, is actually a key mechanic for other reasons.

## Tiering to Facilitate Social Interaction and Cooperation

Another reason for tiering is to facilitate social interaction and cooperation. "Social interaction" is what game theorists and practitioners Staffan Bjork and Jussi Holopainen have described as a "game pattern" (Bjork and Holopainen 2005). Somewhat analogous to structuralist narratology, the study of game design patterns is concerned with the "semiformal interdependent descriptions of commonly reoccurring parts of the design of a game that concern gameplay" (ibid., 34). Bjork and Holopainen outline many of these reoccurring parts, these patterns, that are observable across a variety of game forms (board games, computer games, street games and so on). They divide the patterns into eleven top-level types, one of which is *social interaction*: "the main ways games offer possibilities for social interaction between players" (ibid., 237). They propose four categories of social interaction patterns—competition, collaboration, group activities and simulated social interaction—which are then divided into thirty sub-types (ibid., 237–276). In the category of "collaboration," there is the pattern of "cooperation": where players "coordinate their actions and share resources, in order to reach goals or subgoals of the game" (ibid., 245). Examples are a soccer team cooperating to beat the opposing team, the players of the *Lord of the Rings* board game coordinating to defeat Sauron, and the players of Z-Man Games' *Pandemic* coordinating to find cures for diseases that have broken out across the world. In the transmedia context, that cooperation can be facilitated by, among other techniques, tiering. This happens when designers provide information through medially-distinct experiences that only some or one participant engages with; but that information is needed for the entire project to progress and so impels participants to share it with others.

McGonigal explains how this tiering, or in her terms how projects which are "massively-distributed," facilitate "massively-multiplayer collaboration":

> [A] massive amount of game content [for *The Beast*] was shredded into thousands of bits and pieces. The deconstructed content was then dispersed across dozens of platforms. This distributed design required a collective gathering effort, to bring the many pieces together, as well as a collaborative ordering and interpretation of the pieces, in order to reveal and follow the massively multi-threaded plot.
>
> (McGonigal 2006, 447)

An example of this approach is the ubiquitous or pervasive game of UK group Blast Theory: *Uncle Roy All Around You* (Blast Theory and the Mixed Reality Laboratory at the University of Nottingham, 2003). The game divides players into online and street players, but they all work towards the common goal of finding a character named Uncle Roy. The online players work with a 3D model of the city (see Figure 61), which they use to help or hinder the street player in their search to find Uncle Roy. As the designers explain, "[t]he core artistic theme of the work is trust in strangers—in remote players, Uncle Roy, the technology or even passers by" (Benford et al. 2006). The street players communicate with the online players with handheld computers, GPS receivers and walkie-talkies (see Figure 62) that were supplied for the game (their own phones, indeed all personal possessions were taken away at the beginning).



Figure 61. Online player interface for
*Uncle Roy All Around You*
(Blast Theory and the Mixed Reality Laboratory at
the University of Nottingham, 2003)
Image source: (Capra et al. 2005, 91)

Figure 62. Photo of street player of
*Uncle Roy All Around You*
(Blast Theory and the Mixed Reality Laboratory at
the University of Nottingham, 2003)
Image source: (Capra et al. 2005, 91)

For the street player their mission is to meet with Uncle Roy. They begin by indicating their position on a portable device, which triggers text messages offering clues that may lead them to Uncle Roy. Not all clues are trustworthy though: some "are misleading to the point of being mischievous, encouraging players to follow diversions, drawing on the

history of the local environment, implicating passers by in the game" (ibid.). They also receive text messages from the online players, who apparently have information that can help them find Uncle Roy's office. Both the street and online players can communicate with each other via the text messages and audio recordings.

The online players have a different mission though. They have been tasked with trying to get the street player to retrieve a postcard and post it for them. Most street players do in fact retrieve the postcard, from a location such as a bar, telephone box, or bag on a bike. They then eventually end up in what appears to be a recently deserted office. They are instructed to fill out the postcard, answering the question: "when can you begin to trust a stranger?". At this point, the online player is guided to watch a webcam of the street player in the office, seeing them for the first time. The street player is then directed to go to a nearby telephone box, which rings when they are there. A voice tells them to walk around the corner and get into the parked limousine waiting there. When the street player enters the car, an actor joins them and asks them about trust in strangers. The actor informs them that another player is being asked these questions too (the online player is at this point), and asks if they will enter into a year-long contract to help that person if they ever need it. If they agree, the actor notes their contact details and asks them to post the postcard to seal the contract. If both the street and online player agree to help each other, their details are passed on to each other after the game.

In this example, it is clear that there are different experiences of the game. Indeed, the creators explain how they designed it this way to facilitate social interaction between the players: "One tactic here is to deliberately give different players distinct perspectives, motivating them to exchange information and work together. This means aiming for quite different, but connected, physical and virtual worlds, rather than a seamless augmented reality style experience" (ibid.). In such works, familiarity with all the parts that make up this intracompositional transmedia project is not only difficult, it is contrary to the design of the project. The use of tiering has been employed to, among other game goals, facilitate social interaction.

In a similar vein, some large-scale alternate reality games involve 'clues' being distributed through events orchestrated across states and countries to facilitate players working together, meeting together and sharing what they find. *The Lost Experience*, was a joint effort with international broadcasters, involving the distribution of unique clues to players in the USA (run by the ABC), in Australia (Yahoo!7) and in the United Kingdom (Channel Four). The branded entertainment game *Vanishing Point Game* (42 Entertainment, 2007) was commissioned by Microsoft and AMD to "celebrate the release of Windows Vista" (42 Entertainment 2007). In this game, clues were issued to players through (among other delivery devices) live events across twelve cities in the USA, Australia, Canada, England, Germany, and Singapore. For example, the character Loki was projected onto a water display and building at the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas, where she issued clues verbally and visually (see Figure 63). Players also went to certain locations to find a clue, that would be found when they looked up to the sky and saw text messages—which they then shared with the rest of the players by uploading photos and discussing its significance (see Figure 64). In all of these cases, players worked together online to determine where the live events were, some players attended the live events on behalf of the others, and then they shared what they found with everyone online, which then further progressed the game for everyone.



Figure 63. Video projection of the character Loki and clues at the Bellagio Hotel, Las Vegas, *Vanishing Point Game* (42 Entertainment, 2007) Photo by Reuters. Image source: (Mintz 2007)



Figure 64. Photo of skywriting in Sydney, *Vanishing Point Game* (42 Entertainment, 2007) Image source: (Enigma 2007)

This happens at all stages of an ARG. For instance, the independent ARG *Sammeeeees* (Jan Libby, 2006) began with a package being posted to a player. That player not only

shared the details of the package, but the experience of unpacking it. As you can see in Figure 65, the player (Sean Stacey) posted photos of the wooden boxes and the clues left inside on the community forum UnFiction. The rest of the players then discussed what the clues meant and discovered websites and a phone number to call. Likewise, *I Love Bees* had different players answer 40,000 payphone calls in over "50 United States, and 8 foreign countries" to complete missions and unlock 'axons' (McGonigal 2005) (see players answering a pay phone in Figure 66). They would answer that call and fulfil the challenge which resulted in the unlocking on game content: an audio file being available online for all players.
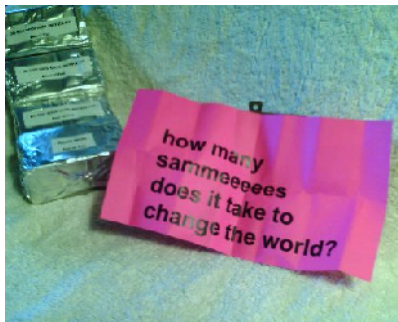


Figure 65. Photo of the unravelling of a box leaving clues shared by player 'Sean Stacey' (aka SpaceBass), *Sammeeeees* (Jan Libby, 2006) Image source: (Stacey 2006a)



Figure 66. Photo of a player answering pay phone to fulfil a mission, *I Love Bees* (42 Entertainment, 2004) Photo by Stitch. Image source: (Peters 2004)

In all of these examples, designers have delivered content to different players to encourage them to share and rely on each other. This can be used to different effect. *Uncle Roy All Around You,* for instance, aimed to facilitate questions of trust; whereas the other examples aimed to encourage interaction and address players in different countries. These could be described as particularly contemporary approaches to tiering. In the next section I explain how early experiments with tiering had a different aim.

## Tiering to Bring Remote Participants Together

For some intracompositional transmedia projects, such as telematic arts, very distributed storytelling and networked narrative environments, tiered design was predominately concerned with trying "to bring an audience 'together' without requiring them to be

physically present in the same place at the same time" (Davenport 1998, 52). This dispersed participant approach is evidenced in projects that have people at different locations communicating with each other through networked technologies. For example, artist and art theorist Susan Collins produced a work, *In Conversation* (1997–8), that "exists simultaneously in three locations: on the world wide web (www); in the gallery, and on the street" (Collins 2001, 33). For people on the street, their experience is an "encounter [with] an animated mouth projected onto the pavement," which, through speakers, chats with them (ibid., 35). The voice is an automated program that speaks the words entered by people on the Internet, who are watching via a surveillance camera (see Figure 67) the people on the street. So, the Internet users type in messages which the people on the street hear; and the Internet users hear, from a microphone at the scene, the replies of the people on the street. The Gallery component then combines the efforts of both:

> The gallery installation consists of a large scale video projection relayed from the surveillance camera (in Fabrica this was a front and rear projection onto a 13 foot screen in the centre of the church). The sound consists of the conversation(s) between the street user and the net user together with amplified sounds from the street.
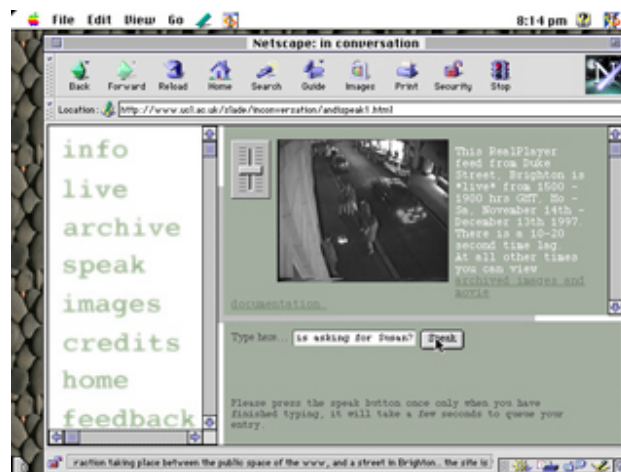>
> (ibid.)



Figure 67. Online interface for *In Conversation*
(Susan Collins, 1997–1998).
Image source: (Collins)

The gallery and street locations changed for the various exhibitions of the project: it was originally commissioned by BN1, Lighthouse and Channel for Fabrica, Duke Street,

Brighton in 1997 as part of Channel's *Inhabiting Metropolis* series of internet works, but was also exhibited at "the Oude Kerk, Amsterdam, Holland as part of the *Avatar* exhibition (1998); Gallery Otso, Espoo, Finland as part of the 1998 MuuMedia Festival's *Encoded Identities* and *Mobile Zones* exhibitions; Chapter Arts, Cardiff, in 2000 as a solo exhibition; and at the British Council in Berlin in 2001 to coincide with the Berlin Biennale" (ibid., 33). There was no single environment they experienced the website from either, as participants engaged with the project from (at the time of writing her PhD) "over 15 different countries" (ibid., 42). Also, the online participants didn't just interact with street passerbys only, for "on occasions when there were no people in the street the net users would often take over, talking to each other and effectively turning the public space of the street into a public net space, a chat channel" (ibid., 43). *In Conversation,* then, had many points-of-entry, many ways it was experienced that was peculiar to each person. There was no single work that a single person experienced in full.

In addition to projects that combine online and street participants, there are projects that involve multiple locations, sometimes across states and countries. An early example is the telematic artwork *A Body of Water* (Paul Serman and Andrea Zapp, 1999), which was commissioned by Söke Dinkla for her specially curated exhibition "Connected Cities— Processes of Art in the Urban Network". The work was located in three rooms across two locations: a chroma-key room at the Wilhelm Lehmbruck Museum in Duisburg, a changing room in the Waschkaue Herten, and a shower room in the Waschkaue Herten (see Figures 68–70).



Figure 68. Chroma-key room in Duisburg, *A Body of Water* (Paul Serman and Andrea Zapp, 1999)
Image source: (Sermon)



Figure 69. Changing room in Herten, *A Body of Water* (Paul Serman and Andrea Zapp, 1999)
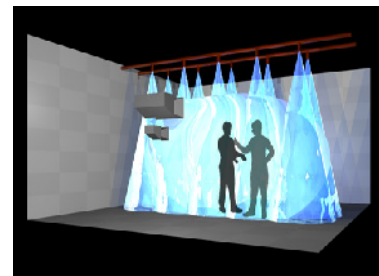Photo by Frank Schuberth
Image source: (Sermon)



Figure 70. Shower room in Herten, *A Body of Water* (Paul Serman and Andrea Zapp, 1999)
Image source: (Sermon)

Connected by videoconferencing technology, participants in the blue-screen room in Duisburg and participants in the changing room at Herten could see their respective images being projected onto the shower in Herten. As you can see with Figures 71–73, the live networked nature of the project motivated participants to interact with each other: pretending to shower with each other across locations. The dispersed nature of the project made it virtually impossible for a single person to experience every articulation of the project. The composition does, however, encompass all the elements, and brought people in different locations "together".



Figure 71. Participants at Duisburg performing for the Herten shower projection, which they watch on the television, *A Body of Water*
(Paul Serman and Andrea Zapp, 1999)
Photo by Frank Schuberth
Image source: (Sermon)
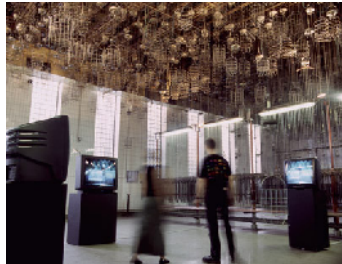
Figure 72. Participants at Herten performing for cameras and watching other participants on television screens, *A Body of Water*
(Paul Serman and Andrea Zapp, 1999)
Photo by Frank Schuberth
Image source: (Sermon)
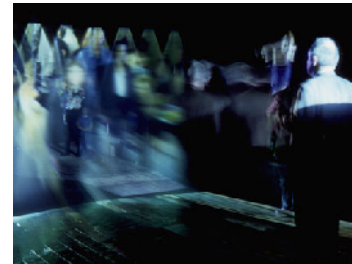
Figure 73. People at Herten shower room watching the shower projection, *A Body of Water*
(Paul Serman and Andrea Zapp, 1999)
Photo by Frank Schuberth .
Image source: (Sermon)

As I stated earlier, the reasons for tiering vary, but I have outlined three approaches observable in both inter- and intracompositional transmedia projects: addressing artistic and media preferences and literacies, facilitating social interaction and bringing remote participants together. While all of these practices occur in mono-medium projects, the medially-distinct nature of tiering in transmedia projects is important to note since it helps illuminate the peculiar nature of transmedia practice.

These discussions not only reflect the nature and state of transmedia practices, but also highlight the benefits of analysing transmedia phenomena from a meaning-construction perspective rather than purely through interpretation-oriented theories. As I have

mentioned earlier, "familiarity," for instance, is a trait argued by narrative theorists to be a necessary condition for transtextuality (Genette 1997 [1982]) and transfictionality (Ryan 2008), but is not possible in many transmedia projects because of the distributed nature of the practice, media and artform preferences, and design approaches. Familiarity is explained by Genette through literary scholar Michael Riffaterre's definition of the inter-text, which "is the perception, by the reader, of the relationship between a work and others that have either preceded or followed it," it is "the mechanism specific to literary reading" (Riffaterre, cited in Genette 1997 [1982], 2). Genette continues, explaining that:

> The hypertext invites us to engage in a relational reading, the flavor of which, however perverse, may well be condensed in an adjective recently coined by Philippe Lejeune: a *palimpsestuous* reading. To put in differently, just for the fun of switching perversities, one who really loves texts must wish from time to time to love (at least) two together.
>
> (ibid., 399, original emphasis)

This reader-centric notion of relationships is also invoked by Ryan as a requirement of transfictionality: "[t]he reader is assumed to be familiar with the world of the transfictionalized text" (Ryan 2008, 391). Familiarity, Ryan continues, "is necessary to the operation of an interpretive mechanism" (ibid.). Drawing on Umberto Eco's notion of the "open work" (Eco 1989 [1962]), Ndalianis has also explained that "[w]e are no longer dealing with works and interpreters, but with processes, flows, and interpretative drifts that concern not single works, but the totality of messages that circulate in the area of communication" (Ndalianis 2004, 71–72). In the transmedia context then, one could say that an interpreter must be familiar with all the compositions, or all the distinct parts of a transmedia composition. How else could they interpret the combined meaning? Indeed, without combined meaning there is no transmedia project, only a mono-medium one. But because of a variety of factors (including the modally diverse nature of the media employed), not all parts of transmedia projects are experienced by the same person.

In reference to the study of transmedia practice, then, even though people may not end up or be able to experience more than one distinct media, the fact remains they are expressed across them. Therefore, familiarity cannot be a prerequisite to identify the phenomenon.

The emphasis on construction privileges a practitioner-oriented phenomenon more than an interpretive process. This emphasis is purely methodological though, as it doesn't negate the interpretive role of the participant. The literacy involved in the experience and interpretation of transmedia phenomena is still crucial (and Ruppel's thesis should be a helpful step in this direction). But from this discussion of familiarity, it is evident that a practice-oriented approach, one that considers meaning-construction, does provide a fruitful compliment to the over-representation of interpretation-oriented theories.

## *Summary*

At the beginning of this chapter I outlined various interpretations of the lack of interactivity in some transmedia projects. While some of the insights these theories offer are valid, I argued that another factor to consider is the literacy of the practitioners involved. A lack of interactivity does not always equate to the desire for control; it may also indicate a lack of experience and skill in facilitating participation. A further important point was made regarding the mono-modal leaning of current transmedia theorists. Just as there are distinct media cultures, I have profiled what may be described as distinct modal cultures (those who see the world purely through a narrative *or* game lens). Building from a discussion of narrative and game similitude, I proposed a theory of transmodality. This is both a methodological approach and a possible approach to developing transmedia concepts. How practitioners attend to the needs of interactivity was addressed in the sections on flowchart documentation and non-computational game mastering, revealing how issues practitioners of earlier forms of hypertext fiction and table-top and digital games are being enunciated in the transmedia context. Finally, the notion of tiering was introduced to highlight the practice of fragmented content for different audiences across distinct media. This is important to recognise because this occurrence is something transmedia designers sometimes plan to work around or encourage. It is in many ways a development of early theories of hypertext fictions in which each node of a work is considered a possible path that a user may or may not access. In transmedia fictions all of the paths are accessed, but not necessarily by the same person, rendering a contemporary nonlinear structure. The next chapter revisits an

even older poetic structure to illuminate its contemporary transmedia implementation: Aristotle's dramatic unities.

# Chapter 5: *Dramatic Unity, Verisimilitude and the Actual World in Transmedia Practice*

We shall set in motion the words-in-freedom that
smash the boundaries of literature as they march
towards painting, music, noise-art, and throw
a marvelous bridge between the word and the real object.
(Marinetti 2001 [1916], 13)


Everything expands, in all directions,
there is an interconnection between all of the arts,
literally between them all, and this is what it is about.
I mean, let's say that art and life really should be one,
and let's see what happens if we really make them one.
(Stan Vanderbeek [1966], cited in Export 2003)


In the previous chapter I discussed the importance of methodologically recognising modal complexity in transmedia phenomena, and I argued this position by drawing on narrative and game theories. I did this because these two modes have a rich and recent history of intellectual debate, because the game mode is distinct to narrative, and is an emerging primary mode that is utilised by many transmedia practitioners. There is another device that is also pivotal to understanding the transmedia phenomenon: mimesis. In this chapter I explore two areas of performance theory—dramatic unities and verisimilitude—to illuminate the nature of the practices occurring in many transmedia projects.

Although there are many (conflicting) definitions of mimesis ranging from Plato to Genette, the meaning I employ here is fundamentally that of imitation. Famously, designer and theorist Brenda Laurel concentrated on performance in her book *Computers as Theatre,* and described theatre based on Aristotle's definition: "the imitation of an action with a beginning, middle, and end, which is meant to be enacted in real time, as if the events were actually unfolding" (Laurel 1993, 94). For Laurel, "human-computer activities are more like plays than stories" (ibid.), and in this chapter I explain how some transmedia practices (not all) are more like plays than stories too.

To Laurel (after Aristotle), one of the key difference of drama is the difference between enactment and description: "meaning to act out rather than to read" (ibid.). Or in even more basic terms: the difference between telling and showing. Films, dance, theatre and games all involve showing (mimesis) and in some cases doing. While there are many aspects to mimetic arts, the key aspects I discuss in this chapter are dramatic unity and verisimilitude. The theory of dramatic unities is selected because it has been developed by theorists to explain a particular aesthetic approach. This aesthetic approach, marked in part by the attempt to marry both form and content (media and story for instance) and the parallel urge towards verisimilitude (being true to life), is evident in many transmedia practices.

I invoke the theory of dramatic unities, as introduced by Aristotle and developed by Italian scholarship, for two reasons. The first is to develop Walker Rettberg's argument that distributed narratives are akin to disunities. In the third chapter of this thesis I critically discussed Walker Rettberg's theory of distributed narratives. My objection to the theory (and Montola's pervasive gaming) was the framing of a phenomenon to a specific perceived norm. That is, both Walker Rettberg and Montola frame their respective phenomena according how contemporary phenomena can be understood as being distributed or expanded beyond the unity of a single dramatic event or magic circle. The theory of dramatic unity is helpful in many applications however. But rather than the theory being a rhetorical tool to explain how contemporary phenomenon is an example of "disunity," I utilise it to explain how aesthetics is operating in some contemporary phenomena. That is, transmedia (or distributed narratives) are not better understood as "disunities" but as a different implementation of "dramatic unities".

The second reason for invoking theories of dramatic unities in transmedia theory is to utilise the aesthetic insights the theories provide. To explain the underlying aesthetics of dramatic unities, I draw primarily on Italian literary theorist Joel Elias Spingarn's comprehensive analysis of the development of dramatic unities theories (Spingarn 1963 [1899], 57). Spingarn analyses the various theories and concludes that there are reoccurring principles that appear to influence or at least explain aesthetic choices. These

reoccurring principles include a concern with marrying form and content, the fiction world with its medium. By interrogating this relationship, the peculiar nature of transmedia practices can be further distinguished and understood. For instance, there are there concepts that are amenable to the transmedia medium? How do concepts and media affect each other in the transmedia context? Indeed, one aspect of the transmedia phenomena is the active utilisation of the actual world as a semiotic mode. On the one hand this can be understood as the employment of environments as a semiotic resource; but it has other implications in the transmedia context. When a fictional world is expressed across distinct media its boundaries, in Walker Rettberg's and Montola's language, distribute and expand beyond a single medium. Everything within a medium can be somewhat controlled, indeed constructed, by practitioners to communicate meaning. But when the fictional world continues across distinct media, in many cases both practitioners and experiencers (audience, players) do not consider the space between media as benign or out-of-world if you like. Instead, the space between media becomes a necessary part of the meaning-making process. In this chapter I discuss how the actual world is utilised in transmedia fictions.

Related to the enveloping of the actual world in a fiction is its role in verisimilitude. Many are aware of the rise of both transmedia and verisimilitude practices. But the parallel emergence has not been interrogated at length. Indeed, the parallel emergence of both transmedia and verisimilitude practices is no co-incidence. In this chapter I therefore explain why and how many transmedia practices have employed verisimilitude. But what do I mean by rise of verisimilitude practices? Verisimilitude is a term often invoked to describe practices that attempt to be true to life, to simulate real life, to be realistic in some way. In the last few years in particular, verisimilitude practices have been popularised in the transmedia form with alternate reality games (in particular), and pervasive and ubiquitous games in general. But as Hill observes in his dissertation on the topic, it arose also in contemporary arts:

> The premise for the research program is that over the past two decades there has been an increasing use of fiction and fragmented narrative within contemporary art practice. In a poetic sense, the questions asked by this hypothesis in the

preceding abstract could be summarised thus: "What happens when illusion slips out of the picture frame and fiction escapes from the pages of the novel?" This is almost immediately followed by a question of classification: "Should the resulting hybrid be classified as a "superfiction," and are there enough commonalities between artists working in this way to regard it as a new art movement?"

(Hill 2001, 12)

I discuss these verisimilitude practices by drawing on Walker Rettberg's use of the theory of dramatic unities. I argue that for many practitioners the actual world is designed to be a part of the fictional world due to aesthetic reasons. These aesthetic reasons can be understood in part by theories explaining dramatic unities. With this approach I am not claiming that all practitioners have pure aesthetic rationales to all their actions. Some transmedia practitioners utilise the actual world in a variety of ways in their design for various reasons. These reasons range from leveraging proven or popular approaches that others have implemented to wanting to produce hoaxes, deceive their audiences or players in some way. But by invoking the theory of dramatic unities I intend to draw together the parallel emergence of both transmedia and verisimilitude practices, proposing that the urge toward dramatic unity is a transhistorical and transartistic urge. As will be explained shortly, verisimilitude and the marrying of form and content are two key aspects to the notion of dramatic unity. The theory therefore explains, in part, the reason why verisimilitude has emerged in the manner it has in transmedia practices. A significant aspect of transmedia verisimilitude is the inclusion of the actual world in projects. The consideration of the actual world in the design of transmedia fictions is discussed in light of the aesthetic rationales of dramatic unities and, importantly, articulated through the cognitive narrative theory of "deixis".

## *The Aesthetics of Dramatic Unities*

I begin the discussion of the theories of dramatic unities by returning to Walker Rettberg. My aim with this approach is to utilise Walker Rettberg's juxtaposition of contemporary practices with the ancient theory, and explain the theory of dramatic unities by contrasting it with Walker Rettberg's interpretation. Walker Rettberg explains distributed narratives through Aristotle's dramatic unities (Walker 2004). That is, the distribution traits Walker Rettberg propose—distributed across time, space and/or authors—are

explained as the antithesis of dramatic unities, as disunities (ibid., 93). I argue transmedia fictions are not necessarily disunities at all, and in many cases actually uphold the aesthetic rationale of dramatic unities. The theory of dramatic unities explains the approach of many transmedia practitioners who attempt to create a relationship between the fictional world they conceive and its material expression. Indeed, Walker Rettberg's final proposition in her essay is quite appropriate: that "perhaps they [disunities] point to a new kind of unity: a unity where the time and space of the narrative are the same as the space and time of the reader" (ibid., 100).

Walker Rettberg's essay begins by explaining that distributed narratives "aren't self-contained," and "can't be experienced in a single session or in a single space" (ibid., 91). Walker Rettberg continues, explaining that a way of thinking about distributed narratives is through comparing them to unity. That is, by "thinking about the ways in which we've usually demanded that narratives and drama should have unity" and comparing this situation to distributed narratives (ibid., 92, original emphasis removed). The unity of drama, Walker Rettberg argues, is "the opposite of distribution" (ibid.). To explain, Walker Rettberg outlines Aristotle's dramatic unities as follows:

> 1. The Unity of Time: The action depicted in the play should take place during a single day.
> 2. The Unity of Space: The action depicted in the play should take place in a single location.
> 3. The Unity of Action: All action within the play was to be directed towards a single overarching idea.
>
> (ibid., 92–93)

These unities are then reframed as disunities when she explains how a distributed narrative can be understood as having the following qualities:

- *distribution in time*: when the "narrative cannot be experienced in one consecutive period of time"; examples are weblogs and email narratives, or the multiple media platform work *Online Caroline* (Bevan and Wright, 2000) that was delivered in episodes;
- d*istribution in space*: because there "is no single place in which all of the narrative can be experienced"; an example is the sticker novel

> *Implementation: A Novel* (Montfort and Rettberg, 2004), which was distributed across the world on poles and buildings, with photos posted on the photo-sharing website flickr, and readings of the paragraphs at events;
>
> - *distribution of authors*: where "[n]o single author or group of authors can have complete control of the form of the narrative"[24]; an example is when different narrators co-write a story across independent websites, or even when an algorithm gathers disparate elements together which people then project a narrative onto[25].
>
> <div align="right">(ibid., 93–94)</div>

What the keen eye may have observed is that Walker Rettberg's disunities refer to the expression of the drama, not the action of the drama. That is, the dramatic unities cited earlier explain how the *action depicted in the play* (the fictional world) should have unity, whereas Walker Rettberg refers to way the action is experienced. Walker Rettberg is aware of this, and explains that Aristotle's "unities are unities of content," while the narrative disunities she proposes are "mainly on the form of the narrative" (Walker 2004, 93). This split, however, is actually contrary to the logic of dramatic unities. Through exploring what dramatic unities are and why they were introduced, I will show how transmedia fictions sustain dramatic unity, and how this urge towards dramatic unity helps illuminate the aesthetics behind some contemporary transmedia practices.

Firstly, it is important to clarify that theories of dramatic unity are the result of neo-classical scholarship on, and not necessarily from, Aristotle's *Poetics* (Aristotle 1997 [c330B.C.])*.* Indeed, in his influential study of the development of the dramatic unities in Italian scholarship, Spingarn provides a compelling analysis of various theories. Spingarn argues that unity of action was "the only unity which Aristotle knew or insisted upon" (Spingarn 1963 [1899], 57). Aristotle argues that tragedy must have a "unity of plot" (Aristotle 1997 [c330B.C.], 16). What this unity of plot means is that not all "incidents in

---

[24] On the last unity/disunity: Walker Rettberg explains that unity of action is tricky and unclear. Instead, since her definition is about form rather than content, she invokes Foucault's argument that the notion of a distinct author, or group of authors, is a precondition of our idea of a whole work (Foucault 1988)' to "see what happens if we think about narratives in which authorship itself is distributed" (Walker 2004, 94).

[25] Walker Rettberg uses an example of tags on photos in the online photo-sharing website Flickr. Using these tags (keywords), people can look at many photos by different publishers and determine their own narrative from it. It is clear here, with this unplanned narrative, that Walker Rettberg's theory is not a theory of a practice, but a lens, a way of viewing how networked technologies have influenced how some create and experience works.

one man's life" should be included, for they "cannot be reduced to unity" (ibid.). He continues:

> As therefore, in the other imitative arts, the imitation is one when the object imitated is one, so the plot, being an imitation of an action, must imitate one action and that a whole, the structural union of the parts being such that, if any one of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed or disturned. For a thing whose presence or absence makes no visible difference, is not an organic part of the whole.
>
> (ibid.)

It is important, in other words, to only include those events, those actions, that are "necessary" and have a "probable connexion" (ibid.). It is from these arguments in passage viii, that unity of action has been determined; as Walker Rettberg explains: unity of action refers to the principle that "[a]ll action within the play [is] to be directed towards a single overarching idea" (Walker 2004, 93). Unity of time, on the other hand, was introduced by Cintio Giraldi in 1554 with his *Discorso sulle Comedie e sulle Tragedie* publication, where he "converted Aristotle's statement of an historical fact"— that "Tragedy endeavours, as far as possible, to confine itself to a single revolution of the sun" (Aristotle 1997 [c330B.C.], 9)—"into dramatic law' (Spingarn 1963 [1899], 57). There has been some debate as to whether a "single revolution of the sun" refers to an entire twenty-four period or twelve hours of daylight, but the principle is nevertheless clear: that Tragedy should represent a certain time period. Finally, it was Ludovico Castelvetro in his 1570 edition of *Poetics*, who introduced the theory of unity of place (ibid., 61). What is relevant to the argument here is *why* the theory of unity of place was introduced.

Spingarn explains that the theory of unity of place was motivated by scholars who argued drama must aim "at reproducing the actual conditions of life" (ibid., 57). It is verisimilitude (*verisimile*) that "must be the final criterion of dramatic composition" (ibid.). As Gilbert Highet further explains, scholarship on dramatic unities was "an attempt to strengthen and discipline the haphazard and amateurish methods of

contemporary dramatists—not simply in order to copy the ancients, but in order to make drama more intense, more realistic, and more truly dramatic" (Highet 1985, 143).

Spingarn traces this aesthetic agenda back to Vincenzo Maggi and Bartolomeo Lombardi's 1550 edition of *Poetics: In Aristotelis Librum de Poetica Explanationes,* in which they attempt "to explain logically the reason for unity of time" (Spingarn 1963 [1899], 58). For Maggi and Lombardi, Spingarn explains, the "duration of the action of the drama itself must fairly coincide with the duration of its representation on stage" (ibid., 59). A whole month of actions should not be represented (performed) in two or three hours. "This principle," Spingarn explains, "led to the acceptance of the unity of place": "Limit the time of the action to the time of representation, and it follows that the place of action must be limited to the place of representation" (ibid.). As Highet further explains, the "action of the play must seem probable," and it "will not seem probable if the scene is constantly being changed" (Highet 1985, 143).

From this discussion of the development of dramatic unities, it is clear that the notion is imbued with two interrelated concerns. The first is the urge towards verisimilitude, to make drama more "intense, more realistic, and more truly dramatic" (ibid.); the second is aligning the experience of drama (form) with what the drama represents (content). A drama is more intense, realistic and dramatic if the action, time and place correlate with the duration and place it is experienced.

In some ways, Walker Rettberg's initial rendering of distributed narratives as disunities is appropriate. Distributed narratives do not have the unity of being *experienced* at a single place and point in time, unlike the dramas these theories explain. But as we can garner from the previous discussion, dramatic unities were not just developed to explain the wholeness of the dramatic event. They were concerned with the relationship between the action of the drama (content) and the representation of the drama (form). The unity came from the relationship between the fictional world and its representation.

What I argue is these attempts to make "drama more intense, more realistic, and more truly dramatic" (ibid.) through the aesthetic criterion of dramatic unities, are actually concerns shared by many practitioners of transmedia fictions. Many contemporary transmedia practitioners are endeavouring to facilitate dramatic unity and verisimilitude by carefully considering the relationship between the fictional world and its representation in media. That is, the principles are still the same, but they must be adapted because the time and place are now, as Walker Rettberg and Montola explains, distributed or expanded. In the next section I discuss how a unity between "action" and "representation" is developed in the transmedia context. After that, the rest of this chapter will investigate a different kind of verisimilitude that has emerged in transmedia practices.

## *Action and Representation: Dramatic Unities in Transmedia Practices*

Unity of time and unity of place were developed as aesthetic principles that attempt to marry the duration and locations of the drama (the time-span and locations in the fictional world) with its representation (the duration of a play and its single location, the theatre). The notion of marrying action and representation is relevant to the discussion about the appropriateness of fictional world to its transmedia expression. That is, if the duration of a play and its single location in the theatre *limits* how many scenes and time-spans are represented, then it follows that a transmedia production *enlarges* the possibilities of what may be covered in the fictional world. Indeed, Jenkins notes that "storytelling has become the art of world building, as artists create compelling environments that cannot be fully explored or exhausted within a single work or even a single medium" (Jenkins 2006, 114).

Indeed, many current theories propose transmedia concepts are "the art of world-making" (ibid., 113). The notion of transmedia concepts has been discussed by Jenkins, Long (Long 2007) and Smith (Smith 2009) in the context of franchises (intercompositional transmedia projects). Their approach is to highlight a shift in storytelling that is marked by a so-called move in Hollywood from story pitches, to character pitches to "world"

pitches (ibid., 114). I propose that while there are many interpretations of what "world-making" is (the discussion about universe guides, transmodal concepts and the transmedia verisimilitude arguments in this chapter attest to some), essentially what Jenkins, Long and Smith refer to is what could be called dramatic possibilities. To illuminate the correlations and changes when one compares dramatic unities in theatre and transmedia, consider Table 4:

| Dramatic Unities | Representation (Media) / Fictional World (Content) | |
|---|---|---|
| **Unity of Action** | THEATRE<br><br>Limited events, with single overarching idea | TRANSMEDIA<br><br>Multiple events, with single overarching idea |
| **Unity of Time** | THEATRE<br>1-2 hours<br><br>Single day, chronological | TRANSMEDIA<br>10mins to years<br><br>Episodic, chronological, persistent |
| **Unity of Place** | THEATRE<br>Single stage<br><br>Limited locations | TRANSMEDIA<br>Multiple media<br><br>Multiple locations |

Table 4. Comparing Theatre and Transmedia Dramatic Unities

Starting from the bottom row, unity of place can be interpolated to the transmedia context as follows: in theatre there is one stage, and so only a small of amount of locations are represented; whereas in transmedia, there are multiple media (and environments), and so it is appropriate to have many locations represented. Unity of time in theatre marries the duration of a play with how much can be represented in that time. While the length of time represented in theatre is limited by the (usually) relatively short time of a performance, the length of time that can be represented in transmedia is potentially much longer. The duration of a transmedia experience ranges from relatively short events (a street game or two-screen experience with a television show) to the almost prohibitive duration of a franchise or any lengthy work (consider the length of time it takes to read a book, watch a film, play a game and so on). Transmedia projects are therefore often episodic rather than a single event. Oftentimes the urge towards the more dramatic and realistic involves representing stories chronologically in theatre. This also occurs in the

transmedia context, as explained in previous chapters (and will be discussed further in this chapter) when interactivity demands it. Finally, I've added persistence as a time feature in transmedia because (as will be explained further shortly), a project may run 24 hours a day.

Unity of action correlates with Jenkins, Long and Smith's writings on world building. Long explains that in transmedia storytelling, "special attention must be paid to developing a stage upon which multiple storylines (often in different media types) can unfurl" (Long 2007, 48, original brackets). Long continues, noting that while "a storyteller charged with creating a story […] may focus on one character, a different storyteller might focus on someone completely different, in a completely different era" (ibid., 50). As cited earlier, Smith explains that "by evoking the presence of a larger spatial structure in the narrative, a transmedia story can support a near infinite amount of plots and characters" (Smith 2009, 44), indeed, it needs to "support many questions and narratives across multiple media" (ibid., 46). In terms not unlike the rhetoric of dramatic unity, Smith also argues that practitioners should "look for discreet ways to validate narrative extensions, creating a more unified, coherent whole" (ibid., 64).

What this means in the context of transmedia concepts is that if a fictional world is intended to be expressed across multiple compositions, then it follows that the initial fictional world abstraction would need to facilitate not one story or game, but many. But this design issue is not specific to intercompositional transmedia phenomena (franchises for instance). Any project that involves multiple episodes may consider this approach. Alternate reality games are an example, as they are intracompositional transmedia phenomena which are usually expressed over episodes or missions (serially) rather than just one event. Lessons learned from seriality practices are therefore highly applicable here. For instance, fictions that have an ensemble of characters facilitate a variety storylines (and potentially, as discussed previously, a raft of player-characters): for each character has its own personal arcs, and each character will most likely engage in a variety of relationships and introduce a variety of characters from their own lives.

On the latter, the setting also has a role. Some settings are more amenable to having sub-characters involved, an influx of new characters and an influx of new problems. For instance, the setting of the television series *Cheers* (NBC, 1982-1993) is a bar. A bar always has new patrons, ongoing barflies and the potential for outside influences. Even on a smaller scale these principles apply. The episodic alternate reality experience *Must Love Robots* (Awkward Hug, 2009) (which is expressed across multiple websites, live events, and diegetic merchandise), is set mainly in a flat, with two characters: Chuck, and his robot friend, 011iver. But the fictional world is constructed around the problem of finding love for his robot friend, and so they have a dramatic rationale for new characters to enter, for player-characters (to help O11iver find love and even be a potential date), events at home (for parties and dates) and new locations (for rendezvous, and even speed-dating events at conferences, like the one they did at the 2009 *ARGFest* in Oregon). But a setting can of course be much broader, encompassing an entire city, country, planet, universe and even different time periods. If the fictional world abstraction includes travel, then even more dramatic possibilities are facilitated from the new locations, characters and events that may be encountered. Think of the infinite possibilities afforded by the premise of the time-travelling *Dr Who.*

Indeed, if a fictional world is to be expressed over time and across mediums, then, following the logic of making the action of the drama appropriate to its representation, the fictional world needs to facilitate dramatic possibilities. These considerations begin at the concept stage. But it would be inaccurate to relegate all transmedia practices to this kind of expansion. A continuous unfolding may occur in a vertical manner, what Ruppel calls "vertically cross-sited narratives": where the "narrative is reinforced but not compounded" (Ruppel 2005a). Ruppel cites projects such as Danielewski's *House of Leaves,* in which there are, among other elements, multiple versions of the book published (with slight differences in the presentation, for instance, font colour changes). Ruppel continues, explaining that vertical cross-sited narratives "are encoded with an awareness of the other media invoked by the narrative (not a metatext, but a metanetwork)," and explains that these works use "remediation as a strategy for organizing narrative, not as a process of media 'becoming'" (ibid.). I argue what Ruppel

is observing is essentially adaptation; but as discussed in chapter three, a different kind of adaptation.

The projects discussed in chapter three, Darren Aronosfky's *The Fountain* and Richard James Allen's *Thursday's Fictions* are examples of how story, imagery and themes correlate with their transmedia expression. Both explore the notion of reincarnation, in many forms. Hill's practice has an affinity with this approach too, specifically with his notion of "additive" projects:

> At its most basic it means that one project grows out of the former project and will contribute to the next project, like a snake continually shedding its skin but retaining and refining its patterning. In my own case it means that some elements in my work—"The Hermann Nitsch Shower Curtain" is a good example, or my fictive group Film Pilgrims—grow from project to project, are recycled and reinvented, and importantly the narrative history of the piece is changed—even from one lecture to another, since "inconsistencies" are also an important element in my fictions. Such "additive" projects are not uncommon in recent contemporary art practice—Seymour Likely group in the Netherlands is a good example as is IRWIN group in Slovenia, Patrick Pound a New Zealand artist based in Melbourne, and Rodney Glick in Australia. […] But one of the most interesting and longest running is the work of the Canadian art collective (or group) *General Idea* [1969-1994].
>
> (Hill 2001, 83)

While there are elements of Hill's "additive" that do correlate more with expansion rather than adaptation practices, the aesthetic impulse towards adaptation, towards a vertical exploration across forms, is nevertheless applicable here too. A unity of action, where events and ideas are empathetic to their representation, can occur in what Ruppel would call a "horizontal" (expansion) and "vertical" (adaptation) manner. But, since some transmedia projects are single events (a networked performance or street game for example), these are not concerns for all transmedia practitioners. There can be a unity that occurs intra- and inter-compositionally. This is important to note, because for some dramatic unity (indeed drama in general) is characterised by a lack of episodic structure. Laurel, for instance, explains that "[d]ramas typically represent as strong central action with separate incidents that are causally linked to that action" whereas "[n]arrative tends to be more episodic" (Laurel 1993, 95). Not all transmedia projects are episodic though,

and so it is important to decouple episodics and expansion from transmedia therefore. An intracompositional project may involve multiple distinct articulations but not be episodic. Two-screen entertainment (watching a television show with a laptop), or reading a book with the Internet are two examples of single compositions, single events, but transmedia forms.

Irrespective of the implementation, the aligning of the fictional world (content) and its expression (form) is a transartistic aesthetic that can be observed in transmedia practice. Dramatic unities, if understood in this light, are therefore transartistic principles that manifest throughout time in different practices. This understanding rejects the notion that dramatic unity can only be achieved in the theatre. The transmedia implementation of these principles develops the concept further though. Indeed, the aligning of the fictional world and its expression has also emerged in the effort to include the actual world in the fictional world. I do not mean the concepts are set within the actual world necessarily (meaning they only refer to real events). Instead, the actual world of the audience or players are encompassed within the fictional world.

## *Recentering a Fictional Universe with the Actual World*

[P]erhaps they [disunities] point to a new kind of unity:
a unity where the time and space of the narrative
are the same as the space and time of the reader.
(Walker 2004, 100)

The desire to integrate the actual world into a fictional world is a concern of many transmedia practitioners. Transmedia practice does by definition encompass a variety of distinct media and environments. This repositioning of a fictional world across distinct media and environments has prompted many practitioners to explore a new implementation of dramatic unity, where the forms chosen have a probable connection to the fictional world. If a story doesn't end at the end of the pages of a book and instead continues in another medium, then why is that new medium used? That is, just as practitioners endeavour to create diegetic rationales for plot directions, mechanics, costumes, props, gestures and settings, some transmedia practitioners endeavour to create diegetic rationales for the distinct media and environments. This has resulted in

practitioners endeavouring to make the actual world part of the fictional world and represents a different iteration of verisimilitude, where the paradigm shifts slightly but significantly from *true to life* to what could be described as *true in life*. This has recently become prevalent with the rise of pervasive and ubiquitous games, as Montola explains:

> Pervasive games inhabit a game world that is present within the ordinary world, taking the magic circle wherever they go. Unlike nonpervasive games, which seek to be isolated from their surroundings, pervasive games embrace their environments and contexts.
>
> (Montola et al. 2009, 12)

However, Montola also argues this trait of pervasive games is marked by uncertainty: "All games combining physical spaces and cyberspaces are not pervasive, only those that take the game into unpredictable, uncertain and undedicated areas" (Montola et al. 2009, 14). While the actual world could be considered an undedicated area (in that it is not a cinema, or theatre space or any space that is conventionally regarded as a space where "fiction" happens), it is important to note that the invocation of the actual world is not automatically synonymous with uncertainty. Therefore, according to the definition of pervasive games that Montola offers, the greater area of transmedia practices has a shared concern with pervasive games because of the employment of the actual world; but they are not always pervasive games because they are not always designed to promote uncertainty or ambiguity. These other transmedia practices are perhaps more applicable to McGonigal's notion of ubiquitous games then:

> "Ubiquitous" says nothing of boundaries; the concept of borders is less relevant when whatever is ubiquitous has located itself successfully in every possible space. "Pervasive," on the other hand, very much recognizes boundaries. It associates itself with their active dissolution or rupture.
>
> (McGonigal 2006, 48)

Nevertheless, both Montola and McGonigal (and many others) are concerned with works that encompass the actual world in some way. The employment of the actual world in a transmedia project is not limited, however, to the semiotic activation of environments. One does not have to run a live event or street game in order for the actual world to be a

part of a transmedia project. Parks, streets, shops, offices, homes, forests, computers, the Internet, books, food, clothing and so on are all part of the actual world. How the actual world is designed to be part of a fictional world varies greatly. But its "presence" in fictional worlds points to a different kind of verisimilitude. The rest of this chapter will interrogate how this different kind of verisimilitude is facilitated through a recentering of the fictional world with the actual world, as discussed through "deictic shift theory".

## Understanding Recentering through Deixis

Deixis is "a psycholinguistic term for those aspects of meaning associated with self-world orientation" (Galbraith 1995, 21). But it was psychologist and semiotician Carl Bühler that developed the notion in relation to narrative, and refined the definition to include three orientational axes: *here*, *now* and *I* (Bühler 1982). Fundamentally, these notations help orientate the reader with the place, time and person that is speaking in the fictional world. It is based on the assumption that "[r]eaders and writers of narratives sometimes imagine themselves to be in a world that is not literally present" (Segal 1995b, 14). "They interpret narrative text as if they were experiencing it from a position within the world of the narrative" (ibid.). As discussed in chapter one and three of this thesis, this world is commonly described as a storyworld: a world an interpreter imagines as triggered by the text (any signs).

Cognitive scientist Erwin M. Segal argues that "two worlds [are] relevant to the experience of narrative: the reader's world and the story world" (Segal 1995a, 73). "In fictional narrative," he continues, "these two worlds are deictically independent of each other" (ibid., 73). The "deictic center" refers to the center of the "story world" (a fictional world), "a center in space, time and character from which events are depicted" (Zubin and Hewitt 1995, 131). A "deictic shift" refers to the recentering that occurs when an interpreter relocates conceptually to the space and time coordinates of the fictional world, or as Ryan describes it, to an "alternative possible world" (Ryan 1991).

> Because the real world and fictional story worlds are deictically independent of each other, a reader cannot move from one world to the other. The magic of

> fiction is that a person, in the blink of an eye, can shift from being cognitively in one world to being cognitively in another. We do not doubt that readers can shift their deictic center to a spacetime location within the story world. It is a cognitive move that is analogous to everyday phenomenal experiences such as dreaming, daydreaming, and playing games with imaginary objects and people. [...] We just need to identify some of the cues that guide this move.
>
> (Segal 1995a, 73)

As Herman explains, a deictic shift involves a storyteller prompting "his or her interlocutors to relocate from the here and now of the current interaction to the alternative space-time coordinates of the storyworld" (Herman 2002, 271). That prompting, those cues, includes all of those signs that facilitate a "conceptual leap" from "the real world to a story world," a deictic shift (Segal 1995a, 73). It is a physical impossibility to move from the "real world" to a "story world" and we do so conceptually, as directed by cues. A successful deictic shift facilitates the "illusion of experiencing the fictional world directly, because we unconsciously adopt the deixis of the DC [deictic center] as our own" (Zubin and Hewitt 1995, 131).

What I argue is through a series of cues, practitioners also engineer an overlap between the deictic center of the fictional world and our own. The crucial difference is that rather than "relocating" in our minds to an imaginative place, the actual world becomes the imaginative place. The recentering does not just involve a conceptual movement to the deictic centre, but involves an aligning of the deictic centre with the actual world, the reader/audience/player's actual world.

How does this process happen? In what follows I explain six factors that assist the process of recentering the actual world with a fictional world. The first involves designing *fictional world abstractions* (concepts) that encompass the actual world in some way. The second, which is pivotal to all recentering processes, involves a high accessibility between the fictional and actual world through *property resemblance*. Property resemblance is discussed in relation to digital and distinct media, and environments. Closely linked with property resemblance is *paratextuality*, and how cues such as authorship and titles render tangible objects artifacts from a fictional world. *Hypertextuality* is another technique that cues an interpreter to regard tangible objects in

the actual world as part of a fictional world. *Metatextuality* or *commentary* plays a role in this process too, when actual world publicity and the like help frame media and environments as being part of the fictional world. Finally, *catalytic allusions* are one rhetorical technique that facilitates diegetic activity, and therefore cues an interpreter to view their actual activities not as mechanically incidental, but fantastically significant; thus reinforcing the recentering or aligning of actual and fictional world action.

## Recentering with Fictional World Abstraction (Concepts)

In the previous chapter I discussed the notion of transmedia concepts from a transmodal perspective, explaining how fictions that are designed from the beginning to be expressed with narrative and game modes requires a different kind of initial fictional world abstraction. Earlier in this chapter I added to the notion of transmedia-specific fictional world abstractions, with a discussion of marrying dramatic action and representation. This section explains how fictional world abstractions are conceived to encompass the actual world in some way, therefore facilitating an aligning of the deictic center of a fictional world with the actual world. To explain, I'll transpose the previous aesthetic criterion of time ("duration of the action of the drama itself must fairly coincide with the duration of its representation on stage" (Spingarn 1963 [1899], 59)) to the transmedia context: *the duration of the action of the drama itself must fairly coincide with the duration of its representation across media*. Alternate reality games are often described as occurring in "real time," in that they usually can only be played once (like the actual world), and there is a correlation between the duration of time in the fictional world and the actual world. McGonigal explains this point with the example of *The Beast*:

> The Beast also engaged the players' sense of "real time" to ensure that the game fiction unfolded in perfect synchronization with the players' everyday lives. The game's internal plots adhered strictly to an external clock and calendar so that plot developments corresponded precisely with the passage of time in the players' lives. The puppetmasters used a variety of temporal clues, including the header content of faxes and emails from game characters and the datelines of articles posted to in-game news sites, to indicate that midnight in the real world was midnight in the game, Tuesday in the real world was a Tuesday in the game; and April 13 (2001) was April 13 (2142) in the game. This temporal synching, another

> innovation of the ARG, ensured that experiences inside the ludic frame had the same phenomenal rhythm and flow of everyday life.
>
> (McGonigal 2006, 297)

Here, dramatic unity is achieved by marrying the duration of time in the fictional world with the duration of time of the experience of it. Therefore, in many alternate reality games and the like, time is represented faithfully in ways that correspond with the passing of time in the actual world. Unlike the duration of a play, therefore, ARGs can run for days, weeks, months and sometimes years, as was the case with *Perplex City*. Deictic shift theory in narrative studies would observe how time operates in the actual and fictional world. If time operates in the same way in both, it is easier for an interpreter to "relocate" themselves to the deictic center of the imagined universe. What I am arguing here is that the correspondence between the durational experience of the fictional world and the actual world of the player, facilitates a deictic shift in which the actual world is encompassed in the fictional world. The deictic center is "located" in the actual world.

Another aspect to the matching of time in the fiction and actual world is its role in facilitating agency. As I explained in the previous chapter, real time or chronological events are almost always a trope of games or interactive forms, as players are more likely to act if the event is actually 'happening' live (like life). From this, one could surmise an overlap between the urge for realistic intensity in drama and the game mode. Time in some transmedia fictions operates, as stated in the earlier section of this thesis, chronologically and is often persistent in that the fictional world runs for 24 hours. This helps position the interpreter or player within the fictional world.

The aligning of the time in the fictional and actual world does not mean the fiction is set entirely in the actual world though. Not all of the fictional worlds are entirely about present-day Earth. Instead, what many practitioners do is orchestrate a diegetic link between the actual world and the setting and time of the imagined world. For instance, *I Love Bees* is set in the *Halo* universe, a fantastical universe that has been expressed predominately with console games (and some books and graphic novels). For *I Love*

*Bees,* the designers created a rationale for the actual world of the player (Earth, present time) to be a *part of* the Halo universe, as players explained:

> A military spacecraft named the Apocalypso from the Halo universe has crashed and somehow its controlling AI has ended up on Earth. The AI controlling the craft, named Melissa (informally known as The Operator by her crew) is being repaired by an autonomous AI task which it calls a Spider. It doesn't find the experience very pleasant. The Operator was very badly damaged and spent a while in delirium, not knowing where it is. In the initial stage, The Operator apparently managed to transfer itself to a computer in the Bay Area. It then took over a beekeeping website, ilovebees.com. The owner of the website is Margaret Efendi, although it seems that the maintainer of the website now is Margaret's niece, Dana Awbrey. The Operator is trying to signal to any survivors from the crew on the planet, but it's worried that its enemies will find it.
>
> (Fireflies 2004)

The crashing on Earth and the appropriation of a supposed everyday website, ilovebees.com, facilitated a diegetic rationale for the inclusion of actual world of the players and (at the beginning of the game) how the characters in the imagined world and the players can communicate. The fantastical universe of *Halo* still persists, it is not accessible in the actual world, but now there is a part of its universe that envelops present-time Earth. This perhaps means there are two deictic centers: one for the fantastical *Halo,* and one for the *Halo* that overlaps with the actual world, an "alternate reality".

Indeed, it is worth briefly noting here the appropriateness of the term alternate reality game. It was coined by player and community leader Sean Stacey, during the 2002 independent game *Lockjaw* (Stacey 2006b). As McGonigal explains, such projects "required developing a kind of stereoscopic vision, one that simultaneously perceived the everyday reality and the game structure in order to generate a single, but layered and dynamic world view" (McGonigal 2003, 112). I transpose these sentiments here in the context of deixis, proposing that the actual and fictional worlds overlap to some degree, creating an alternate reality. These discussions are mere interpretations though, and "game" is not, as I have argued, an accurate description of a project that involves high degrees of both narrative and game modes. But the popularity of the term in describing

almost any kind of project that in some way exhibits these traits (or not) points to the frequency of and attraction to the device.

Likewise, *Perplex City* is set sometime in an alternate universe. The inhabitants of Perplex City are advanced humans who live on another planet and love puzzles, but a beloved cube was stolen and hidden on planet Earth. This fictional world facilitates the inclusion of the actual world and therefore the players within the fictional world. The inhabitants of Perplex City engage the assistance of Earthlings to find the cube, issuing a reward of 200,000 pounds to the Earth player who finds the cube. The characters issue clues (ideas they have about the location of the cube for instance) to players through puzzles. These puzzles take many forms, including puzzle cards, live events and a board game. The puzzles are diegetic through the conceit of Perplex City being a puzzle-obsessed culture, as designer Adrian Hon explains:

> What Perplex City values most is intelligence and the creation and solving of puzzles. [...] [W]e did this for two reasons. One is [...] (this is kind of a higher goal of Perplex City), we wanted to make being smart cool and we wanted to make puzzles cool. [...] [A]nother reason why we did it is because we wanted an excuse to put a lot of puzzles in the game and it doesn't make a lot of sense for a lot of stories to have a lot of puzzles, but if you've got a world that is obsessed with puzzles [...] you can put them in anywhere.
>
> (Hon 2007)

These techniques to include the actual world are not specific to alternate reality games though. The 1999 cross-over cited earlier between the *Homicide: Life on the Street* television series and the *Homicide: The Second Shift* web series involved a story about web-cast murders. Not only were there web-cast killings (see Figure 74), but suspects had websites, and so too did one of the detectives in the television series. The inclusion of web-cast murders provided a diegetic link between the imagined world of the story and the actual world of the audience. Therefore, just as the detectives used the web to investigate the case (see Figure 75), the audience used the web to explore the fictional world and investigate the case. As explained in the previous chapter, these techniques all relate to the notion of transmodal concepts, in that a fictional world abstraction is designed to facilitate not only telling, but also playing. But importantly here, facilitate an

overlap between the deictic center of the fictional world and the actual world of the audience.
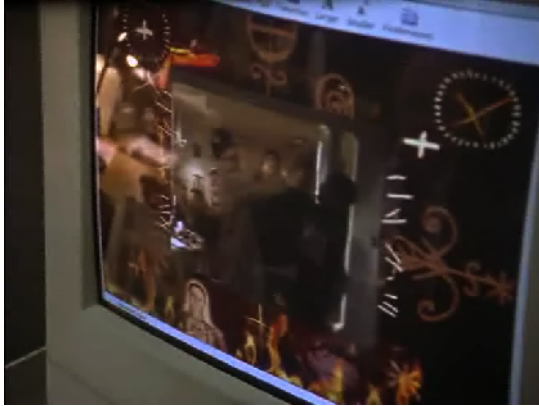


Figure 74. Screenshot of website featured in television episode Homicide.com and online for The Second Shift, *Homicide: Life on the Street* (NBC, 1999)



Figure 75. Screenshot of detectives in the television episode Homicide.com, *Homicide: Life on the Street* (NBC, 1999)

What many transmedia practitioners develop is a diegetic rationale for use of media (and oftentimes environments), which provides a probable connection between the imagined world and the actual world. This process usually begins with the concept, answering questions such as: How will the actual world be linked to a fantastical world? How does the actual world exist in the fictional world? Once a diegetic rationale—a connection between the two—is made, then player actions in the actual world can directly impact the fictional world.

Characters can also be conceived in ways that take account of the media that will be employed, and the time and space (actual world) of the player or audience. For instance, the ARG for NBC's *Heroes* television show, *Heroes Evolutions/360 Experience*, has a diegetic listserv. The listserv is a mailing list for the fictional company website for *Primatech Paper* ("www.primatechpaper.com"). A visitor to the site can apply for a position in the company on the jobs page. Once a player enters their details (including email and mobile/cell phone number) they are assured of immanent contact (see Figure 76). Not long afterwards, a player receives an email informing them their application is under consideration (see Figure 77). Within 10 hours, another email is sent. But this

email is from an intruder using the email list. As you can see in the email in Figure 78, someone is offering a secret passage to the intranet of *Primatech Paper.*



Figure 76. Screenshot of job application entry completion, *Heroes 360 Experience*
(NBC, 2007)
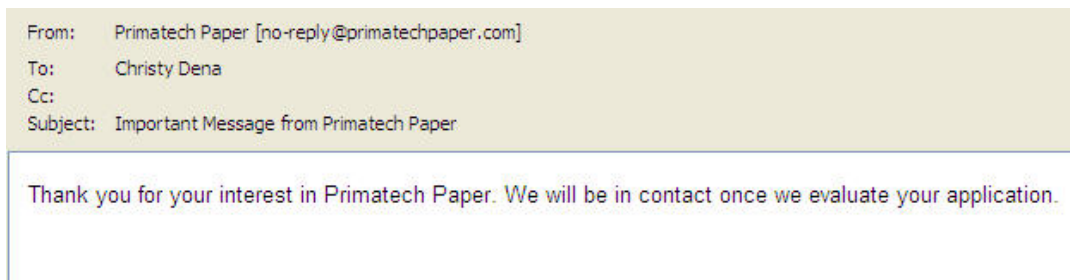Screenshot of: (Primatech Paper (NBC) 2007)



Figure 77. Figure 82. Screenshot of email received on 30th Jan 2007, *Heroes 360 Experience*
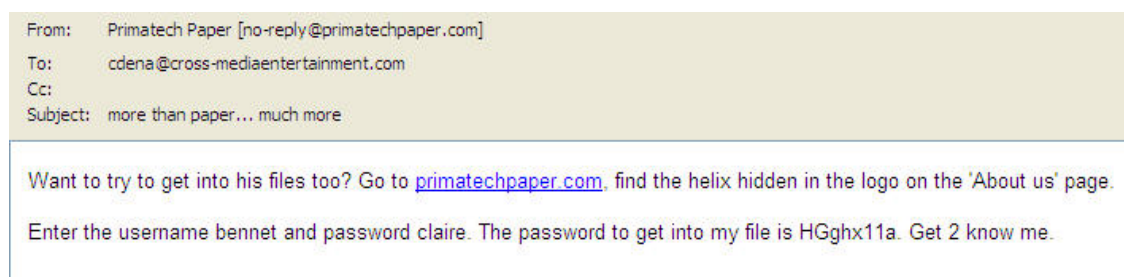(NBC, 2007)



Figure 78. Screenshot of email received on 30th Jan 2007, *Heroes 360 Experience*
(NBC, 2007)

Following the prompts in the email, a player discovers that the listserv intruder is Hana Gitelman, a human whose special ability is the power to "intercept, generate and interpret electronic wireless transmissions," such as email (see Figure 79). The character Hana Gitelman guides the players through the entire *Heroes 360 Experience* (and also features in the online graphic novels and television episodes). The character was constructed with the special ability of being a transmissions interceptor and provided a diegetic rationale for the use of networked media and, importantly, communication with players. The character, what media she uses, what she is able to do and what she does all relate to the present-time of and media employed by the players.
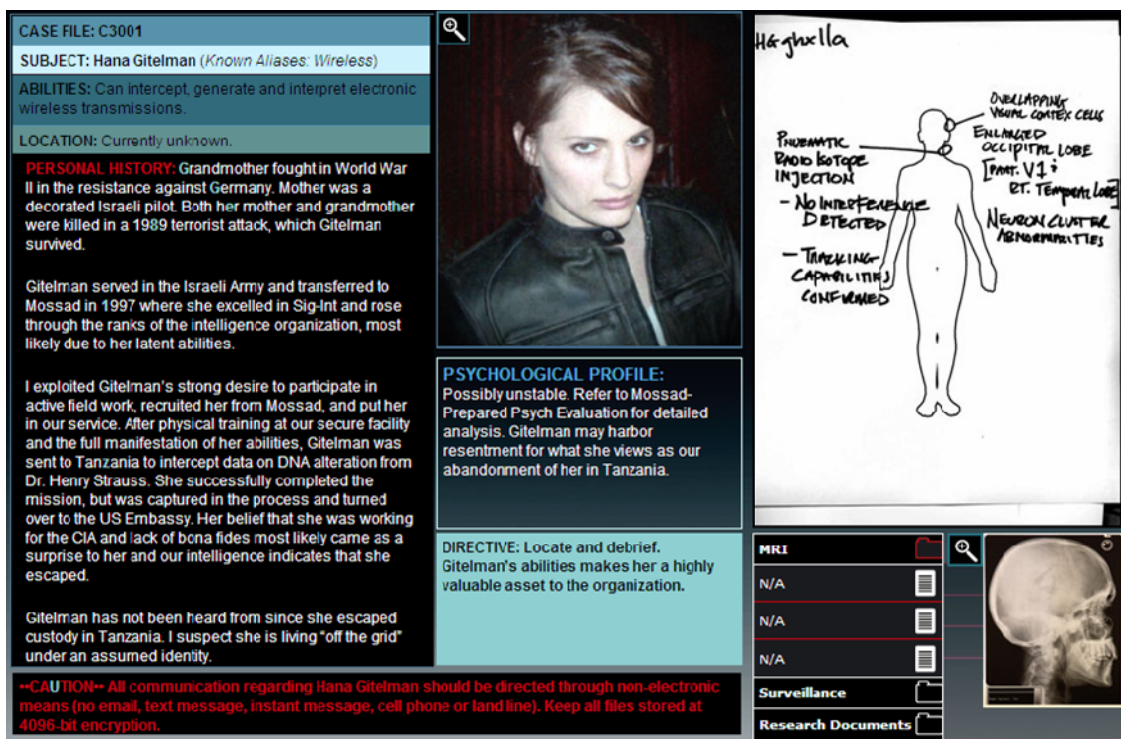


Figure 79. Screenshot of part of Hana Gitelman's file, a character from *Heroes 360 Experience*
(NBC, 2007)
Screenshot of: (Primatech Paper (NBC) 2007)

Indeed, there are many projects over the past decade or so that have been constructed specifically to create a reason for the use of multiple media and align with the actual world. The process of aligning a fictional world with the actual world, encompassing the actual world in the fictional world, begins with the concept. A fictional world abstraction can do this in a number of ways, including the choice of characters, setting it in the actual

world entirely or creating a diegetic link. The next recentering technique continues the discussion about the choices of expressive media and how they are used to encompass the actual world in the fictional world.

## Recentering with Media and Environments: Property Resemblance

In my chapter three discussion about world or universe continuity, I referred to Ryan's notion of inter- and intra-universe relations (Ryan 1991, 32–33, 44–45). The theory of inter-universe relations was introduced by Ryan to challenge the prevailing idea that "fictional texts represent possible worlds [and] nonfictional ones represent the real world," by proposing "a more sophisticated application of the theory of possible worlds to the definition of fictionality" (Ryan 1991, 5). Inter-universe relations were proposed by Ryan to explain the resemblances between the actual world and the world projected by a fiction text, resemblances which in turn influence its accessibility. That is, how similar is the fictional world to the actual world? If similar, then the fictional world is more accessible to audiences. While I utilised Ryan's theory then to describe intra-universe relations (between compositions within the same fictional world), I invoke it here in the Ryan's original sense: as relations between a textual and actual world. Indeed, Segal refers to the notion of accessibility according to the degree of resemblance there is between the actual and fictional worlds:

> Verisimilitude refers to the suggestion that the objects in the story world have properties there that similar objects would have in the outside world experienced by the author and reader. To the extent that a story world has verisimilitude, temporal and spatial relations are the same as one would be likely to find in the real world.
>
> (Segal 1995a, 71)

While Ryan and Segal explain this phenomenon with the assumption that the fictional world is never actualised—it is an independent and only conceptually interpreted (and constructed) environment—I invoke property resemblance to explain how the fictional world is actualised in the actual world of the player or audience. Ryan's theory of property resemblance as an accessibility relation helps explain how practitioners employ

media and environments to facilitate accessibility between the actual world and an imagined world; indeed, render the actual world part of the fictional world.

As cited in the previous chapter, Ryan introduces a list of accessibility relations that indicate "the degree of resemblance between the textual system and our own system of reality" (Ryan 1991, 32). Examples include the *identity of properties* (do objects in the text have the same properties they do in the actual world?); *identity of inventory* (are they furnished by the same objects?); *physical compatibility* (do they share natural laws?); *taxonomic compatibility* (do they contain the same species?); and *linguistic compatibility* (can the way things are described be understood in both worlds?) (Ryan 1991, 32–33). Through these accessibility relations, Ryan illustrates how there are many times in which so-called fictional and non-fictional works can both represent the real world to varying degrees.

In order for media and environments in the actual world to exist in the fictional, they need to have the same properties. As I explained in the previous section on concepts, this does not mean a fictional world abstraction is always set entirely within the present actual world. In some cases this is true, and in other cases practitioners create a link between the actual world and the fantastical environment they imagine. In this section I describe how practitioners utilise property resemblance to create such a bridge, to encompass the actual world in the fictional world.

### Diegetic Artifacts

In their attempt to make a project more intense, realistic and accessible, practitioners often select media that is actually used by characters. Communication in the actual world is often represented through artifacts people produce in media, and so, the thinking goes, a fictional world needs to be represented through similar media. People communicate through online social networks, go to work at businesses that have corporate websites, talk with friends and colleagues on the phone and through social networks. Therefore, fictional worlds in transmedia fictions are often expressed through such everyday or 'life' media. That is, the fictional world is constructed almost completely by the artifacts the inhabitants of that world produce.

For instance, the fictional world of *The Beast* was set in the world of the feature film *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence*. If you recall from a discussion earlier, *The Beast* is set in 2142 AD, but what the designers did is create artifacts from that time. As designer Sean Stewart explained: "We created all of the media evidence that would exist if Spielberg's story really happened, and then we broke it into thousands of tiny pieces and buried them among the 70 billion pieces of online content that had nothing to do with *A.I.*" (Sean Stewart, cited in McGonigal 2006, 269). Those artifacts were created not with a painting, theatre production, feature film or console game, but with

> 2994 separate, widely flung pieces of interactive content, including: thirty-one distinct web sites; eighteen emails received by players at their personal email addresses; fourteen voice mail greetings and messages intercepted by players accessed by calling five separate working phone numbers; five phone calls received by players on their personal phone numbers; four live-action QuickTime videos; three faxes received by players on their personal fax machines; twelve messages and codes embedded in newspaper, television, billboard advertisements; and so on.
>
> (McGonigal 2006, 293)

More recently, the same design team worked on the alternate reality game for Trent Reznor's *Year Zero*, in which the possible alternate future in 2022 was likewise accessed through the artifacts of that time. But irrespective of the time period or fantastical nature of the fictional world, property resemblance is facilitated by creating artifacts with media that currently exist in the actual world of the player. Characters, therefore, use the same social networks as actual people do: they have Facebook, MySpace, Bebo profiles, and Twitter accounts that enable you to chat with them; company websites just like actual people do; online newspapers; and emails addresses you can message.

These social network profiles, websites, and emails operate to set the actual world within the fictional world. They not only provide a diegetic link between an imagined and actual world, but they also enable interaction to take place because they are often not benign artifacts, but actual interaction devices through which participants can converse with characters, interact with the fictional world. Indeed, an important aspect of the use of

everyday media is that it retains its actual world affordances. As McGonigal explains in the context of *The Beast:*

> Everything players did in the fiction of the game, they did for real in the virtualized environment of everyday life. If they hacked into a coroners' website in the game fiction, they hacked into a fictive coroners' website for real. If they received a phone call from an angry sentient machine in the game fiction, their real, everyday phone rang and they actually took the call. The computer-driven alternate reality the Beast created was make-believe, but every aspect of the player's experience was, phenomenologically speaking, real.
>
> (McGonigal 2006, 297)

This relationship between the use of such life media and its role in aligning the actual and fictional worlds is perhaps best understood through what game researchers Craig Lindley and Charlotte Sennersten describe as "interaction mechanics" and "interaction semantics" (Lindley and Sennersten 2006). Akin to a signifier and signified relationship, interaction mechanics refer to the "basic motor operations required to operate (for example) a keyboard and mouse in a largely unconscious way," and interaction semantics refer to the "associative mappings" from the keyboard operations (or any controller) to in-game and meta-game actions (Lindley and Sennersten 2006, 47). For instance, if a player presses up and down keys on their keyboard or controller, this could make their avatar jump in up and down obstacles in a game. In the case of *The Beast* and other transmedia projects that utilize everyday media in this manner, there are no associative mappings needed. The operation of a keyboard, letterbox and fax machine is not associated with an imagined fantastical correlation in the fictional world. Both the characters and the players use the same device in the same way. Therefore, the use of actual world media operates to align the actual world with the fictional world. The deictic center of the fictional world is in the actual world. A further development of this concept is the use of *tangible diegetic media*. While property resemblance is still a key trait in the aligning process, the tangibility of the media represents a subtle but semiotically significant difference.

## Tangible Diegetic Media

Many media and television theorists (Askwith 2007, 65–70; Gray 2008, 80; Smith 2009, 60–61) have recognised the rise of "diegetic artifacts" in transmedia practices. While some theorists include almost all websites and representations of objects (remediated letters and phones on a website for example) that are set within the fictional world as diegetic artifacts, I refer here specifically to tangible objects, distinct media. There are two ways tangible diegetic media recenters the actual world in the fictional world. One way is for practitioners to appropriate actual world media to be a part of the fictional world. For instance, the pay phones in *I Love Bees* are existing tangible media that the fictional characters (played by performers) use to communicate with actual world players. Both McGonigal and Montola, among others, discuss a variety of ways tangible media are *appropriated* in pervasive and ubiquitous games. Another way is to construct the tangible media to appear as if it began in the imagined world, not the actual world.

These exported tangible diegetic artifacts have the same resemblance of media, the actual objects, in the actual world and in the fiction. This accessibility means that what characters use in the fictional world can also be used by people in the actual world. That is, the resemblance moves beyond a representation in the fiction, to being an actual object, a media that is actualised. For instance, the *Welcome to Twin Peaks* tourist guide from the television series *Twin Peaks* exists in the actual world as it would in the fictional world. Likewise, a comic can exist in a fictional world and the actual world, like *$9^{th}$ Wonders* (see Figure 80). It was used by characters in *Heroes* television series as well as given to fans at Comic-Con. A piece of clothing also has the same properties in the fictional and actual world, and is observable in the scarf Harry Potter wears in the books and feature films, which is also available for sale as merchandise. Food has the same properties as well, such as the KrustyO's cereal Bart and Lisa Simpson eat in *The Simpsons*, which was also for sale during the feature film promotion (see Figures 81–82).

Figure 80. Screen captures of character Hiro reading '9th Wonders' comic in *Heroes*
Image source: (Melesse 2008)



Figure 81. Picture of cel from an episode featuring KrustyOs, *The Simpsons*
Image source: (toon-city 2009)



Figure 82. Picture of KrustyO's at a 7-11 store, *The Simpsons*
Image source: (sweatypants 2007)

Here, the artifacts have the same properties as actual world artifacts and so works to make the fictional world accessible in the actual world. They are not objects from the actual world depicted in a fictional world, they are objects from a fictional world, available in the actual world. This process of aligning does not just happen through property resemblance, it is also made possible with paratextual cues, and is strengthened with hypertextuality and commentary—all devices that will be discussed shortly.

But first it is worth exploring for a moment the function of these media. Askwith argues that diegetic artifacts are "designed to give viewers the sensation of 'direct interaction' with the show's narrative world and/or characters" (Askwith 2007, 65). This is another way to describe part of the process of aligning the deictic center of the fictional world with the actual world. But it also means that the diegetic media do not necessarily need to have any other role other than verisimilitude. This phenomenon has been recognised before. In 1968, Barthes introduced the notion of the "reality effect" (*effet de réel*) to explain the inclusion of descriptions in novels which "seem to have no logical, narratological or aesthetic necessity" (Bensmaia 2005). Barthes found that in texts like Flaubert's 'A Simple Heart,' there were references to details like a "barometer" that seemed to have no function in the narrative, and so was not recognised in structural analysis (Barthes 1986 [1968]). This anomaly led Barthes to ask: "Is everything in narrative significant?" and if not, then what is "the significance of this insignificance?" (ibid., 143).

Barthes turned to the use of realism in historical narratives and found the use of realism usually justified speaking. It is a narrative about history and so refers to the real in order to justify its existence. But this still didn't explain the use of realism in the kinds of texts Barthes was looking at. There seemed to be no function other than just being a detail about the actual world. All such details say is "*we are the real*," they don't signify anything else, they have no structural function in the narrative (ibid., 148, original emphasis). To Barthes, this marks a "new verisimilitude" in which the details work "to the advantage of the referent alone" (ibid.). That is, when such concrete details operate in this manner they become purely a "signifier of realism" (ibid.). This reality effect, Barthes concludes, "forms the aesthetic of all the standard works of modernity" and challenges the "the age-old aesthetic of 'representation'" (ibid.). The reality effect operates in some transmedia projects, because the choice of medium—a tangible diegetic media—has a role, but sometimes this role is purely to facilitate verisimilitude; and in this discussion, purely to facilitate an aligning of the actual world in the fictional world. They operate to make the fictional world seem true to life, indeed, in light of the previous discussion about deictic shift theory, closer to life.

While the reality effect characterizes many projects that could be described as being part of popular culture (given my previous examples), it would be inaccurate to assign this function to all uses of life or tangible diegetic artifacts. Hill for instance creates tangible artifacts in his superfiction project *Museum of Contemporary Ideas* (1989–present). Hill's work involves the creation of many artifacts from a museum that doesn't exist. While there are mini-narrative events (with '*The Art Fair Murders*'[26] for example), much of the work is composed of beermats (Figure 83), pens (Figure 84) and faxes of press releases from a fictional press office (Figure 85). Hill explains the context of the press office:

> The Press Office is part of most large institutions from museums and art fairs to casinos, hotels, and multi-national businesses. When building fictional art fair installations, especially in museums, I often construct fictional press offices which attempt to mirror real press offices at biennales, art fairs, or museums. […] Everything on public view in museums is thought out to the last millimetre and the most fine tuned lighting and humidity conditions. However, 'behind the scenes' and in individual offices and staff rest areas there is often a conglomeration of 'stuff' and an interesting selection of art works and reproductions on the walls.
>
> (Hill 2001, 59–60)



Figure 83. Photo of 'Plato's Cave' beermat, *Museum of Contemporary Ideas* (Peter Hill, 1989–present) Photo by Peter Hill
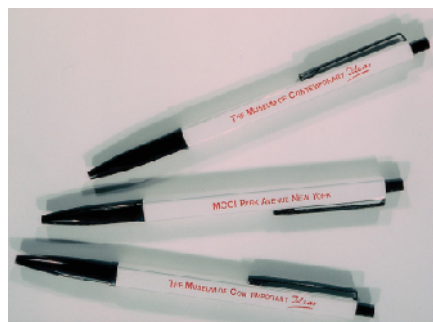


Figure 84. Photo of pens, *Museum of Contemporary Ideas* (Peter Hill, 1989–present) Photo by Peter Hill

---

[26] Peter Hill's 'The Art Fair Murders' were released through letters (mail art): "Each clue would be on a single sheet of A4 paper with the word 'CLUE' printed in the top left-hand corner. Three quarters of the way down the page the words 'The Art Fair Murders—a story told in fragments' was positioned" (Hill 2001, 69).

Figure 85. Photo of press releases sent to press outlets and art fairs, *Museum of Contemporary Ideas*
(Peter Hill, 1989–present)
Photo by Peter Hill

These artifacts are exterior to any narrative events but are crucial to the meaning of the work (they are the work). For Hill, each of these artifacts is metonymic:

> In many superfictions a small part of an implied larger event, organisation or structure represents the whole. The existence of Cameron Oil pens stands for the whole company as do the press releases for The Museum of Contemporary Ideas, and the beer coasters in Plato's Cave which represent the whole bar.
>
> (ibid., 56)

Here, the function of these artifacts is on the one hand to facilitate the illusion that the Museum, bar and company exists. But more accurately, they comment on the ease with which such constructions can be made, and offer a reflection on the contemporary art world:

> I did not do this as a hoax or as a way of "taking the piss" out of the art world. I did it partly out of curiosity and partly as a way of creating a mirror image of the art world, to reflect the high seriousness and absurdity that occurs when art meets money and ambition.
>
> (ibid., 87)

Hill's use of tangible diegetic artifacts is not to facilitate the illusion that his fictional world is actual, or to bring his participants closer to it. Indeed, Hill's fictional world is an imitation of the actual world. Therefore, his use of tangible diegetic artifacts may be understood as an effort to recontextualise the actual world, the world of art. Art and non-art media are inverted, with the non-art media, the administrative and industrial artifacts of the art industry, becoming the artwork. The question "what is art?" is juxtaposed with "what is the art industry?". In this case, the choice of life media and paratextual information on it (the brands), are the message. But that message is not *we are the real*. Instead, the message may be: *we are the real part of art*. The aim of this reference to Hill's work highlights the variety of implementations that recentering with property resemblance can facilitate.

Property resemblance is essential to bridging fictional and actual worlds for without it there is no correspondence, no common point of reference. As Ryan articulated with her theory of intra- and interuniverse relations, it provides a point of accessibility between the worlds; but as explained in these sections, it also has profound implications when the artifacts are actuated. That is, these resemblances move beyond depictions or references to being artifacts people can use in the same way as characters do in fictional worlds, thus making their world closer to the fictional world. The aligning the actual world with the fictional world through media resemblance can not only have different functions, it can occur with environments too.

### *Activating Environments*

Locative games, street games, urban games, big games, mixed reality games, augmented reality games, trans-reality games, ubiquitous games, pervasive games and street performance are often defined by the use of a (usually outdoor) environment in a work. However, the mere placement of a game or event outside does not automatically render the environment as part of the constructed meaning of the game. In many instances, the environment only situates the game within the practice of locative, pervasive or ubiquitous games in general. Game practitioners and theorists have argued, therefore, that "designers can employ space and place as media to convey narrative and aesthetic

information" (Davies 2007), that place can become a character in "situated narratives" (Davenport 2005), that the "meaning, history, and significance" of the space a game is played in should be consciously invoked (Flanagan 2009),[27] and that "[s]patially expanded games become most interesting when they make intense use of the city *as it is,* including its history and ambience" (Montola et al. 2009, 79, original emphasis).

But the activation of actual environments is, of course, not new. A pivotal example of an ordinary environment that is activated is found in the Situationist movement. Writer, theorist and filmmaker Guy Debord argued that modern culture (in the 1950s) had reached a "total ideological decomposition" in which "nothing new can be built" (Debord n.d. [1957]). According to Debord, one could not revolutionalize life with poems, novels or even architecture anymore. Instead, modern culture must be refused by "revolutionizing everyday life" (ibid.). "Our central idea," Debord continues, "is the construction of situations […] [through] a systematic intervention based on the complex factors of two components in perpetual interaction: the material environment of life and the behaviours which it gives rise to and which radically transform it" (ibid.).

For the Situationists, the preferred material environment of life to be revolutionized is the urban environment. Applying the logic of integral art, the Situationist practices a "unitary urbanism": one that considers the "acoustic environment as well as the distribution of different varieties of food and drink […] the creation of new forms and détournement of previous forms of architecture, urbanism, poetry and cinema" (ibid.). These are all consciously involved in some way to "construct situations, that is to say, collective ambiances, ensembles of impressions determining the quality of a moment" (ibid.). "The most general goal must be to expand the nonmediocre part of life, to reduce the empty moments of life as much as possible" (ibid.). Debord describes the situation as the "invention of games of an essentially new type" which unlike the classic notion of games, do not involve a "separation from everyday life" (ibid.). Debord's generalisation of games as separated from everyday life while understandable at the time, is ironic

---

[27] Mary Flanagan's 2007 paper was mistakenly left out of the proceedings for *Digital Arts and Culture* conference and handed out manually (Flanagan 2007), therefore I have cited the 2009 special issue of the conference proceedings published at *Leonardo Online* (Flanagan 2009).

considering the fervent employment of urban environments (and his theory), in contemporary ubiquitous and pervasive gaming practices and theory.

Game researcher and designer Mary Flanagan refers to Debord in her essay on the importance of what I describe as activating actual environments. Flanagan cites the urban tourism game *You Are Not Here* (Mushon Zer-Aviv, Dan Phiffer, Kati London, Thomas Duc, Ran Tao, Charles Joseph, 2006) as an example of the use of an actual world location for meaning. The game, described on the main website as a "dislocative tourism agency" (Zer-Aviv, Phiffer, London, Duc, Tao and Joseph 2006), "invites participants to become meta-tourists on an excursion through the city of Baghdad" (Flanagan 2009). Participants navigate through New York City using a two-sided map of New York City and Baghdad, and by holding the map up to the light can discern corresponding locations (Figure 86).
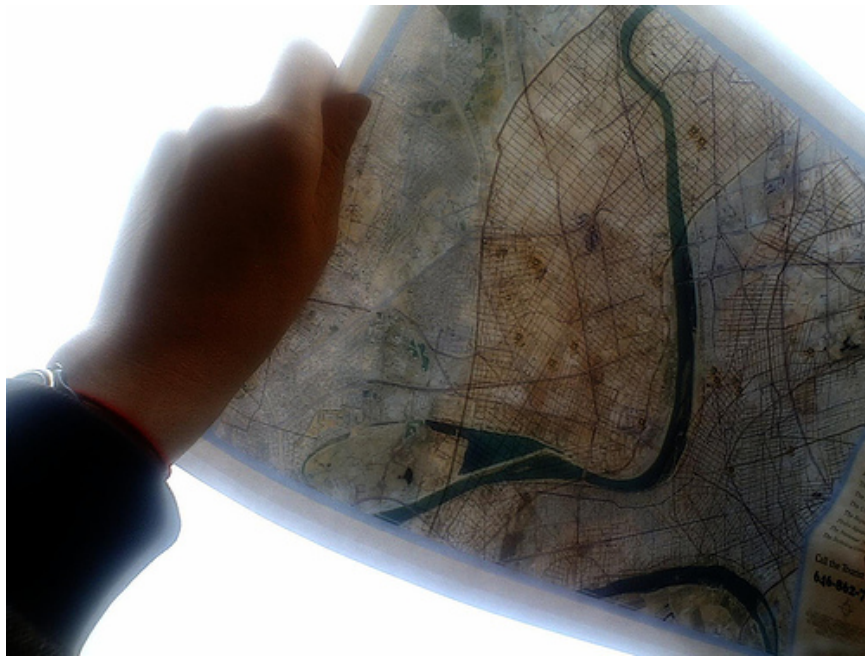


Figure 86. Map detail from *You Are Not Here*
(Mushon Zer-Aviv, Dan Phiffer, Kati London, Thomas Duc, Ran Tao, Charles Joseph, 2006)
Photo by Aaron Straup Cope (Cope 2006)

Once at that location, they find stickers with a phone number, in which they can listen to a recorded message narrating details of the corresponding Baghdad location or an event that occurred there. While the actual streets are not necessarily significant, it is the choice of city and country that is: "*You Are Not Here* attempts to expose the contrasts and

similarities between two cities [...] While each city's realities are politically involved, both the emotional and social perception of these corresponding spaces are completely detached from one another" (Zer-Aviv et al. 2006). The space can be seen to operate as part of the meaning-making process in at least two ways: the experiential aspect brings the participant closer to the reality of a remote city than newspaper reports do, and the juxtaposition of the two locations asks the participant to question the differences between the cities set apart by political rhetoric. But importantly for this discussion, the actual environment is part of the fictional world. The actual and fictional worlds are one.

Interestingly, another game that intentionally activates an actual world location, the augmented reality game called *Reliving the Revolution (RtR)* (Karen Schrier, MIT, 2006), also asks players to juxtapose two spaces. But unlike *You Are Here,* which asks players to juxtapose two locations, *RtR* invites players to juxtapose the same location, at a different time. The participants are asked to "physically explore present-day Lexington and go back in time to April 19, 1775 in order to figure out who fired the first shot at the Battle of Lexington" (Schrier 2007, 272). The augmented reality aspect of the game is found in the use of a GPS-enabled PocketPC, where textual and pictorial information is given about historic figures, documents and artifacts. These elements are triggered to appear on the device when the participants venture into the preprogrammed hotspots. By design, historical information from 1775 is juxtaposed with the present at the appropriate locations. As the designer explains, both the actual environment and the inferred environment in the past are critical aspects of the experience:

> [T]he interpretive tasks of the game and the juxtaposition of virtual and physical information also compelled participants to look deeply at their surroundings and consider their historical context. Participants began to view the natural and built environment as sites of inspection rather than simply as ambient information, and they more easily recalled, analyzed and visualized the game's data in relation to the layout of Lexington. Houses, buildings and monuments suddenly took on cultural, historical and political significance.
>
> (Schrier 2007, 272)

Other actual world environments include retail outlets, such as the use of Audi showrooms in the alternate reality game *Art of the Heist* (Campfire, GMD Studios,

McKinney-Silver, 2005). The game was commissioned by *Audi USA* to promote the launch (and sales) of the *Audi A3*. It involved the "theft" of the new Audi, which was documented by police-tape (Figure 87), signage (Figure 88) and a broken window (Figure 89) at the Audi Park Avenue showroom. The entire storyline and player activities were conceived to include objects and environments that exist in both the actual and fictional world. Therefore, among other diegetic media and environments, the actual brand (Audi cars and showrooms) were part of the fictional world. These existing consumer environments temporarily aligned, for the players, with a fictional world.



Figure 87. Audi Park Avenue showroom, *Art of the Heist* (Campfire, GMD Studios, McKinney-Silver, 2005) Photo by AngelAnger Image source: (AngelAnger 2005)
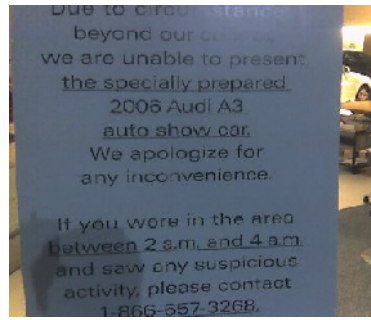
Figure 88. Audio Park Avenue showroom sign, *Art of the Heist* (Campfire, GMD Studios, McKinney-Silver, 2005). Photo by AngelAnger Image source: (AngelAnger 2005)

Figure 89. Audi Park Avenue showroom repaired door, *Art of the Heist* (Campfire, GMD Studios, McKinney-Silver, 2005) Photo by AngelAnger Image source: (AngelAnger 2005)

Not all environments are semiotically activated to be a part of the constructed-meaning, and to align with the deictic center of the fictional world. Like the discussion of the reality effect earlier, sometimes environments function purely as a device to facilitate the aligning process. Lee defines an alternate reality game (ARG) as "anything that takes your life and converts it into an entertainment space" (Elan Lee, cited in Ruberg and Lee 2006). The goal of ARGs, ARG designer Dave Szulborski explained, "is not to immerse the player in the artificial world of the game; instead, a successful game immerses the world of the game into the everyday existence and life of the player" (Szulborski 2005, 31). To ground a game in the everyday environment of the player, designers use devices such as having characters call the players at home. In their discussion about Electronic Arts' ARG, *Majestic* (2001), technology and culture theorists T.L. Taylor and Beth E.

Kolko explain that these games "propose a more expansive definition of immersion—one in which it is not simply enough to be 'in' the computer, but where the experience of the 'virtual' leaks out into your real world" (Taylor and Kolko 2003, 503). While the use of emails, messaging, faxes and phone calls have been well documented in these games (and discussed earlier), what is not overtly acknowledged is the fact that these everyday media are accessed through distinct media located within a player's home or office. This places the player's actual world within the fictional world. Though it is not always part of the meaning-making process related to the concepts or themes of the fictional world, it is part of the aligning process, and in some cases part of the reality effect. Another feature crucial to the (reality) effect of property resemblance is paratextuality.

## Recentering with Paratextuality

No one, Segal explains, can "physically move from the real world to a story world, or vice versa" (Segal 1995a, 74). Instead, a conceptual shift to the deictic center of a "story world" is facilitated by cues. These cues exist in the real world:

> All discourse, including narrative discourse, exists in the real world. Books, film, and performances are all real. Some of this discourse is designed to represent storyworld phenomena and some is not. Boundaries can and do exist between these two categories of discourse. Authors and performers who produce discourse are likely to know which parts of it are storyworld related. It is their responsibility to mark in the discourse its relevant boundaries.
>
> (ibid.)

These boundaries between the storyworld and actual world are indicated with paratextual cues (Genette 1997 [1982]). To Genette, paratextual information includes a title, prefaces, blurbs, book covers and dust jackets (ibid., 3). As Genette notes, paratextual information operate as secondary signals, whether they are by different authors or editors (allographic) or by the same author (autographic) (ibid.). While Segal (and others) describe these devices as ways to *conceptually* recenter to the deictic center of a fictional world, I argue they also operate to recenter the actual world in the deictic center of a fictional world. The fictional world exists in the actual world. Discourses are not just boundary-devices, they can be part of the fictional world. Paratextual elements on

diegetic artifacts identify those objects as fictional. They are the cues that frame objects that could exist purely in the actual world, as fictional objects that exist in the actual world.

An example of paratextuality operating to position an actual book within the fictional world is the use of authorship and titles. For instance, in the last few years in particular there has been a rise of books (and to a lesser extent graphic novels) that have been credited to fictional characters. *The Blair Witch Project: A Dossier*, for example, describes the police investigation of the missing student filmmakers from the 1999 Haxan Films feature *The Blair Witch Project*, and is credited to D. A. Stern. Stern apparently contacted the filmmakers who had "edited footage that the three Maryland students had shot while attempting to come up with conclusive facts about the Blair Witch themselves," footage which was "then assembled by a team of [the] filmmakers at Haxan Films" (Stern 1999, viii). Stern interviewed the filmmakers, who had "at their disposal not just the found footage, but a great deal of other information" (ibid., x). "This book," Stern explains, "contains virtually all of that evidence, as well as additional material recently supplied to the author" (ibid.). All of these paratextual elements situate the entire book within the fictional world.

Likewise, *The Diary of Ellen Rimbauer: My Life at Rose Red*, is a novel credited to Joyce Reardon, a fictional academic. The character Joyce Reardon is featured in Stephen King's 2002 ABC telemovie *Rose Red* and numerous fictional websites. The graphic novel *Chasing the Wish* is credited to Dale Sprague, a character that is part of the alternate reality game *Chasing the Wish* (Szulborski, 2006), and who also signed copies of his work (Figure 90). *The Sopranos: A Family History* chronicles the history of the Soprano family (depicted in the television series *The Sopranos*) and is described as being based on the evidence of an expert on organized crime, Jeffrey Warwick, who is a character within the TV series (and who writes the introduction to the book). The book titles and the authorship credits frame the tangible diegetic artifact as existing in a fictional world, a world accessible in the reader's actual world.
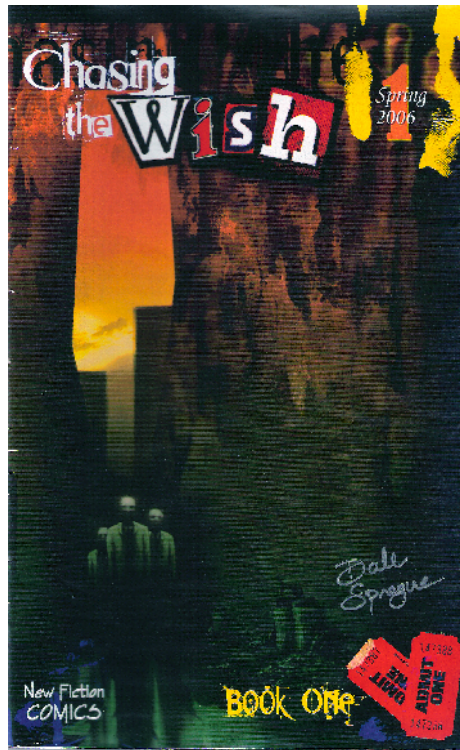
Figure 90. Scan of fictional character Dale Sprague's autograph on the cover of *Chasing the Wish* (Szulborski, 2006)

Another type of paratextual information that frames a tangible diegetic artifact as beginning in the fictional world but existing in the actual world is one that denies it is an official publication, is apparently authorless. For example, the novel *Cathy's Book: If Found Call 650-266-8233*, is presented as if it is the personal diary of girl that the reader has stumbled upon. Stuck to the inside cover of the book are a variety of "personal" items one would find in a diary: removable photos, scribbles and napkins with phone numbers that lead to character recordings and fictional websites. In a similar vein to epistolary fictions of the past, the use of the diegetic title, accompanying objects and websites all ask the reader to interpret the distinct media as part of the fictional world. Specific to this discussion too is the fact that the book cover, diegetic title and lack of "author" on the cover all indicate these elements are not benign but a semiotic resource invoked by the creators to facilitate its identity as a tangible artifact of a fictional world. This does not mean there are no indicators of its fictional status, there are many markers provided, such as the cues listed on the website (see Figure 91), balancing informing the reader of its

fictional status whilst also endeavouring to facilitate its identity as a tangible artifact of a fictional world.



Figure 91. Screenshot of an version of "www.cathysbook.com" detailing artefacts and indicating fictional status of *Cathy's Book: If Found Call 650-266-8233*
(Sean Stewart, Jordan Weisman and Cathy Briggs, Running Press, 2006)
Image source: (Stewart et al. 2006)

Property resemblance and paratextuality work together to facilitate an aligning of the deictic center of a fictional world with the actual world. In many cases, tangible diegetic artifacts are *exported artifacts* in that they exist in the fictional world but are somehow available in the actual world. Paratextual information helps facilitate the notion of a fictional world being actualised or accessible in some way. But perhaps one of the most influential factors in facilitating the exported artifact effect is hypertertextuality.

## Recentering with Hypertextuality

Hypertextuality refers to any relationships between texts that are beyond commentary (Genette 1997 [1982], 5). As I discussed in chapter three, these relations could actually be more appropriately described as auto- or intratextuality (ibid., 207) or even autographic (ibid., 3), since in this thesis they are relations between compositions that are usually initiated by either the same creator or creative body. Further to this, they could be described as intercompositional relations, to recognise the non-verbal and medially-complex nature of transmedia phenomena. Fundamentally though, the hypertextual relations I am discussing here involve hypertextual relations between compositions within the same fictional world.

Hypertextual practices include transformations, parodies and sequels. They are relations between compositions within a fictional world and are another method practitioners use to facilitate the identity of, and attraction to, a tangible diegetic artifact. Askwith recognised there is a difference between "objects that have explicit significance in the core television narrative" and "objects that do not appear in the core narrative, but are presented as if they exist within the diegetic space of the program" (Askwith 2007, 66). He notes the commercial performance of *The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer* relative to the other Twin Peaks books such as the *Dale Cooper Autobiography*, and suggested that this demonstrates a higher interest in artifacts that are depicted in other compositions (ibid.). Likewise, television theorist Jonathan Gray notes merchandise that places the viewer partially inside a (fictional) universe (Gray 2008, 80), and Smith has recognised what he calls "institutional artifacts" as a form of diegetic artifacts, that include books that are set within the "hyperdiegeis" of a show (Smith 2009, 60–61). By representing the use of a tangible artifact in the fictional world, practitioners facilitate the illusion that the artifacts not only exist in the fictional world, they are crucial to the daily life of the characters.

The *Killing Club*, for instance, is a novel co-written by Michael Malone (the actual writer) and Marcie Walsh, a character in the ABC television soap *One Life to Live*.

During the television series, Walsh writes the novel, has a book launch, and deals with the repercussions of copy-cat murders. Walsh's book is also seen being read by character Lily McNeil in *All My Children*, a television soap that in 1997 had the character Erica Kane publish her own book: *Having It All* (Ford 2007). The *Killing Club* was also available in the actual world, and while it was co-credited to Malone, the back cover features of photo of Marcie Walsh the character, not the actor. Likewise, the novel *Oakdale Confidential* was published anonymously within the television soap *As the World Turns*, and by Simon and Schuster in 2006. The book, which chronicled gossip about the characters, had both the characters within the series and fans of the series trying to figure out who the author is. In these examples, the artifact is depicted in another medium (a television series) and is intricately linked to the unfolding narrative. This has a compelling effect for the audience in that it situates tangible diegetic artifacts as an object that they can use just like the characters. It has a history and place in the fictional world and now the actual world too. When the audience is able to access them at the same as the characters then they share the same diegetic space, therefore recentering the actual world within the fictional world.

## Recentering with MetaTextuality

The fourth strategy used to position media and environments in the actual world as part of the fictional world is metatextuality, or commentary, or what Fiske terms "vertical intertextuality":

> Vertical intertextuality is that between a primary text, such as a television program or series, and other texts of a different type that refer explicitly to it. These may be secondary texts such as studio publicity, journalistic features, or criticism, or tertiary texts produced by the viewers themselves in the form of letters to the press or, more importantly, of gossip and conversation.
>
> (Fiske 1987, 108)

While this type of intertextuality relies on the commentary being external to the fictional world, as extra-diegetic, the two can be conflated. An example is the novel *Bad Twin* which is credited to Gary Troup, a passenger who perished on the ill-fated flight 815 in

the television series *Lost*. The book was "posthumously published" and described on the publisher website, Hyperion, as if Gary Troup did exist:

> *Bad Twin* is the highly-anticipated new novel by acclaimed mystery writer Gary Troup. *Bad Twin* was delivered to Hyperion just days before Troup boarded Oceanic Flight 815, which was lost in flight from Sydney, Australia to Los Angeles in September 2004. He remains missing and is presumed dead.
>
> (Hyperion Books 2006)

Here, the publisher commentary frames Gary Troup as an actual author, playing the diegetic game to recenter the book and the imagined world of *Lost* as being located in the actual world. While audiences cannot step into that fictional world themselves, they can move closer to it by having the same artifacts that exist within it. There were also advertisements placed in newspapers, footage released of Gary Troup being interviewed about his writing (prior to him perishing of course). There were hypertextual relations as well, as characters within the television series found his manuscript in the airplane rubble and read it.

Another example from the *Lost* fictional world illustrates how all of the factors operate to position media in the actual world as part of the fictional world, in this case with an tangible diegetic artifact. The Apollo Bar from the *Lost* fictional world is a chocolate bar (an object we have in the actual world). It is labelled with a brand (paratextual cue) that exists in the fictional world (Apollo). The bar is eaten by characters in the television show (see Figure 92), giving it a hypertextual relationship. It had a variety of vertical intertextuality cues, such as its own company website (see Figure 95), was advertised in issue #6 of the *Lost Magazine* (see Figure 96), a commercial in the ad breaks for *Jimmy Kimmel! Live* (Figure 97) and was advertised on buses. The bar was not for sale though, as it was awarded to some players in the alternate reality game *The Lost Experience* (see Figure 94). But even before the bar was produced as part of *The Lost Experience,* a fan designed the wrapper and made it available for other fans to download and create their own bar (see Figure 93), therefore illustrating the lure of exported diegetic artifacts when they are depicted in another composition, and the subsequent recentering of a fictional world in the actual world.

Figure 92. Screenshot of character eating Apollo Bars in *Lost*
(ABC, 2006–present)
Image source: (Lostpedia 2007c)



Figure 93. Photo of a fan with an Apollo Bar, *Lost* Note, this chocolate bar was actually made by the fan before the bars were released to players of *The Lost Experience*
(ABC, 2006)
Image source: (Bedilia 2008)
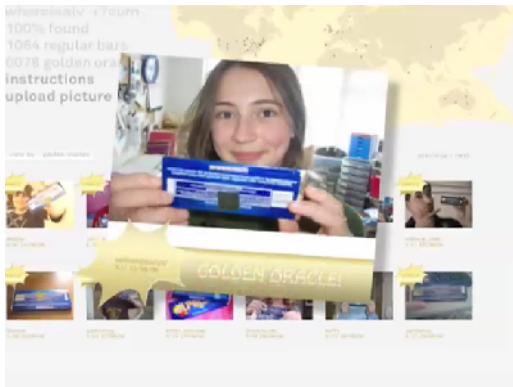


Figure 94. Screenshot of www.WhereisAlvar.com showing players with Apollo Bars, *The Lost Experience*
(ABC, 2006)
Image source: (Hi-ReS 2007)



Figure 95. Screenshot of Apollo Bar website, *The Lost Experience*
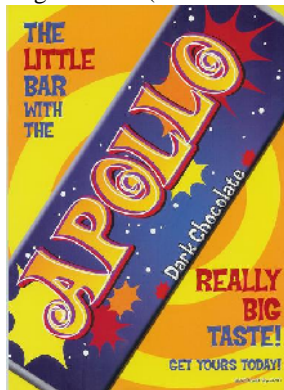(ABC, 2006)
Image source: (Lostpedia 2007a)



Figure 96. Apollo Bar advertisement in 'Lost Magazine', issue #6, *The Lost Experience*
(ABC, 2006).
Image source: (Lostpedia 2007b)



Figure 97. Screenshot of Apollo Bar television commercial, *The Lost Experience*
(ABC, 2006)

Paratextual elements operate to not only frame artifacts as diegetic, but also situate the actual world discourses as being part of the fictional world. This is not just a mere rendering of artifacts and discourses as diegetic—which is common in many practices—as it invokes the actual world as part of that diegetic discourse as well. This implicates the present world of the player or audience in the fictional experience.

## Recentering with Catalytic Allusions

One aspect of aligning of the deictic center of a fictional world with the actual world is that it places the present world of a participant in the fiction. Sometimes this means purely that a fictional world and player world occur at the same time and place, and sometimes it means players can interact with the fictional world in a variety of ways (such as communicating with characters, influencing a plot direction or completing a mission). In this section I describe one type of activity participants can do that doesn't always result in an influence on the fictional world (I discussed some of these in the previous chapter section on players as co-constructors), but is nevertheless involved in the aligning process. The activity I'm referring to is that of traversal across media: when participants move from one distinct media to another. The process of recentering enters this type of activity when the discourse employed to encourage such activity is both diegetic and operates in the same way in the actual world. Specifically, this section highlights a rhetorical strategy I term a *catalytic allusion*.

This type of activity is perhaps part of what Ruppel describes as "migratory cues": "a signal towards another medium—the means through which various narrative paths are marked by an author and located by a user through activation patterns" (Ruppel 2005a). Examples Ruppel cites includes one from *The Matrix* where the sachet of documents depicted as being posted in the anime short 'The Final Flight of Osiris,' is retrieved by the players of the digital game *Enter the Matrix* and delivered by characters in an early scene of *The Matrix Reloaded*; one from *I Love Bees*, which involves a momentary flash on screen of a URL during the trailer for the forthcoming Xbox game the ARG was promoting; a paragraph in Mark Danielewski's *House of Leaves* referring to a character 'Poe,' which references an album created by Danielewski's sister Poe, *Haunted,* which in

turn references Danielewski's novels; and a check mark in *House of Leaves*, which references *The Whalestoe Letters.*

I find all of these, minus the *I Love Bees* URL, to be examples of what Genette would call intertextuality. The *I Love Bees* URL, however, is persuasive; it has illocutionary force in that it encourages a viewer to go to the website. The "activation patterns" Ruppel describes could only mean, therefore, the activity the user undertook when they attended to all the various media elements. That is, if they recognise the sachet of documents, the reference to Poe and the check mark, it is because they are already familiar with the other works. They recognise the sign because they have acted previously. But they are not all cues to migrate, to act, in themselves. In this sense most of Ruppel's examples correlate with an allusion, in that a reader, audience member, or player would recognise the textual or visual signs once they are already familiar with the works they are being referenced from. In this section I discuss a different kind of allusion, one that may be described as a migratory cue (or even traversal design) if the term encompasses cues that impel a person to act, to migrate or traverse to another medium or location.

It is important to first understand that persuasive migratory cues can take many forms. In intercompositional transmedia projects, practitioners do not always provide prompts to traverse distinct media. This is largely due to the literacy of the practitioners involved, in that they are oftentimes still writing or designing compositions that are entirely self-contained. While the entire fictional world may benefit from people knowing about all the other compositions, practitioners are not necessarily versed in rhetorical strategies to ensure this happens. Or, as in the case of *The Matrix*, for instance, they may rely on the efforts of fans to piece all the elements together. Indeed, among all the extensive expansions and adaptations developed across media for *The Matrix*, there were hardly any migratory cues. There were many intertextual references, but virtually no cues that informed their audience there were more parts of the experience elsewhere. One of the cues I found was at the end of the credits of *The Matrix* feature film, when the text "www.whatismatrix.com, password:steak" came on screen. It is these types of migratory cues that are the most common in works that are not designed with traversal in mind.

That is, the most common migratory cues are extra-diegetic, in that they are not set within the fiction at all. For instance, in the novel I cited in chapter one—Laura Esquivel's *The Law of Love*—the reader is prompted at certain times to play a track of music. Even though the music is part of the diegesis (it is what the character hears), the cue is extra-diegetic: "CD Track 1" (see Figure 98).
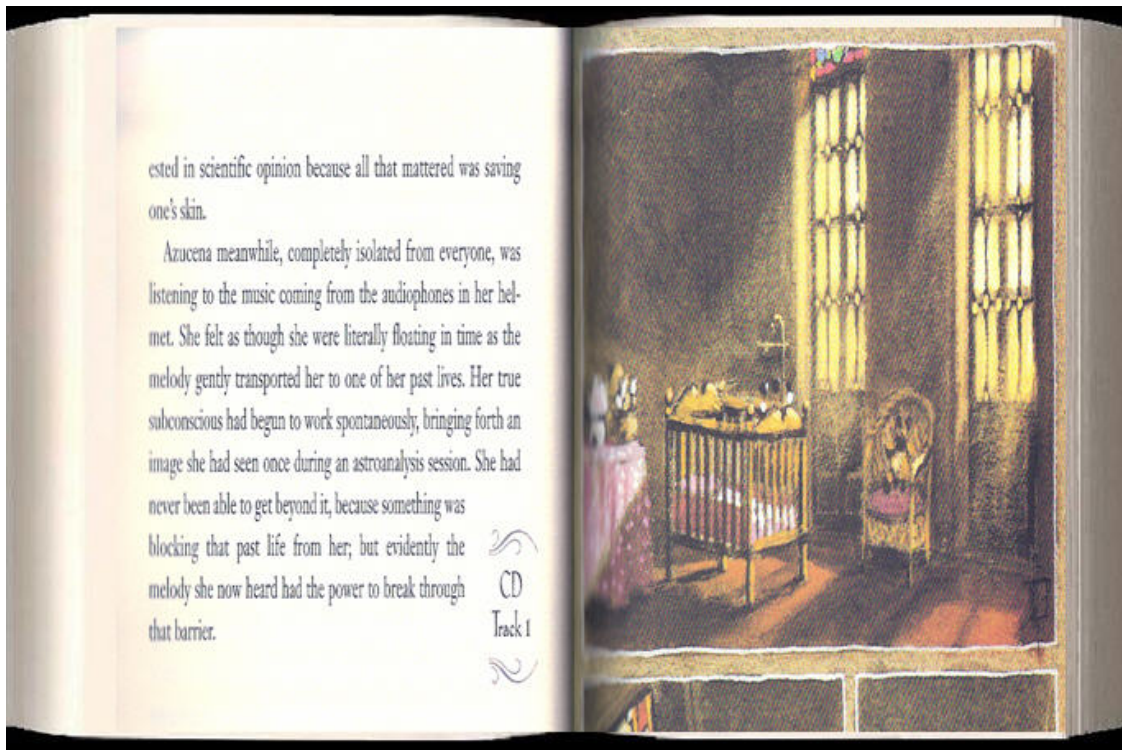


Figure 98. Scan of part of two pages from the 'multimedia' book *Law of Love*
(Laura Esquivel 1996, 42–43)
Note, scan placed over an image of an open book

Catalytic allusions on the other hand are not only diegetic, they are a contemporary implementation and in some cases complete inversion of the well-known practice of allusion. While the practice of allusion is quite complex and has therefore many theories about it, the definition of allusion employed here is in the sense explained by literary theorist Ziva Ben-Porat:

> The literary allusion is a device for the simultaneous activation of two texts. The activation is achieved through the manipulation of a special sign: a sign (simple or

complex) in a given text characterised by an additional larger "referent." This referent is always an independent text.

<div align="right">(Ben-Porat 1976, 107)</div>

Allusion is considered by some literary theorists to be the epitome of literariness: where the allusions unlock a particular reading or enable a reading at all. Genette quotes Michael Riffaterre arguing this notion when he says that intertextuality (of which allusion is a form of) is "the mechanism specific to literary reading" (Riffaterre, cited in Genette 1997 [1982], 2). "It alone, in fact, produces significance, while linear reading, common to literary and non-literary texts, produces only meaning" (ibid.).

Beyond significance, there are many cases when the reader does not garner meaning at all if the allusion is not known. If the reader recognises and understands the allusion (or thinks they do) there is no reason to act (to attend to the referred to work); but if they do not understand the reference, the implication is that they will not enjoy a satisfactory reading. As Allan Pasco explains, if we do not know what the author knows, "the text will make us feel the lack" (Pasco 1994, 12). There is a status here obviously: those that have less knowledge than the author need to move outside of the work either immediately or later in order to re-enter it again; whereas those that understand the author's allusions can remain in the work, physically passive yet engaging in a significant reading.

Catalytic allusions mark a new literariness, if you like, that privileges those that act, rather than those that don't. Unlike a traditional allusion (where a person is expected to know the allusion upon sight), a catalytic allusion cannot be prepared for, it could not have been accessed and therefore previously known. Traditional allusions are founded on the condition that an alluded to text is pre-existing. Catalytic allusions are founded on the condition that the allusion provides access to a new work for the first time. They place all participants at the same level when they enter the work, and privilege those that act upon the cue the allusion provides.

Indeed, the technique is termed *catalytic* because it is a prompt for a person to act. Distinguished from most allusions, a catalytic allusion does not operate as a dual

activation of two texts to create a third meaning, an assembled significance. Instead, the mechanic of referring to another composition or part of it impels activity and can function as a recentering device. That is, the goal of the process is to direct a person towards the new composition in a diegetic manner, and in a manner that is congruent with activity in the actual world. As discussed earlier in this chapter, interactions with diegetic artifacts in some verisimilitude practices do not involve "associative mappings"; so too, catalytic allusions ask a person to act just as they do in the actual world.

Why employ the term *allusion* though? My use of the term allusion is not to corrupt understanding of what an allusion is. Instead, allusion is employed because of the similarities in the implementation. An allusion is not necessarily signalled or highlighted as being an allusion. A person can read, for instance, a novel that has allusions to other works or characters. They may read the text without knowledge of the allusions and still have a satisfactory reading. But as Riffaterre argues, it won't be a "significant" reading because the reader will not be interpreting the combined meanings of both the current and alluded to texts. So too, catalytic allusions can have two functions: they can simply operate normally as part of the non-interactive discourse, or they can succeed in being recognised and acted upon as a catalyst for action. For instance, in a scene from episode 12 ('Godsend') of the television series *Heroes,* the character Noah Bennett gives his business card to Mohinder Suresh (see Figure 99). There is a momentary close-up of the business card (see Figure 100) and the scene progresses as normal. That business card, however, details a website address and phone number, both of which exist in the actual world and are the beginning of the *Heroes 360 Experience* cited earlier in this chapter. To the unaware viewer, the scene would just progress as normal, but to other viewers the website address and phone number are catalytic allusions to other compositions in other distinct media that will reveal more information.

Figure 99. Screenshot of scene where Noah Bennett gives his business card to Mohinder Suresh, *Heroes* (NBC, 2006–present)



Figure 100. Screenshot of close-up of on 'Primatech Paper' business card, *Heroes* (NBC, 2006–present)

Likewise, in the television show *ReGenesis,* there is a scene in which the characters Mayko and Wes briefly discuss a password to an intranet (see Figure 101). The password is in fact needed by players of the *ReGenesis Extended Reality Game II* and so is a catalytic allusion for them. In both of these examples, there are two possible paths for the viewers, one of which entails activity and another aspect to the experience of the fictional world. Furthermore, catalytic allusions operate in the same way they would in the actual world. A website address on a business card is a call to action, and so is a password (for a spy who may be over-hearing it for instance!).
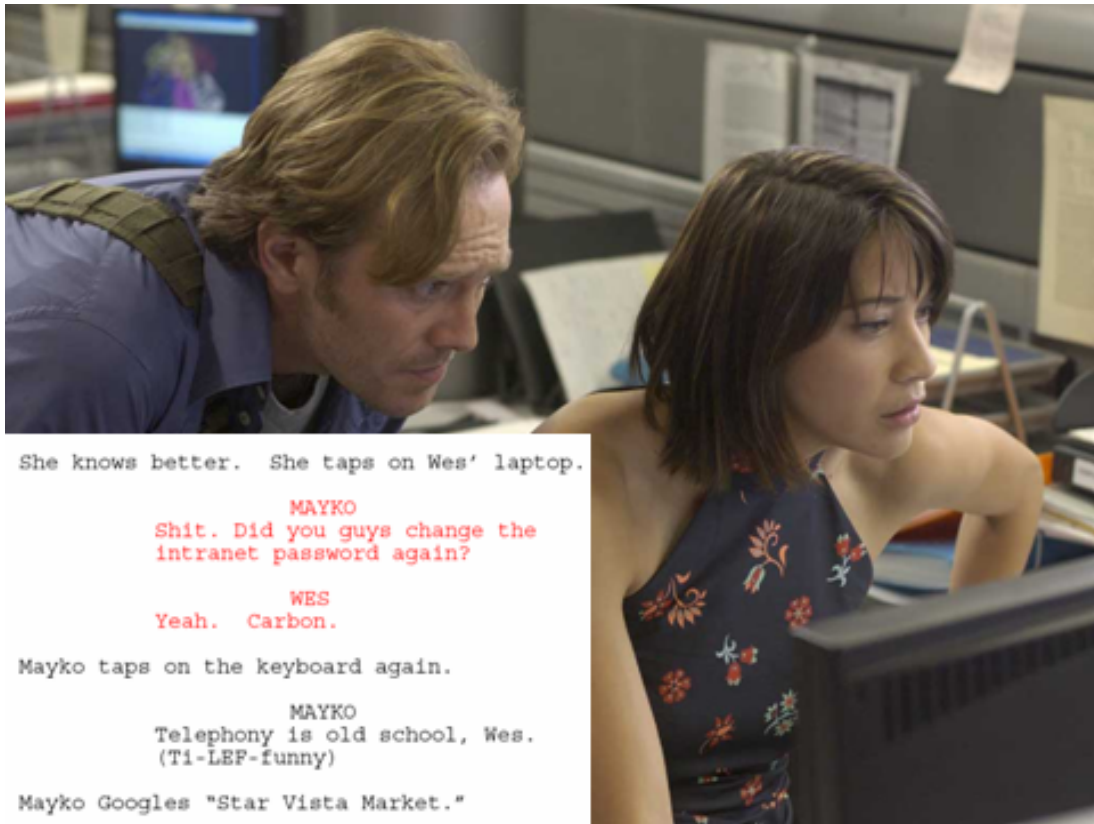
Figure 101. Juxtaposition of still from episode and correlating script segment indicating a catalytic allusion,
*ReGenesis Extended Reality Game II*
(Xenophile Media 2006)
Image source: (Jones 2007)

A tangible media example is evidenced in the graphic novel, *Chasing the Wish*, which is main point of entry to *Catching the Wish* or *Chasing the Wish 2*. In the graphic novel are numerous fictional advertisements (a town library, amusement park and website design company) and links to the artist's online journal. All of these websites provide new information and facilitate participation through diegetic tasks. See Figure 102 for a flowchart outlining some of the catalytic allusions in the graphic novel.
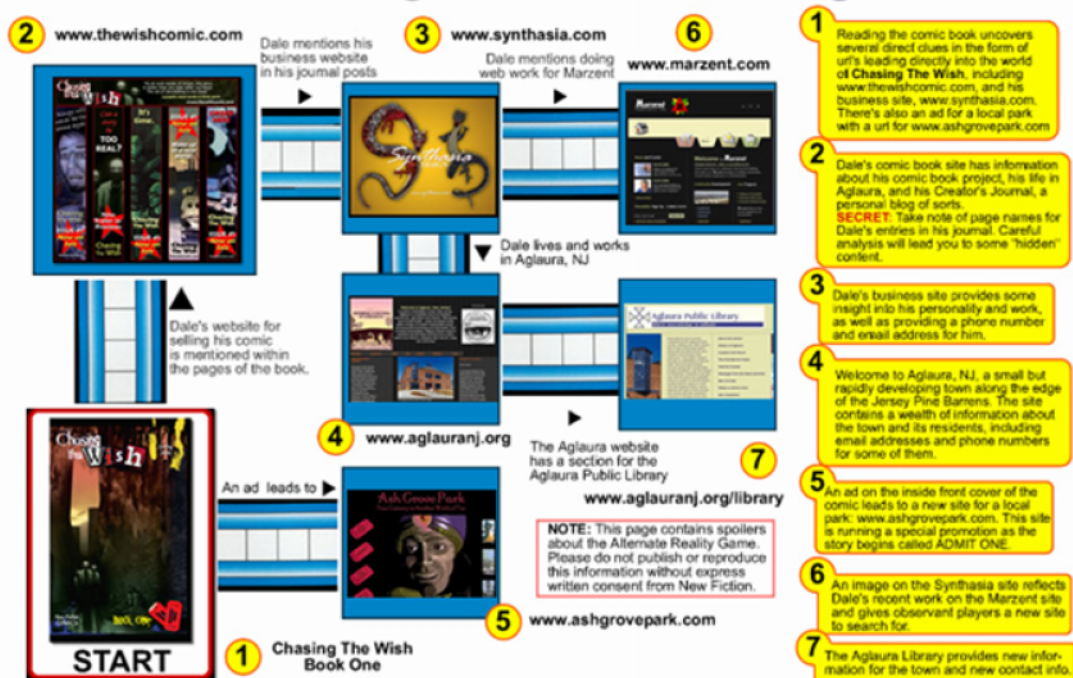
Figure 102. Flowchart showing catalytic allusions to new websites at the beginning of the *Catching the Wish*
(Szulborski, 2006)
Flowchart by Dave Szulborski

To assume that such allusions are rarely catalytic would be incorrect. Indeed, there have been many occasions in which productions have been caught-out by the catalytic effect of phone numbers and websites. A popular example is the "24 Fan Phone". In episode 5 of season 4 of the Fox television series *24* a character receives a call on their mobile/cell phone. There is a close-up of the phone, revealing an actual phone number (see Figure 103). Viewers immediately called the phone and discovered that it actually belonged to one of the crew. Aware of the interest in the number, it has been screened many times; which in the beginning meant callers could speak with different crew members, and now means they listen to a voice mail message.

Figure 103. Screenshot of first appearance of the number later called the '24 Fan Phone', *24*
(Fox, 2001–present)
Image source: (Wikia24 2006)

The consequences of the screening of an actual phone number were minimal in *24*'s case, but many television series, feature films and even books have mistakenly not produced a website or secured a domain name only to have people create a pornography site at the suddenly quite popular address. Some fans have actually secured domains because this happens, to either protect their beloved fictional world (or an under-age from viewing them), or to simply enact what they wish was there. For instance, the character Jason Bourne in the feature film *Bourne Ultimatum* searches in Google for an investment company, *Sewell and Marbury*. Finding the site hadn't been created, a fan secured it and created it to a small degree according to the fiction at "www.sewellmarbury.com" (JC 2007). But mostly, the fan, JC, invites people who visit the website to leave a comment and what country they are from. The website was created in 2007 and has had to date over one-thousand comments from people all over the world (more would have visited the site and not left a comment). They all leave surprised and cheerful comments saying they just had to check if the website was real (and in most cases checked while they were watching the film on DVD), how they were thrilled to find it there, and that so many people had checked it just like them.

People acting on references to websites and phone numbers isn't a peculiarly contemporary phenomenon either. Cecil Adams of the Chicago Reader's online answer service, *The Straight Dope*, claims that a real phone number was used in a Charles M.

Schultz *Peanuts* strip. Apparently a bewildered family in Moline, Illinois, answered over 50 calls "ranging from plaintive requests to speak to Snoopy to less plaintive requests of a considerably darker nature" (Adams 1978). Indeed, many would be familiar with the so-called Hollywood number of 555 or KLF. It was apparently introduced in 1973 and according to Michael Thyen's "Compilation of 555 Numbers from Movies, Television and Radio," there are thousands of times a 555 or KLF number has been cited (Thyen 1996). The need for these fake numbers shows that audiences needed to be dissuaded from acting on them.

Even if a company doesn't employ any of the existing fake numbers, they may ensure it is a number that cannot be reached. For instance, in the 2003 feature *Bruce Almighty*, the lead character, Bruce Nolan (Jim Carrey), receives calls from The Almighty on his pager. There were many close-ups on the number, which some movie watchers memorized and subsequently called. Journalist Mitch Stacy reported that Universal Pictures released a statement on the 28th May explaining they chose the number because it did not exist in Buffalo, N.Y., the location where the fictional movie is set (Stacy 2003). The same with website addresses too. In the television series *Smallville* (The WB Network, 2001–2006) in episode 17 of season 5 ('Void'), the character Chloe is at her computer, looking at website: "www.elheraldo_19385773"; an impossible domain address.

Phone numbers have always been, therefore, catalytic for some audiences. The difference now is there are more audiences doing it and practitioners are utilising the catalytic nature of these elements (including now email and websites) to facilitate a cross-media traversal that is true to life. Catalytic allusions enable activity in a manner that is congruent with normal communication (and it should be said, advertising rhetoric). The device facilitates the recentering of the actual world in the fictional world by aligning actual world catalysts with fictional world traversal. By removing the "associative mappings" that fictional-world interaction usually demands (click this button to do this, turn this page to read more), a participants' behaviour becomes diegetic, or perhaps mimetic. All of these elements—an artifact that has the same properties in the fictional and actual world,

paratextual, hypertextual and commentary cues—all operate to facilitate the identity of a diegetic artifacts and to align the actual and fictional worlds.

## *Summary*

This chapter has shown how some of the aesthetics and devices of transmedia projects share principles with dramatic unities. Through a discussion of dramatic unities as they have been theorised in neo-classical scholarship, I have argued that unities are primarily concerned with a marrying of form and content and how this can be understood in the transmedia context. Many transmedia practitioners endeavour to establish a relationship between the duration and numerous settings afforded by the transmedia expression with concepts. Further to this, the urge towards creating a unity of action and verisimilitude can be seen in the efforts to integrate the actual world in a fictional world. Through the theory of fictional recentering I have shown how the actual world can be encompassed in the fictional world through concepts, property resemblance, paratextuality, hypertextuality, metatextuality and catalytic allusions. These techniques are not specific to dramatic unities in that all occurrences are not evidence of an intentional design approach. But this chapter has helped explain the parallel rise of actual world aesthetics and transmedia practice and shown that it is more than a co-incidence. It has also attempted to draw a parallel between mono-medium aesthetics and shown how they differ in the transmedia context. Indeed, this chapter completes the journey of this thesis: to explain what is peculiar about transmedia practice.

# *Conclusion*

For better or for worse, the very nature of disciplines,
their function and their role within and outside of institutions has changed.
The context for this change is not just the individual nature or history of one or other discipline.
Rather, the social and cultural conditions for the creation and communication of
ideas, artifacts, knowledge and information have been completely altered.
(Burnett 2005)

Intermediality has always been a possibility since the most ancient times,
and though some well-meaning commissar might try to legislate it away
as formalistic and therefore antipopular, it remains a possibility
wherever the desire to fuse two or more existing media exists.
(Higgins 2004 [1965])

In this thesis I present ways to distinguish and study the transmedia phenomenon. While transmedia projects have arisen in popularity in both industry and academia, the supposition underlying this dissertation is that the phenomenon needs to be properly distinguished from other practices. I therefore set out to explain how transmedia can be understood as a unique creative practice. Both transmedia-specific and related theories are critically analysed according to their applicability to what I argue is the crux of the phenomenon. Furthermore, methodologies are developed to account for the challenges raised by transmedia phenomena.

## *Studying Transmedia Practice*

I have taken a different stance than some my contemporaries and chosen to overtly encompass all transmedia practices in my theory, whether they are produced in the halls of a conglomerate or with the inspired and tired hands of an employee on the weekend. I did this because these emergences *are* happening in marketing, in the film industry, television industry, new media arts, gaming, literature and beyond. Therefore, when academics proposed theories of influence there emerged for me a conflicting chorus where changing industrial and legal structures were heard alongside revolutionary rhetoric. I could not ascribe the transmedia phenomenon to deregulation in the USA when it had nothing to do with the use of networked technology in the forests of Sweden. Neither could I ascribe the phenomenon to the creative and sometimes subversive desire

for making and experiencing fictions that exist in the ordinary world, for it didn't explain the high-risk multi-million investments being made.

The theory of transmedia presented here therefore encompasses a wide range of practices. Due to the demands of discussing such a wide scope, there are no case-studies offered. Indeed, the specifics of the different forms are not discussed at length. This is one of the costs of such an approach; but on the other hand it provides insights that most artform-, medium- and/or industry-specific investigations cannot. Indeed, this thesis has grouped together a range of forms that do not usually rub shoulders, in theory. The implications of this approach means that a variety of methodologies and theories, indeed lenses of perspective, are utilised. I could study the phenomenon from a media studies perspective, but media studies is historically engineered to study mass communication. Film studies to study film, television studies to study television. Likewise, narrative studies is traditionally concerned with the nature of narrative, but more recently has also overtly recognised narrative in all media forms; and understandably given its young nature, game studies has been chiefly concerned with the nature of the game mode. There are, in other words, an entire set of specific research questions that come with each field. These research questions are based on certain assumptions about what the field is about, and what the objects of study are. One studies mass communication or independent arts or film or television or narrative or game. Therefore, just as transmedia practitioners negotiate existing media cultures to create transmedia projects, a transmedia theorist negotiates existing research cultures. Müller summarised the challenges of such an approach well over a decade ago:

> Nowadays more and more scholars seem to recognize the fact that media studies must meet the transdisciplinary challenge of *intermedia processes.* […] An intermedial approach is thus *per definitionem* a challenge to the "established scientific landscape" because of its fundamental need for the abolition and transgression of clear-cut borderlines between many disciplines which have been drawn and built up with great efforts during the past decades. In this sense, every paradigm of intermediality must constitute a provocation for the already existing media-theories; and this not only in terms of its asking for a re-arrangement of the claims of the established disciplines, but also in terms of its asking for a re-evaluation of their specific methodologies, which are—due to their isolating tendencies—in most cases not suited for the study of intermedia processes.
>
> (Müller 1997, 295, original emphasis)

Though not the only methodology, the approach in this thesis has been to draw on research questions from a variety of fields in order to enrich understanding of the phenomenon of transmedia practice. Different fields are driven by different research questions, but when combined they can provide a complex rendering of the object of study. So in chapter two, for instance, I tackle the issue of distinguishing franchises and questions of the role of the commerce. This is in light of discussions in media studies over the past couple of decades about the nature of emerging "intertextual commodities" in franchises. I agree with other theorists that the area cannot be understood purely through an aesthetic or commercial investigation. However, I complicate the matter by interrogating these two forces during production. I argue that both commerce and aesthetics may be better understood by what may be described as a *design ecology*, influencing decisions a practitioner makes. This is important because it helps thwart the tendency to create artificial binaries that lead to oversimplifications and hierarchies. Commerce and aesthetics are not, and never have been, entirely isolated categories of influence.

I also interrogate narrative studies questions such as the nature of transmedia practice in light of the existing research areas of hypertextuality and transfictionality. I argue that while the rich insights of each can be utilised in understanding transmedia, the theories are designed to recognise different phenomena: distinct-authors, same-media, and texts that produce new fictional worlds that do not adhere to the logic of the proto-text. This is significant in light of the propensity of researchers to casually draw on these theories, and generally bundle together orality practices and early franchises with transmedia practices. It is crucially important to not cast all compositions that share the same fictional world (or worlds) as being part of the transmedia phenomenon. The popularity of the practice and study of transmedia has resulted in transmedia being for many the first time they have considered relationships between compositions in distinct media. This has resulted in a heightened awareness of many practices, through the lens of transmedia. Suddenly any repurposing, adaptation, continuation, franchising, storytelling, gaming and

marketing becomes transmedia. But transmedia has to be more than an entry-point, it needs to be clearly distinguished if it is to carve its own research area.

I also interrogate research questions from game studies, such as the issue of theorising the role of environments in outdoor games—which I explain through the notion of semiotic activation. While there have been game designers and theorists that discuss the role of an environment in outdoor games, the invocation of semiotics is, I argue, a helpful method to articulate the differences between works that are merely situated in public, works that construct entire artificial environments and those that activate an existing environment to be a part of the meaning-making process. Furthermore, while there have been semioticians that have discussed the meaning of museums, for instance, and architecture in public spaces, the emphasis on meaning-construction rather than the role that all modes have in the interpretation or experience of an environment is a valuable one. That is, one can interpret meanings from an entire experience, but as in thesis, analyse the modes that are constructed to be part of the meaning-making process by the practitioner(s).

Related to the discussions of environments is Montola's theory of pervasive games. I argue the definition proposed by Montola is highly specific to *a* boundary between a perceived norm and its aberration. The ramification of this definition is that it only has relevance to those experiencing that particular "uncertainty" boundary; it precludes other boundaries that both practitioners and players may and will experience. This does not mean the notion of boundary transgression is not helpful. It certainly is. Transmedia definitely involves boundary transgressions. But I argue that defining a phenomenon according to the way it is perceived by some, at a particular point in time, misrepresents the breadth of the phenomenon. The "unpredictable, uncertain and undedicated areas" (Montola 2009, 14) of pervasive games are not characteristics of the areas, but of how the areas are perceived. Theories of perception are highly relevant and should be pursued. But they must not be confused for describing a phenomenon for everyone. I question how long and for how many a game that is not confined to a magic circle can be described as a transgression. I make the same argument regarding Walker Rettberg's provisionary rendering of distributed narratives as disunities.

Another research question that is particularly marked in recent game scholarship is the issue of explaining the setting of games within the ordinary world. While many theorists, including Montola, argue that this represents a blurring of the game space, I analyse the practice through the notion of semiotic activation, and the narrative theory of deixis. That is, I discuss how the notion of the deictic center can help understand how (and in some cases why) many transmedia fictions encompass the actual world. The deictic center of a fictional world is what a person conceptually relocates to when engaged in a fiction. That center is facilitated by cues in a text. In order to explain the use of the ordinary world in transmedia fictions, I invoked the notion that there is an aligning of the deictic centre with the actual world. The actual world of a player, reader or audience member is situated within a fictional world through carefully constructed concepts that create a diegetic link between the fantastical and the present-day of the audience; property resemblance between artifacts in a fictional and the actual world; paratextual elements that can frame artifacts as being native to (or exported from) a fictional world; how those artifacts can be depicted or referred to, to facilitate the link between the fictional and actual world; metatextual elements that further frame artifacts as diegetic and existing in the actual world; and catalytic allusions that facilitate activity that operates the same in the actual and fictional world.

While some of these devices can be observed in other non-transmedia phenomena, the rise of these practices and transmedia at the same time is undeniable and noteworthy. This phenomenon can be partly understood through the lens of dramatic unity. That is, the tenants of dramatic unity, as surmised by neo-classical theorists, involves an attempt to make the amount of time depicted, settings covered and events of a fiction match in some way the duration and setting of the theatre. The core concept of this notion of dramatic unity is not specific to the dramatic form. Instead, it can be transposed to many artistic forms, including transmedia. It is with this literary and performance theory that the efforts to include the actual world can be seen as an attempt to marry the transmedia form with its content, signalling, as Walker Rettberg posed, a new kind of unity. All of these issues and others are from a design perspective, explicating my practitioner-literacy

approach. This is another key methodological difference with this thesis: a practice-rather than interpreter-oriented approach.

## *From the End-Point Experience to Meaning Construction*

In media, narrative, semiotics and to a lesser extent game studies there is an observable emphasis on interpretation-oriented theories. This means that theories of phenomena are often centered on the end-point experience. A phenomenon is defined according to the way it is interpreted as a consumer, audience-member, reader, or player. While I am certainly not berating the value of interpretation-oriented theories—they are crucial to understanding what is happening for, quite frankly, the majority of people—there has historically been, I argue, an over-representation of this approach in academia.[28] I am not alone in this view. In 1994, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and K. Ludwig Pfeiffer published an edited collection on "materialities of communication" (Gumbrecht and Pfeiffer 1994). The contributors, they explain on the back cover, "investigate the underlying conditions and constraints of communication, whose technological, material, procedual, and performative potentials have been all too easily swallowed up by long-dominant interpretational habits" (ibid.). These interpretational habits became particularly marked in theories that aim to distinguish transmedia phenomena at the intercompositional level.

*Prima facie,* there are hundreds of thousands of fictional worlds that have been expressed across multiple compositions in multiple distinct media. Almost any beloved fictional world exits in multiple forms, from multiple adaptations implemented across time to the inordinate amount of fan-produced works and now marketing campaigns that expand a fictional world. Jenkins argues that the phenomenon can be best understood by the expansion of a story across media platforms. While Ryan argues that transfictionality needs to involve a familiarity with a prototext. I argue that interpretive and end-point experience criteria are not sufficient methods to capture the transmedia phenomenon.

---

[28] I hypothesise that the income-earning attempts of universities to provide more practice-oriented courses such as creative writing and game design, and the growing emphasis on tertiary education as a minimum point of entry for the workforce, has resulted and will result in more theorists exploring non-interpretation-oriented theories.

Expansion encompasses too wide range of phenomena and does not indicate any knowledge and skills involved. That is, expansions can be articulated by fans, marketing departments, isolated production companies and so on.

Furthermore, the interpretive experience of works is not a reliable identifier of the transmedia phenomenon. Anyone can impose significance on any aspects of a work across media. Walker Rettberg contends that distributed narratives can be understood as narratives, because narrativity is the primary way they are understood. I argue that narrativity is not the primary mode for all and does not necessarily describe the interpretive processes occurring. As argued throughout this thesis, therefore, I propose that a practice-oriented theory captures the peculiar knowledge and skills needed to create a transmedia project. Projects could be enacted by different people and companies, but it is their knowledge, skills and processes that is the key distinguishing factor.

## *Transmedia Knowledge and Skills*

This thesis therefore began interrogating what those peculiar knowledge and skills are. I explained how the trait of distinct media entails not just understanding the affordances and experiential aspects of each medium, but oftentimes involve negotiating different media cultures. Media cultures such as the film, television and gaming industries have their own production cycles with different concept development and production lengths; with hierarchies and roles of creative influence that vary; as well as established creative cultures that may or may not be versed in interactivity in all its guises.

One of the ramifications of these distinct media cultures is the emergence of professions that can attend to these differences. I outlined professions already emerging, including a new kind of writer or designer, super producer, and director. The writer or designer of a transmedia proejct obviously is a key profession that is responsible for creating projects that are suitable to transmedia expression. On the one hand we have what Long has called "hard" transmedia (Long 2007, 20–21), where the project is designed from the beginning to be transmedia. This can entail concepts that are amenable to both narrative and game modes, enabling dramatic possibilities beyond the single event, and even encompassing

the actual world. The practical articulation of transmodal concepts is pertinent in light of the game mode arising as a primary cultural mode challenging the dominance of the narrative mode. Game theorist Terence McSweeney observes that "a new generation of directors have grown up playing video games" (McSweeney 2008). "While the film-makers of the New Hollywood movement in the late sixties and early seventies like Steven Spielberg, Francis Ford Coppola and Martin Scorsese were inspired as much by the directors of the French New Wave as those of the classical Hollywood cinema; this new generation of film-makers are as likely to be influenced by the work of Shigeru Miyamoto or Hideo Kojima as they are by Quentin Tarantino or Steven Spielberg himself" (ibid.). Therefore, McSweeney surmises, there will be more filmmakers involved in game production. This cross-fertilisation of modes will not just be evidenced with filmmakers of course, but novelists, television creators, artists and beyond will develop projects that experiment with complex renderings of the narrative and game modes in transmedia projects.

But my aim with the discussion of possible transmedia-specific concepts is not to be prescriptive or exclusionary. Transmedia projects can take many forms, and can be articulated at various times during and after production (after the concept development stage). While one may attest to the quality a certain approach affords, it would be misrepresentative to place them in a hierarchy. However, the exploration of transmedia concepts is essential to illuminating the knowledge and skills peculiar to this practice. The high-level narrative and game designing, writing and the rhetorical strategies they entail are other areas that demand (and are already receiving) further attention.

The other emerging professions include the super producer role, a producer or project manager (who may also be a writer and/or director) that understands the discourses and processes of each medium being utilised. This is significant as it heralds a profession that demands an understanding of many media cultures, their associated production processes, protocols, politics, policies and so on. There is only so much a person can do within a company. As Gary Genonsko notes in his discussion on Felix Guattari's "transdisciplinary metamethodology": "the real task is to find the institutional means to

incarnate new modes of subjectification while simultaneously avoiding the slide into bureaucratic sclerosis" (Genosko 2003, 133).

What these roles entail is being transliterate and multilingual (in terms of media culture discourses), and different ways of thinking. These different ways of thinking are congruent with a transdisciplinary state of mind, as enunciated in my analysis of narrative and game similitude. One of the methodological implications of taking a transdisciplinary approach to transmedia phenomena is the necessity to recognise modal complexity. I highlight the prevalent approach of transmedia theorists (and beyond) to champion a mono-modal framing of the phenomenon. In light of the shifts the rise of the game mode has in practice and theory, the transmodiological approach is a potentially promising new research area. It builds on the insights of multimodality by overtly recognising that meaning can be made in many ways. The transmodal element is one way that the primary modes of contemporary entertainment—narrative and game—can be understood as distinct modes that modulate meaning for the entire experience in complex ways. To study transmodality is to resituate the research question outside the current mono-modal tenants of narrative and game studies. This approach has methodological ramifications therefore. A transmodiological approach is potentially a superdiscipline that aligns with the tenants of semiotics, privileging meaning-making in all its guises.

Interactivity is one device that can be articulated in narrative and game modes, and media. It is transmodal and transmedial. Interactivity is enacted in transmedia practices even though the media employed does not always facilitate it. As media theorist Rob Cover observes, "the rise of interactivity as a form of audience participation is a strongly held and culturally based desire to participate in the creation and transformation of the text that has been denied by previous technologies of media production and distribution" (Cover 2004, 174). It is in some ways still denied. I have therefore explained how the feedback loop needed for interactivity is articulated in transmedia practices with human-managed but network-augmented "game mastering". In ways that may make a cyberneticist smile, the seemingly ultimate interactive machine is half human, half network. But this flesh-driven emergence reveals how far automated technologies still

have to go, and how the desire for participation and transformation will keep emerging "through unexpected, multifarious and diverse sites in different ways, at different times" (ibid., 188). It is in many ways remarkable that interactivity can occur in media forms that are somewhat immutable. The interactivity is happening *around* the fixed media and media cultures that are not amenable to it, in websites and mobile devices before, during and after the broadcast medium affixes its stare.

The combining of digital and non-digital media in unique ways in the transmedia phenomenon cannot be understated. While not all transmedia practices utilise this combination, it is important to note the phenomenon often involves the utilisation of seemingly incompatible media. The phenomenon is the opposite of what has been described as a material or technological convergence. "Convergence" has been a popular term in academia and industry for decades. Its popularity and longevity has resulted in it being invoked in a variety of settings, with a variety of meanings. Jenkins (Jenkins 2001) and journalism scholar Rich Gordon (Gordon 2002; Gordon 2003) are among the early theorists who attempted to bring clarity to the nomenclature chaos by offering concept explications. Jenkins rejects the notion of a convergent device such as a mobile/cell phone that can access the Internet, receive and send emails, play PowerPoint slides, play movies, songs, and be a phone. He argues this notion is steeped in what he calls the "Black Box Fallacy":

> Sooner or later, the argument goes, all media content is going to flow through a single black box into our living rooms (or, in the mobile scenario, through black boxes we carry around with us everywhere we go). […] I don't know about you, but in my living room, I am seeing more and more black boxes. There are my VCR, my digital cable box, my DVD player, my digital recorder, my sound system, and my two game systems, not to mention a huge mound of videotapes, DVDs and CDs, game cartridges and controllers, sitting atop, laying alongside, toppling over the edge of my television system.
>
> (Jenkins 2006, 14–15)

The transmedia phenomenon enacts what Jenkins calls a "cultural convergence," and others call "content convergence," where the convergence is enunciated in the content that is on the isolated technologies. This distinguishes transmedia practices from

"intermedia" as it is theorised by Higgins. Intermedia involves a fusion at the material level, where disparate forms are combined in one medium. However there is still a connection between intermedia and transmedia.

## *Theorising an Ongoing Tendency*

Practitioners have, throughout time, endeavoured to work with more than one medium. A crucial part of my early research, therefore, involved investigating the historical context of the apparent contemporary practice described here as transmedia. Of course, my search through the wide scope of "the past" was guided by various influences. I had many colleagues in the early days of my research, for instance, who upon hearing of my research would claim that the phenomena I highlighted was nothing new. "Oh," they would comment, "that's been done before when…". I'd investigate their citations and found over and over again that the spirit was perhaps the same but the implementation was not. But beyond a congruent spirit, a meta-discursive analysis revealed practitioners, participants and critics described these works and the experience of them in the same manner as those doing so with contemporary phenomena. I asked myself then, what really is the relationship between related phenomena in the past and contemporary phenomena? In searching for the answer I realized I had made a methodological error.

I was obviously unaware of this assumption, but it become clear to me that I considered discussing past phenomena a device to highlight the uniqueness of current phenomena. I was not alone in this assumption. Many theorists also cite the past but do not explain why there are similar occurrences or even why they differ to more recent ones. There is not, in other words, a theorizing of the relationship between past and present phenomena. A lack of reflection of the relationship between the past and present could be attributed to an assumption that the past is somehow secondary to the present, that the past was building up to some ideal present state. In other words, similar phenomena in the past are secondary and incomplete early stages of a current, unique and supposedly ultimate present.

Upon recognizing this fallacy, I altered how I regarded similar phenomena in the past. Rather than see past phenomena as being an early stage of some ideal present, the past is presumed to be of equal and significant importance to understanding contemporary phenomena, and a phenomenon in general. Indeed, I hypothesized that what I was observing was in fact the same phenomenon emerging in different ways at different times. This approach also removes or dilutes the supposition that previous phenomena have a causal relationship with the present. But what this view of continuous emergence requires is an interrogation of what that transhistorical element is, for its current manifestation cannot be the marker.

Of course, many theorists considering the relationship between current and past phenomena have reached a similar methodological conclusion. Literary theorist and author Umberto Eco argues that postmodernism is not specific to a point in time but is instead a "*Kunstwollen*, a way of operating," and that "every period has its own postmodernism" (Eco 1984, 66). What is the "way of operating" that unites transmedia practices with intermedia, expanded cinema, with all what could be described as a *Gesamtkunstwerk* throughout time? Higgins argues that intermedia will remain "a possibility wherever the desire to fuse two or more existing media exists" (Higgins 2004 [1965], 18); and marketers, journalists and creators alike have across time spoken of "integration" and "synergy". It is perhaps the urge to integrate that is a long-held desire that emerges continually across time.

Integration can only occur in the context of isolation. Friedman explains that Higgins coined the term intermedia to describe artists that "cross the boundaries of recognized media or to fuse the boundaries of art with media that had not previously been considered art forms" (Friedman [1998]). Kress and van Leeuwen explain that rise of multimodality is characterized by practitioners who "use an increasing variety of materials and [who] cross the boundaries between the various art, design and performance disciplines, towards multimodal *Gesamtkunstwerk,* multi-media events, and so on" (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001, 1, original emphasis). Walker Rettberg and Montola propose the boundaries

creators are attempting to cross are those of an existing norm of a singular narrative or game respectively (Walker 2004; Montola 2009).

As I discussed in chapter two, for some creators integration happens between art and non-art media, for other between new and old media, and so on. Perhaps more accurately then: it is the boundaries between media that have not been considered an artform by the majority (what was seen as a purely transmissive medium, for instance, an everyday media, or an advertising platform); and/or what has not been considered a form of expression by the creator (what is outside of their current practice); and/or media that are technically isolated (non-networked). In many ways, then, the discussion about the desire to cross-boundaries is an observation of people attempting to alter constructed divisions. It is this which is a transhistorical urge.

## *Future Directions*

What haven't I done in this thesis? I intimated the significance of the materiality of the transmedia experience. While materiality studies have been undertaken in many areas, and are emerging more in game studies, the transmedia experience is an area that needs further interrogation. How does the experience of materiality—the feel of a book in your hands, sitting in a dark cinema with friends, and pushing buttons on a game controller—change the fictional world that is designed for cross-media traversal? What influences immersion or facilitates a state of flow in transmedia practices? Further to this, what are the rhetorical strategies that facilitate traversal across media? Do they demand a different kind of illocutionary force than creative works that facilitate activity within a medium?

I have outlined some of the knowledge and skill associated with transmedia practice. Now that this avenue of investigation has been started, the knowledge and skills needed to interpret and interact with a transmedia is needed. At present, many transmedia literacy theories have too easily fallen into the fuzzy world interpreters imposing significance on anything. Now that the nature of a transmedia is somewhat better defined, clear research into the transmedia interpretation is needed. I believe Ruppel is investigating this aspect and so should offer a great leap in this direction.

Some of the rhetorical devices and techniques discussed in this thesis are relative to the current state of transmedia practice. Some of the tiering practices, for instance, are specific to the knowledge and skills of both practitioners and audiences. Compositions are self-contained and fragmented for many people because practitioners and audiences are still applying a mono-medium mind-set to the form. As their transmedia knowledge and skills develop, it may be that intercompositional transmedia projects will become less tiered (targeting different content in distinct media to different people). These hypotheses are based on current understanding of the form. It would be fruitful therefore to not only continue interrogating transmedia devices and techniques as they arise, but to comparatively observe the developments.

It would also be fruitful to study further the differences between large- and small-scale, independent and conglomerate, and different transmedia artforms. While in this thesis I have concentrated on grouping them together and then providing some subsets and comparisons (such as inter- and intra-compositional phenomena), a further analysis of the similarities and differences could help illuminate the nature of transmedia forms and these respective media cultures. Further to this, based on my own provisional research, a cross-cultural analysis of the emergence and development of transmedia globally would provide rich insights into the context-specific perception of the form.

What else does the future hold? Television theorists Lynnette Porter and David Lavery observe that "[v]irtually every important maker of end-of-the-millennium and early twenty-first-century TV, from Joss Whedon to David Chase to J.J.Abrams, has spoken of their debt to David Lynch and Mark Frost's bizarre tale of […] *Twin Peaks*" (Porter and Lavery 2006, 147). Whedon, Chase and Abrams are all practitioners that are experimenting with transmedia forms. Likewise, *Star Wars* is often cited as an influence too by transmedia practitioners, for instance Jesse Alexander, J.J.Abrams and Damon Lindelhof (Burton, Abrams and Lindelof 2006; Burton and Alexander 2008). This thesis has documented practitioners adept at the mono-medium form transitioning to or experimenting with transmedia practice. It has also provided glimpses of a new

practitioner that is not in transition necessarily, but has delved directly and is committed to this new practice. The new generation that will emerge next has already been nurtured in a transmedia ecology.

Media theorists have documented ages of media and their impact—the influence of papyrus, print, radio, film, television and digital technology. What does this new transmedia culture mean? McLuhan famously said that the medium is the message. Then what is the message of a medium cluster? To me, transmedia represents a working implementation of unity in diversity. In transmedia practice there is no single medium, no one single way of expressing or experiencing the world. There are many media that have their own production and experiential media cultures; and they can actually work together despite their differences. In this thesis I have attempted to reveal this phenomenon in a way that is congruent with this spirit: by making multiple research fields work together. Just as a transmedia project cannot be created with one medium, the phenomenon cannot be understood through the lens of one research field. Traditionally this role is taken up by the sum of many theorists, each contributing a different view and therefore revealing the complexity of the area. In this thesis I have embarked on this process myself. It is not, of course, the only voice. It cannot be. But I hope this thesis provides insights that could not be accomplished by studying the phenomenon in one industry or artistic sector, and through one research field; and enriches all of them because of it.

# *Glossary*

**Activated Environments** *are environments or parts thereof, which have been appropriated as a semiotic resource by practitioners as part of the meaning-making process.*

**Activated Media** *are distinct media that have been invoked as a semiotic resource in the meaning-making process through cues addressing the experiencer.*

**Catalytic Allusion** *is a rhetorical device to prompt a person to attend to another composition or part of a composition through an allusion to it.*

**Composition** *is the equivalent of a "work". It refers to both the fictional world (or part of it) and its mode of expression. For instance, a feature film on DVD and the story of the film are one composition.*

**Constructed Environments** *are environments (not virtual) that have been wholly or partly constructed to act as a semiotic resource in the communication of a fictional world.*

**Diegetic Media** *are media that are constructed to be a part of a fictional world or diegesis.*

**Fictional World** *is the sum of all the semiotic triggers that are constructed to adhere to the same world logic.*

**IntraCompositional**: *refers to (the study of) phenomena within a single composition, such as a book, film, computer game, play or painting.*

**InterCompositional**: *refers to (the study of) the relationships between compositions.*

**InterCompositional Transmedia Phenomena**: *refers to (the study of relations) between compositions in distinct media.*

**IntraCompositional Transmedia Phenomena**: *refers to (the study of) a single composition that consists of more than one distinct media. For instance, many ubiquitous and pervasive games involve multiple technologies; and "two-screen" projects such television show with website-synched content involves two mediums an audience needs to traverse.*

**Tangible Diegetic Media** *are tangible objects (books, comics, food, drink, electrical goods, clothing and so on) that have the same qualities as real-world artifacts, but have*

*paratextual elements that indicate they are native to, and therefore exported from, a fictional world.*

***Tiering*** *refers to the addressing of different audiences with different content in distinct media. It is like a polysemous address, but is articulated across distinct media rather than within one medium.*

***Transmedia Fiction*** *the term encompasses all practices that involve the expression of a fictional world across distinct media and environments.*

***Transmedia Practice*** *refers to all practices that involve the employment of multiple distinct media and environments.*

***Transmodal*** *refers to elements that can be realized in different narrative, drama and game modes. Unlike transmedial phenomena, which are modes that can be realized in different media (chess can be a board game and digital game for instance), transmodal elements can be realized in different modes.*

# *Works Cited*

42 Entertainment. 2007. Case Studies: Vanishing Point. 42 Entertainment. http://www.42entertainment.com/vpg.html (accessed June 10, 2008).

42 Entertainment. Case Study: The Beast. 42 Entertainment. http://www.42entertainment.com/beast.html (accessed April 20, 2009).

Aarseth, Espen. 1997. *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*. Maryland: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.

———. 1999. Aporia and Epiphany in Doom and The Speaking Clock: The Temporality Of Ergodic Art. In *Cyberspace Textuality: Computer Technology and Literary Theory*, ed. Marie-Laure Ryan, 31–41. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press.

———. 2003. Playing Research: Methodological Approaches to Game Analysis. Paper presented at the *5th International Digital Arts and Culture Conference*, May 19–23, in Melbourne, Australia.

———. 2004a. Genre Trouble: Narrativism and the Art of Simulation. In *First Person, New Media as Story, Performance, and Game*, ed. Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Pat Harrigan, 45–55. Cambridge: MIT Press. Also available at http://www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/firstperson/vigilant.

———. 2004b. Quest Games as Post-Narrative Discourse. In *Narrative Across Media: The Languages of Storytelling*, ed. Marie-Laure Ryan, 361–376. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press.

———. 2005. Meet Death Jr.: The Culture and Business of Cross-Media Productions. Paper presented at the *Digital Games Research Conference*, June 16–20, in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Adams, Cecil. n.d. [1978]. Why do phone numbers in TV shows and movies all start with 555?. The Straight Dope. http://www.straightdope.com/classics/a1_374a.html (accessed Oct 11, 2007)

Allen, Kendall. 2009. The Widening Role of The Super-Producer. MediaPost. http://www.mediapost.com/publications/?fa=Articles.showArticle&art_aid=104872 (accessed April 28, 2009).

Allen, Richard James and Karen Pearlman. 2009. Thursday's Fictions in Second Life: The Sun's Search for Moon on 'You Tube'. Thursday's Fictions. http://www.thursdaysfictions.com/TheSunsSearchForTheMoonEpisode1_554_1180_3_0.html (accessed April 20, 2009).

———. Thursday's Fictions: the Book. Thursday's Fictions. http://www.thursdaysfictions.com/ThursdaysFictionsTheBook_505_1141_3_0.html (accessed April 20, 2009).

———. Thursday's Fictions: the Multi-Media Live Performance Work. Thursday's Fictions. http://www.thursdaysfictions.com/ThursdaysFictionsTheMultiMediaLivePerformanceWork_526_1144_3_0.html (accessed April 20, 2009).

AngelAnger. 2005. [INTERACTION] Audi on Apr 1st. Unfiction Unforums. http://forums.unfiction.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=9451 (accessed April 5, 2005).

Apperley, Tom. 2007. Citizenship and Consumption: Convergence Culture, Transmedia Narratives and the Digital Divide. In *Proceedings of the 4th Australasian Conference on Interactive Entertainment*, article 2. Melbourne: ACM.

area/code. 2007. The Sopranos A&E Connection. AreaCodeInc. http://www.areacodeinc.com/work/sopranos/ (accessed Feb 20, 2008).

Aristotle. 1997 [c330B.C.]. *Poetics*. Mineola: Dover Publications.

Aronofsky, Darren. 2006. The Fountain Commentary. DarrenAronofsky.com http://www.darrenaronofsky.com/fountain_com.html (accessed Jan 7, 2007).

Aronofsky, Darren, Kent Williams, Ari Handel and Ared Fletcher. 2005. *The Fountain*. New York, Vertigo (DC Comics).

Artistportfolio.net. GoFigure.net.au (detail). http://www.artistportfolio.net/index.php?secret=160&artist_id=7159&image_id=32937 (accessed April 20, 2009).

Ascott, Roy. 2003 [1984]. Art and Telematics: Towards a Network Consciousness. In *Telematic Embrace: Visionary Theories of Art, Technology, and Consciousness*, ed. Edward A. Shanken, 185–201. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.

———. 2003 [1989]. Gesamtdatenwerk: Connectivity, Transformation, and Transcendence. In *Telematic Embrace: Visionary Theories of Art, Technology, and Consciousness*, ed. Edward A. Shanken, 222–227. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.

———. 2003 [1990]. Is There Love in the Telematic Embrace?. In *Telematic Embrace: Visionary Theories of Art, Technology, and Consciousness*, ed. Edward A. Shanken, 232–247. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.

———. 2009. Transmedia Arts and the Evolution of the Senses: Transactional, Transentient, Technoetic. Paper presented at *21C TransMedia Innovation Symposium*, Sept 23–25, in Seoul, South Korea.

Askwith, Ivan. 2003. A Matrix in Every Medium. Salon. http://dir.salon.com/story/tech/feature/2003/05/12/matrix_universe/ (accessed Jan 17, 2004).

———. 2007. Television 2.0: Reconceptualizing TV as an Engagement Medium. Masters, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

August, John. 2003. Ph.D. on Adapted Screenplays. JohnAugust.com. http://johnaugust.com/archives/2003/phd-on-adapted-screenplays (accessed April 25, 2008).

avalonian42. 2001. changame_flow. Cloudmakers Yahoo!Group. http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/cloudmakers/files/ (accessed Nov 28, 2007).

Baage, Jay and Jeff Gomez. 2009. DMW Vlog: Jeff Gomez on Creating Transmedia Experiences. Digital Media Wire. http://www.dmwmedia.com/news/2009/07/11/dmw-vlog:-jeff-gomez-creating-transmedia-experiences (accessed July 12, 2009).

Bach, Robert. 2000. Freakylinks. On the Box. http://onthebox.netfirms.com/Articles/Freakylinks/Freakylinks.html (accessed June 10, 2006).

Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1981 [1930s]a. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holoquist, trans Carly Emerson and Michael Holoquist. Austin: Univ. of Texas Press.

———. 1981 [1930s]b. Epic and Novel: Toward a Methodology for the Study of the Novel. In *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holoquist, trans Carly Emerson and Michael Holoquist, 3–40. Austin: Univ. of Texas Press.

———. 1981 [1930s]c. From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse. In *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holoquist, trans Carly Emerson and Michael Holoquist, 41–83. Austin: Univ. of Texas Press.

Bakio lu, Burcu. 2009. The Business of Storytelling: Production of Works, Poaching Communities, and Creation of Story Worlds. PhD diss., Indiana University.

Barker, Garry. 2005. Digital Archibald Entry is a Sign of the Times. The Sydney Morning Herald. http://smh.com.au/articles/2005/04/25/1114281483546.html (accessed June 10, 2006).

Barthes, Roland. 1974. *S/Z*. New York: Hill and Wang.

———. 1986 [1968]. The Reality Effect. *The Rustle of Language,* trans Richard Howard, 141–148. Berkely: Univ. of California Press.

Bartle, Richard. 1996. Hearts, Clubs, Diamonds, Spades: Players who suit MUDs. Richard Bartle's Website. http://www.mud.co.uk/richard/hcds.htm (accessed March 13, 2000).

———. 2003. *Designing Virtual Worlds*. Indianapolis: New Riders.

Bateman, Chris. 2007. Design Document: Play with Fire. Gamasutra. http://gamasutra.com/features/20070220/bateman_01.shtml (accessed Feb 10, 2008).

BBC Press Office. 2007. BBC Vision launches new multiplatform strategy. BBC Press Office. http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2007/09_september/27/multiplatform.shtml (accessed April 14, 2008).

Beck, James. 2004. The Concept of Narrative: An Analysis of Requiem for a Dream(.com) and Donnie Darko(.com). *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 10(3): 55–82.

Beckett, Sandra, ed. 1999. *Transcending Boundaries: Writing for a Dual Audience of Children and Adults*. New York: Garland Science.

Bedilia, Aneilia. 2008. One Evening Lost to the Apollo Bar. Kate and Neil's Awesome Website. http://www.kateandneil.com/media/one-evening-lost-to-the-apollo-bar/ (accessed Jan 10, 2009).

Ben-Porat, Ziva. 1976. The Poetics of Literary Allusion. *PTL: Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 1: 105–128.

Benford, Steve, Martin Flintham, Adam Drodz, Nick Tandavanitj, Matt Adams and Ju Row Farr. 2006. The Design and Experience Of The Location-Based Performance Uncle Roy All Around You. *Leonardo Electronic Almanac* 14 (3).

Benjamin, Walter. 1968. The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt and trans Harry Zohn, 219–253. New York: Harcourt.

Bennett, Tony and Janet Woollacott. 1987. *Bond and Beyond: The Political Career of a Popular Hero*. Houndmills: Macmillan Education.

Bensmaia, Reda. 2005. Reality Effect. In *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. David Herman, Mandfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan, 492. Oxfordshire: Routledge.

Berens, Brad and Don Schultz. 2006. Don Schultz Describes New Integration. iMediaConnection. http://www.imediaconnection.com//content//11466.asp (accessed Jan 10, 2007).

Berenstein, Rhona. 2002. Horror for Sale: the Marketing and Reception of Classic Horror Cinema. In *Horror, the Film Reader*, ed. Mark Jancovich, 138–149. London: Routledge.

Big Screen Entertainment Group. 2006. Big Screen Entertainment Group Announces its First MMO Video Game. Big Screen Entertainment Group. http://www.bigscreenentertainmentgroup.com/news/investor_news/big_screen_entertainment_group_announces_its_first_mmo_video_game/ (accessed July 28, 2006).

Bjork, Staffan and Jussi Holopainen. 2005. *Patterns in Game Design*. Hingham: Charles River Media.

Bohr, Niels. 1949. Discussion with Einstein on Epistemological Problems in Atomic Physics. *Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp. La Salle: Open Court.

Bolter, J. David and Richard A. Grusin 1999. *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Bolter, J. David. and Michael Joyce. 1987. Hypertext and Creative Writing. *Proceedings of the ACM conference on Hypertext*, 41–50. Chapel Hill: ACM.

Bonds, Susan. 2009. Susan Bonds Presentation. X|Media|Lab. http://www.XMediaLab.tv (accessed Sept 10, 2009).

Bordwell, David. 2009. Now Leaving From Platform 1. David Bordwell's Website on Cinema. http://www.davidbordwell.net/blog/?p=5264 (accessed Aug 19, 2009).

Brooker, Will. 2001. Living on Dawson's Creek: Teen Viewers, Cultural Convergence, and Television Overflow. *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 4: 456–472.

Buckingham, David. and Julian Sefton-Green. 2004. Structure, Agency, and Pedagogy in Children's Media Culture. In *Pikachu's Global Adventure: the Rise and Fall of Pokemon*, ed. Joseph Jay Tobin, 13–33. Durham: Duke Univ. Press.

Bühler, Carl. 1982. The Deictic Field of Language and Deictic Words. In *Speech, Place and Action: Studies in Deixis and Related Topics*, ed. Robert Jarvella and Wolfgang Klien, 9–30. New York, Wiley.

Burnett, Ron. 2005. Disciplines in Crisis: Transdisciplinary Approaches in the Arts, Humanities and Sciences. Critical Approaches to Culture, Communications + Hypermedia. http://www.eciad.ca/~rburnett/transdisciplinary.html (accessed June 10, 2007).

Burton, Bonnie, J.J. Abrams and Damon Lindelof. 2006. Mission: 'Lost' in Star Wars—J.J. Abrams and Damon Lindelof. StarWars.com http://www.starwars.com/community/news/rocks/f20060505/index.html (accessed Sept 26, 2008).

Burton, Bonnie and Jesse Alexander. 2008. Jesse Alexander: Appreciating the 'Heroes' of Star Wars. StarWars.com. http://www.starwars.com/fans/rocks/news20080922.html (accessed Sept 26, 2008).

Burul, Yesim. 2001 Intertexuality and Interactivity: When Twin Peaks goes to the Net. *M/C Reviews* feature no. 13. http://reviews.media-culture.org.au/features/interactive/yburul.html (accessed June 10, 2005).

Butler, Nathan P. 2007. The Star Wars Timeline Gold 44 (10th Anniversary Edition). Star Wars Timeline Gold. http://www.starwarsfanworks.com/timeline/ (accessed Feb 5, 2008).

Caillois, Roger. 2001. *Man, Play, and Games*. Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press.

Caldwell, John. 2004. Convergence Television: Aggregating Form and Repurposing Content in the Culture of Conglomeration. In *Television after TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition*, ed. Lynn Spigel and Jan Olsson, 41–74. Durham: Duke Univ. Press.

———. 2003. Second-Shift Media Aesthetics: Programming, Interactivity, and User Flows. In *New Media: Theories and Practices of Digitextuality*, ed. Anna Everett and John Caldwell, 127–144. New York: Routledge.

———. 2008. *Production Culture: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television*. London: Duke Univ. Press.

Cameron, James. 1991. The Ultimate Edition DVD: Terminator 2: Judgement Day. Australia, Universal.

Campbell, Joseph. 1949. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Campfire. 2007. USA Network: Battle Over Promicin. Campfire. http://www.campfirenyc.com/2007/03/31/battle-over-promicin/ (accessed Aug 10, 2009).

Capone and Darren Aronofsky. 2006. Capone and Darren Aronofsky discuss THE FOUNTAIN!!!. Ain't it Cool News. http://www.aintitcool.com/node/30768 (accessed Jan 6, 2007).

Capra, Mauricio, Milena Radenkovic, Steve Benford, Leif Oppermann, Adam Drozd and Martin Flintham. 2005. The Multimedia Challenges Raised by Pervasive Games. In *Proceedings of the 13th Annual ACM International Conference on Multimedia*, 89–95. New York: ACM.

Caves, Richard. 2000. *Creative Industries: Contracts between Art and Commerce*. Boston: Harvard Univ. Press.

Chaffee, Steven 1991. *Explication*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications Inc.

———. 1996. Thinking about Theory. In *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*, ed. Michael Salwen and Don Stacks, 15–32. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Chatman, Seymour. 1978. *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*. New York: Cornell Univ. Press.

Cloudmakers. 2001a. Aleph-Naught: Loki Nightmare. Cloudmakers. http://aleph-naught.cloudmakers.org/loki- nightmare.htm (accessed March 31, 2008).

Cloudmakers. 2001b. Sentient Property Crime Bureau: News. Cloudmakers. http://spcb.cloudmakers.org/news.htm (accessed March 31, 2008).

Collins, Jim. 1992. Television and Postmodernism. In *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled*, ed. Robert Allen. New York: Routledge.

Collins, Susan. 2001. Inhabited Content: An Exploration into the Role of the Viewer through the Realisation of In Conversation and other Works. PhD diss., The University of Readin.

———. In Conversation. In Conversation. http://www.InConversation.com (accessed April 25, 2009)

Cope, Aaron Straup. 2006. You are not here. Flickr. http://www.flickr.com/photos/straup/243408752/.

Copier, Marinka. 2007. Beyond the Magic Circle: A Network Perspective on Role-Play in Online Games. PhD diss., Utrecht University.

Couldry, Nick. 2004. Theorising Media as Practice. *Social Semiotics* 14(2).

Cover, Rob. 2004. New Media Theory: Electronic Games, Democracy and Reconfiguring the Author-Audience Relationship. *Social Semiotics* 14(2): 173–191.

The Creator. 2008. The Creator. http://the-creator.org/ (accessed Nov 10, 2009).

D'Aquili, Eugene and Andrew Newberg. 1999. *The Mystical Mind: Probing the Biology of Religious Experience*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Danto, Arthur C. 1981. *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art*. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press.

DaPonte, Jason. 2008. Crossover Nordic: Cross-media Production Process Comparison. Jason DaPonte's Blog. http://jasondaponte.wordpress.com/2008/09/19/crossover-nordic-cross-   media-production-process-comparison/ (accessed Sept 21, 2008).

Davenport, Glorianna. 1998. Very Distributed Media Stories: Presence, Time, Imagination. In *Proceedings 4th International Euro-Par Conference on Parallel Processing*, 47–54. Springer-Verlag: London.

———. 2005. Desire Versus Destiny: the Question of Payoff in Narrative. Paper presented at *5th Symposium on Art and Multimedia: Metanarrative[s]*?, in Barcelona, Spain.

Davenport, Glorianna, Stefan Agamanolis, Barbara Barry, Brian Bradley and Kevin Brooks. 2000. Synergistic Storyscapes and Constructionist Cinematic Sharing. *IBM Systems Journal* 39(3–4): 456–69.

Davidson, Drew. 2001. *Stories In Between*. PhD, University of Texas at Austin.

Davies, Hugh. 2007. Place as Media in Pervasive Games. In *Proceedings of the 4th Australasian Conference on Interactive Entertainment*, article no. 7. Melbourne: RMIT Univ.

Debord, Guy. n.d. [1957]. Report on the Constructions and the International Situationist Tendency's Conditions of Organization and Action. Situationalist International Online. http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/report.html (accessed April 15, 2008).

Dena, Christy. 2003. Response as Input: The Role of Reader Response, HCI and HRI in the Modeling of a Cross Media Narrative. Paper presented at *Seismic Readings 2003 Conference*, July 17–18, Clayton, Australia.

———. 2004a. Current State of Cross Media Storytelling: Preliminary observations for future design. Paper presented (by Monique de Haas) at the *European Information Society Technologies (IST) Event*, Nov 14, in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

———. 2004b. New Media Methodologies, applied. Paper presented at *Contexts, School of Creative Arts Postgraduate Seminar Day*, May 4, in Melbourne, Australia.

———. 2004c. Towards of Poetics of Multi-channel storytelling. Paper presented at *Critical Animals, This Is Not Art Festival*, Oct 1, in Newcastle, Australia.

———. 2006. How the Internet is Holding the Center of Conjured Universes. Paper presented at *Internet Research 7.0: Internet Convergences*, Sept 27–30, in Brisbane, Australia.

———. 2008. Emerging Participatory Culture Practices: Player-Created Tiers in Alternate Reality Games. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, ed. Jenkins, Henry and Mark Deuze 14(1): 41–57.

Denward, Marie. 2008. Broadcast Culture Meets Role-Playing Culture: Consequences for Audience Participation in a Cross-Media Production. Paper presented at the *International Association for Media & Communication Research (IAMCR) 26th Annual Research Conference*. 20–25 July, in Stockholm, Sweden.

Denward, Marie, Annika Waern and Andie Nordgren. 2008. Evaluation of a Long-term and Large-scale Pervasive Game: Sanningen om Marika. IPerG (Integrated Project on Pervasive Gaming).

Deuze, Mark. 2007. *Media Work*. Cambridge: Polity.

deWaal Malefyt, Timothy. 2006. The Privatisation of Consumption: Marketing Media Through Sensory Modalities. *Advertising and the Media themed issue of Media International Australia*(119): 85-98.

Dinehart, Stephen. 2009a. Transmedia Franchise Development. The Narrative Design Exploratorium. http://narrativedesign.org/2009/06/transmedia-franchise-development/ (accessed June 30, 2009).

———. 2009b. What is a Narrative Designer?. The Narrative Design Exploratorium. http://narrator.narrativedesigners.net/2009/09/what-is-a-narrative-designer/ (accessed Sept 20, 2009).

Dinehart, Stephen and Jeff Gomez. 2009. Creators of Transmedia Stories 3: Jeff Gomez. The Narrative Design Exploratorium. http://narrativedesign.org/2009/09/creators-of-transmedia-stories-3-jeff-gomez/ (accessed Sept 20, 2009).

Dixon, Robert. 2006. Travelling Mass-Media Circus: Frank Hurley's Synchronized Lecture Entertainments. *Nineteenth Century Theatre & Film* 33(1): 60–87.

Doležel, Lubomír. 1998. *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.

Donaton, Scott. 2004. *Madison & Vine: Why the Entertainment and Advertising Industries Must Converge to Survive*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Douglas, Christopher. 2002. 'You Have Unleashed a Horde of Barbarians!': Fighting Indians, Playing Games, Forming Disciplines. *Postmodern Culture* 14(1). http://pmc.iath.virginia.edu/text-only/issue.902/13.1douglas.txt

Dreher, Thomas. 2005. Konzeptuelle Kunst und Software Art: Notationen, Algorithmen und Codes. Paper presented at *Literatur und Strom: Code Interface Concept*, Nov 11, in Stuttgart, Germany.

Duncan, Tom and Clarke Caywood. 1996. The Concept, Process, and Evolution of Integrated Marketing Communication. In *Integrated Communication: Synergy of Persuasive Voices*, ed. Esther Thorson and Jeri Moore, 13–34 Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Dutta-Bergman, Mohan. 2004. Complementarity in Consumption of News Types Across Traditional and New Media. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 48(1): 41–60.

Eastgate. 2007. Storyspace Views. Eastgate. http://www.eastgate.com/storyspace/maps.html (accessed April 10, 2008).

Eco, Umberto. 1984. *Postscript to The Name of the Rose*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

———. 1989 [1962]. *The Open Work*. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press.

Elkington, Trevor. 2005. How a Salad Bowl Can Improve Transmedia Storytelling: Integration and Convergence in Film and Game Development. Paper presented at *Futureplay*, Oct, 14, in East Lansing, USA.

———. 2009. Too Many Cooks: Media Convergence and Self-Defeating Adaptations. In *The Video Game Theory Reader 2*, ed. Bernard Perron and Mark J. P. Wolf, 213–235. New York: Routledge.

Elliott, Bridget and Anthony Purdy. 2005. Man in a Suitcase: Tulse Luper at Compton Verney. *Image and Narrative* 12.

Elliott, Kamilla. 2004. Literary Film Adaptation and the Form/Content Dilemma. In *Narrative Across Media: the Languages of Storytelling*, ed. Marie-Laure Ryan, 220–243. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press. .

Enigma, Brian. 2007. Sydney2. Vanishing Point Wiki. http://vanishingpointwiki.com/wiki/Image:Sydney2.jpg (accessed June 10, 2008).

Eno, Brian. 2009. A Living Art Reborn. *Prospect Magazine* 158. http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/article_details.php?id=10784 (accessed May 23, 2009).

Epstein, Daniel and Darren Aronofsky. 2005. Darren Aronofsky: The Fountain. Suicide Girls. http://suicidegirls.com/interviews/Darren+Aronofsky+-+The+Fountain/ (accessed Aug 10. 2006).

Eskelinen, Markku. 2001. The Gaming Situation. *Game Studies* 1(1). http://gamestudies.org/0101/eskelinen/.

———. 2004a. Six Problems in Search of a Solution: The Challenge of Cybertext Theory and Ludology to Literary Theory. *Dichtung-Digital* 3. http://www.brown.edu/Research/dichtung-digital/.

———. 2004b. Towards Computer Game Studies. Electronic Book Review. http://www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/firstperson/anticolonial.

———. 2005. Explorations in Game Ecology, Part 1. *Forum Computerphilologie*. http://computerphilologie.uni-muenchen.de/jg05/eskelinen.html.

Espenson, Jane. 2008. How to Give Maris Hives, Alphabetized. JaneEspenson.com http://www.janeespenson.com/archives/00000550.php (accessed Jan 10, 2009).

Export, Valie. 2003. Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality. *Senses of Cinema* (28). http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/03/28/expanded_cinema.html.

Fermoso, Jose. 2009. Why Lost's Web-based ARGs Have Made Us Go ARGH! NewTeeVee. http://newteevee.com/2009/05/25/why-losts-web-based-args-have-made-us-go-argh/ (accessed May 25, 2009).

Fireflies. 2004. Story So Far. Fireflies. http://ilb.extrasonic.com/index.php/Summary (accessed April 25, 2009).

Fiske, John. 1987. *Television Culture*. London: Methuen.

Flanagan, Mary. 2007. Locating Play and Politics: Real World Games & Activism. In *Proceedings of perthDAC 2007: the 7th Digital Arts and Culture Conference*. Perth: Curtin University of Technology.

———. 2009. Locating Play and Politics: Real World Games & Activism. *Leonardo Electronic Almanac* 16(2–3). http://www.leonardo.info/LEA/PerthDAC/DAC-SocialMedia.html.

Fludernik, Monika. 1996. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology*. London: Routledge.

FoAM. trg. FoAM. http://fo.am/trg (accessed 25 Sept, 2007).

Ford, Sam. 2007. *As the World Turns in a Convergence Culture.* Masters, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Foucault, Michel. 1977. What is An Author? *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, 113–138. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Francastel, Pierre. 1956. *Art et technique aux XIX et XX e siècle*. Paris: Editions de Minuit.

Frasca, Gonzalo. 1999. Ludology meets Narratology: Similitude and differences between (video)games and narrative. Ludology.org. http://www.ludology.org/articles/ludology.htm (accessed May 15, 2008).

———. 2003a. Ludologists Love Stories too: Notes from a Debate that never too Place. Paper presented at *Level Up*, Nov 4–6, in Utrecht, Netherlands. http://ludology.org/articles/Frasca_LevelUp2003.pdf.

———. 2003b. Simulation versus Narrative: Introduction to Ludology. *The Video Game Theory Reader*, ed. Mark J. P. Wolf and Bernard Perron, 221–236. New York: Routledge.

Friedman, Ken. ([1998]). Ken Friedman's contribution to "Fluxlist and Silence Celebrate Dick Higgins. Fluxus. http://www.fluxus.org/higgins/ken.htm (accessed Jan 26, 2008).

Fullerton, Tracey. 2006. webRIOT. TracyFullerton.com http://tracyfullerton.com/projects/webriot.html (accessed April 25, 2009).

Fullerton, Tracy, Christopher Swain and Steven Hoffman. 2008. *Game Design Workshop: A Playcentric Approach to Creating Innovative Games*. Amsterdam: Elsevier Morgan Kaufmann.

Galbraith, Mary. 1995. Deictic Shift Theory and the Poetics of Involvement in Narrative. In *Deixis in Narrative: A Cognitive Science Perspective*, ed. Duncan, Judith, Gail Bruder, Lynne Hewitt, 19–59. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Galloway, Kit and Sherrie Rabinowitz. Hole-In-Space, 1980. Electronic Café International. http://www.ecafe.com/getty/HIS/index.html (accessed April 16, 2008).

Gaudiosi, John. 2006. The Hollywood Byte #16: ABC Finds New Lost Game. Yahoo! Games. http://videogames.yahoo.com/ongoingfeature?eid=454019&page=0 (accessed May 10, 2006).

Gaudiosi, John. 2009. "The Sims" Creator Eyes the World Beyond Games. Reuters. http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE5752GX20090806 (accessed Aug 8, 2008).

Genette, Gérard. 1980 [1972]. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

———. 1997 [1982]. *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Genevieve. 2009. 'Extended Experience' of Strange Case. Pervasive Media Studio. http://www.pmstudio.co.uk/events/sat-30052009-1000am (accessed May 27, 2009).

Genosko, Gary. 2003. Félix Guattari: Towards a Transdisciplinary Metamethodology. *Angelaki: The Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 8(1): 129–140.

Gere, Charlie. 2005. Jack Burnham and the Work of Art in the Age of Real Time Systems. In *Get Real! Art + Real-time: History, Practice, Theory*, ed. Björn Norberg and Morten Søndergaard. Europe: Informations Forlag.

Gerritzen, Mieke, Geert Lovink, Max Bruinsma, Marjolijn Ruyg. 2001. *Catalogue of Strategies*. Amsterdam: BIS Publishers.

Gibson, William. 2001. Geeks and Artboys. In *Multimedia: From Wagner to Virtual Reality*, ed. Randal Packer and Ken Jordan, xi–xiv. New York: Norton.

Godfrey, Mark and Anthony McCall. 2007. Anthony McCall's Line Describing a Cone. *Tate Papers* (Autumn). http://www.tate.org.uk/research/tateresearch/tatepapers/07autumn/godfreymccall.htm

Gomez, Jeff. 2007. PGA member Jeff Gomez (left) assembled. Producers Guild of America New Media Council Blog. http://pganmc.blogspot.com/2007/10/pga-member-jeff-gomez-left-assembled.html (accessed Oct 10, 2007).

Gordon, Rich. 2002. The Meanings and Implications of Convergence. *Medill Magazine* (Fall/Winter).

———. 2003. The Meanings and Implications of Convergence. In *Digital Journalism: Emerging Media and the Changing Horizons of Journalism*, ed. Kevin Kawamoto. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Graser, Marc. 1999. 'Homicide' plans online sweep 'Second Shift' Spinoff to Transport Internet Plot to TV. Variety. http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117490857.html (accessed April 25, 2007).

Gray, Johnathan. 2008. *Television Entertainment*. New York: Routledge.

Greenaway, Peter. 2003. Cinema Militans Lecture: Toward a Re-invention of Cinema. Peter Greenaway. http://petergreenaway.co.uk/essay3.htm (accessed March 17, 2006).

Gschwandtner, Sabrina. 2004. Between Film and Video- the Intermedia Art of Jud Yalkut: An Interview with Jud Yalkut. *Millennium Film Journal: Video: Vintage and Current* 42(10 Dec).

Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich. 1994. A Farewell to Interpretation. In *Materialities of Communication*, ed. Jans Ulrich Gumbrecht and K. Ludwig Pfeiffer, 389–402. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press.

Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich K. Ludwig Pfeiffer, ed. 1994. *Materialities of Communication*. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press.

Haas, Nancy. 1999. Summer Films: Synergy; It's Synergy, Baby, Groovy, Yeah!. The New York Times. http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9805EEDC143DF931A35756C0A96F958260&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=all (accessed Oct 20, 2007).

Halliday, Michael. 1973. *Explorations in the Functions of Language*. London: Edward Arnold.

Hansen-Löve, Aaage A. 1983. Intermedijalnost i intertekstualnost. In *Problemi koreljacije verbalne islokovne umjetnosti - na primjeru ruske moderne*, ed. H.G. Makovic, 31–74. Zagreb: Intertekstualnost & Intermedijalnost.

Hansen, P. K. 2005. A Real Story? On Hans Christian Andersen's Sense of Narrativity and His Double Narratee. In *When We Get to the End. . .Towards a Narratology of the Fairytales of Hans Christian Andersen*, ed. P. K. Hansen and M. W. Lundholt, 99–118. Odense: Univ.

Press of Southern Denmark.

Haraway, Donna. 1991. A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century. In *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, 149–181. New York: Routledge.

Harries, Dan. 2002. Preface. In *The New Media Book*, ed. Dan Harries, ix–x. London: British Film Institute.

Hench, John and Peggy Van Pelt. 2003. *Designing Disney: Imagineering and the Art of the Show*. New York: Disney Editions.

Herman, David. 2002. *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press.

———. 2004. Toward a Transmedial Narratology. In *Narrative Across Media: the Languages of Storytelling*, ed Marie-Laure Ryan, 47–75. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press.

Hi-ReS. 2007. The Lost Experience. Hi-ReS. http://www.hi-res.net/awards/thelostexperience/ (accessed Sept 10, 2007).

Higgins, Dick. 2001 [1965]. Intermedia. *Leonardo* 34(1): 49–54.

Higgins, Dick. 2004 [1965]. Synesthesia and Intersenses: Intermedia. UbuWeb http://www.ubu.com/papers/higgins_intermedia.html (accessed April 25, 2007).

Higgins, Hannah. 2002. Intermedial Perception or Fluxing Across the Sensory. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 8(4): 59–76.

Highet, Gilbert. 1985. *The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman influences on Western Literature*. New York, Oxford Univ. Press.

Hill, Peter. 2001. Superfictions: The Creation of Fictional Situations in International Contemporary Art Practice. PhD diss., RMIT.

Holquist, Michael. 1981 [1930s]. Introduction. In *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, xvi–xxxiii. Austin: Univ. of Texas Press.

Hon, Adrian. 2001. The Guide: Laia's Scary Email. Cloudmakers. http://www.cloudmakers.org/guide/index3.shtml#8.0laia (accessed March 31, 2008).

———. 2007. How to Make an Alternate Reality Game or Perplex City: A Look Behind the Scenes. Paper presented at *Google Tech Talk*, March 5.

Hon, Dan. 2001. FW: [cloudmakers] The Loki nightmare text, origins and credit, email sent to Cloudmakers-Moderated, YahooGroups, June 2.

———. 2001. The Loki Pieces Puzzle. Cloudmakers. http://www.cloudmakers.org/trail/#3.50 (accessed March 31, 2008).

Hoodlum. Hoodlum. http://www.hoodlum.com.au/ (accessed April 15, 2008).

Hudson, Simon and David Hudson. 2006. Branded Entertainment: A New Advertising Technique or Product Placement in Disguise? *Journal of Marketing Management* 22(5-6): 489–504.

Huizinga, Johan. 1955 [1938]. Homo Ludens: a Study of the Play-Element in Culture. Boston: Beacon Press.

Hutcheon, Linda. 2006. *A Theory of Adaptation*. New York: Routledge.

Hyperion Books. 2006. Gary Troup. Hyperion Books. http://www.hyperionbooks.com/author.asp?AUTH_ID=Troup (accessed Dec 10, 2006).

Jackson, Shelley. 2003. Skin. Ineradicable Stain. http://ineradicablestain.com/skin.html (accessed April 20, 2009).

JC. 2007. Sewell and Marbury. Sewell and Marbury. http://www.sewellmarbury.com/2007/09/sewell-and-marbury.html (accessed March 10, 2009).

Jeffrey-Poulter, Stephen. 2001. Creating and Producing Digital Content across Multiple Platforms. *Journal of Media Production* (3): 155–163.

Jenkins, Henry. 1992. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans & Participatory Culture*. New York: Routledge.

———. 2001. Convergence? I Diverge. *Technology Review* 93.

———. 2003. Why The Matrix Matters. Technology Review. http://www.technologyreview.com/blog/posts.aspx?id=15779 (accessed June 10, 2004).

———. 2004. The Cultural Logic of Media Convergence. *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 7(1): 33–43.

———. 2006. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York Univ. Press.

———. 2009. The Aesthetics of Transmedia: In Response to David Bordwell (Part One). HenryJenkins.org http://henryjenkins.org/2009/09/the_aesthetics_of_transmedia_i.html (accessed Sept 11, 2009).

Jenkins, Henry, Jessie Alexander and Mark Warshaw. 2007. NBC's Heroes: Appointment TV to Engagement TV. CMS Colloquium Series, Nov 15.

Jones, Evan. 2007. Xenophile Media Projects. Presented at *Extended Entertainment Experiences*, Nov 24, in Sydney, Australia.

Jones, Steven E. 2005. This Medium will Metastasize: Videogames and Textual Studies. Paper presented at the *Modern Language Association Convention*, in Washington, DC., USA.

Jonsson, Staffan and Annika Waern. 2008. The Art of Game-Mastering Pervasive Games. *Advances in Computer Entertainment Technology*, 224–231.

Joystiq. 2009. Gallery: James Cameron's Avatar (Xbox 360/PS3/PC). Jostiq. http://www.joystiq.com/photos/james-camerons-avatar-xbox-360-ps3-pc/2225353/ (accessed Aug 25, 2009).

Juul, Jesper. 2001. Games Telling stories?: A Brief Note on Games and Narratives. *Games Studies* 1(1). http://www.gamestudies.org/0101/juul-gts/.

———. 2005. *Half-Real: Video Games between Real Rules and Fictional Worlds*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Kapell, Matthew. 2004. At the Edge of the World, Again. In *Jacking in to the Matrix Franchise: Cultural Reception and Interpretation*, ed. Matthew Kapell and William G. Doty, 183–187. New York, Continuum.

Kaveney, R. 2005. From Alien to The Matrix: Reading Science Fiction Film. London: I.B. Tauris.

Kearns, Michael. 2005. Codes for Reading. In *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan, 66–67. Oxfordshire: Routledge.

Kelso, Margaret Thomas, Peter Weyhrauch and Joseph Bates. 1992. Dramatic Presence. Technical Report, School of Computer Science, Carnegie Mellon University.

Kerr, Aphra. 2006. *The Business and Culture of Digital Games: Gamework/Gameplay*. London: Thousand Oaks.

Kinder, Marsha. 1991. *Playing with Power in Movies, Television, and Video Games: From Muppet Babies to Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.

Kirwin, Peter. 2009. Wired-o-Nomics: Mad Men, Media, Marketing and a Fine Mess. Wired. http://www.wired.com/epicenter/2009/11/wired-o-nomics-mad-men-media-marketing-and-a-fine-mess/ (accessed Nov 26, 2009).

Kiteway, Violet. 2005. A Brainwave. Quirky Acuity. http://www.quirkyacuity.com/archives/2005/11/a_brainwave.html (accessed Dec 10, 2006).

Kittler, Friedrich. 1996. The History of Communication Media. *CTheory.net*. http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=45.

Kittler, Friedrich and John Johnston. 1997. *Literature, Media, Information Systems: Essays*. Amsterdam: GB Arts International.

Klastrup, Lizbeth and Susana Tosca 2004. Transmedial Worlds: Rethinking Cyberworld Design. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Cyberworlds 2004*, 409-416.

Kochhar-Lindgren, Gray. 2005. Epigraph: Improvise 92 Quotations on Uranium, History, and New Media. *Image and Narrative*(12: Opening Peter Greenaway's Tulse Luper Suitcases).

Kraft, Jason and Chris Kwak. 2005. Movies and Games: Joined at the Hip. *Susquehanna Financial Group Video Game Journal,* Nov 8.

Krauss, R. 1979. Sculpture in the Expanded Field. *October* 8: 30–44.

Kress, Gunther and Theo Van Leeuwen 1996. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.

———. 2001. *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication*. London: Arnold.

Kristeva, Julia. 1986 [1969]. Word, dialogue and novel. *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi, 34–61. New York: Columbia Univ. Press.

Krug, Christian and Joachim Frenk. 2006. Enter the Matrix: Interactivity and the Logic of Digital Capitalism. *The Matrix in Theory*, ed. Díaz-Diocaretz, Myriam and Stefan Herbrechter, 73–92. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi.

Kuzmanovic, Maja and Nik Gaffney. 2006a. Interfacing Realities: On Blending Worlds with Contemporary Technologies. In *On Transient Realities and their Generators*, ed. Time's Up and FoAM, 14–21. Brussels: FoAM.

———. 2006a. Transient Realites or Verges of Con-Fusion. In *On Transient Realities and their Generators*, ed. Time's Up and FoAM, 60–79. Brussels: FoAM.

Lachonis, Jon. 2007. BuddyTV Interviews Lost's Damon Lindelof and Carlton Cuse – and gets Answers!. Buddy TV. http://www.buddytv.com/articles/lost/buddytv-interviews-losts-damon-4766.aspx (accessed April 10, 2008).

Landow, George. P. 1997. *Hypertext 2.0*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.

Laurel, Brenda. 1993. *Computers as Theatre*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.

Lattanzi, Massimiliano. 1998. *Transdisciplinarity: Stimulating Synergies, Integrating Knowledge*. Geneva: UNESCO Documents and Publications.

Lavery, David. 1995. Introduction: The Semiotics of Cobbler: Twin Peaks' Interpretive

Community. In *Full of Secrets: Critical Approaches to Twin Peaks*, ed. David Lavery, 1–21. Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press.

Lazzaro, Nicole. 2009. Understand Emotions. In *Beyond Game Design: Nine Steps Toward Creating Better Videogames*, ed. Chris Bateman, 3–48. Boston: Course Technology.

Lemke, Jay. 1993. Multiplying Meaning: Literacy in a Multimedia World. Paper presented at the *National Reading Conference*, Dec, in Charleston, Arlington

———. 1998a. Metamedia Literacy: Transforming Meanings and Media. In *Handbook of Literacy and Technology: Technological Transformation in a Post-typographic World*, ed. Reinking, David, Michael McKenna, Linda Labbo and Ronald Kieffer, 283–301. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

———. 1998b. Multiplying Meaning: Visual and Verbal Semiotics in Scientific Text. In *Reading Science*, ed. J. R. Martin and Robert Veel, 87–113. London: Routledge.

———. 2002. Travels in Hypermodality. *Visual Communication* 1(3): 299–325.

———. 2004. Critical Analysis across Media: Games, Franchises, and the New Cultural Order. Paper presented at the *First International Conference on Critical Discourse Analysis*, May 5–8, in Valencia, Spain. http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jaylemke/papers/Franchises/Valencia-CDA-Franchises.htm.

———. 2006. Transmedia Traversals: Marketing Meaning and Identity. Paper presented at the *Third International Conference on Multimodality*. May 25–26, in Pavia, Italy. http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jaylemke/papers/transmedia_traversals.htm.

Lindley, Craig. 2004. Trans-Reality Gaming. Paper presented at the *Second Annual International Workshop in Computer Game Design and Technology*, Nov 15–16, in Liverpool, UK.

Lindley, Craig and Charlotte Sennersten. 2006. Game Play Schemas: From Play Analysis to Adaptive Game Mechanics. Paper presented at the *International Conference on Games* Research and Development: CyberGames, Dec 4–6, in Perth, Australia.

Lindt, Irma, Jan Ohlenburg, Uta Pankoke-Babatz, Leif Oppermann, Sabiha Ghellal and Matt Adams. 2005. Designing Cross Media Games. Paper presented at *Pervasive '05*, May 8–13, in Munich, Germany. http://iperg.sics.se/Publications/Designing-Cross-Media-Games.pdf.

Long, Geoffrey. 2007. Transmedia Storytelling: Business, Aesthetics and Production at the Jim Henson Company. PhD diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Lostpedia. 2007a. ApolloCandyWebsite.jpg. Lostpedia. http://lostpedia.wikia.com/wiki/File:ApolloCandyWebsite.jpg (accessed Sept 5, 2007).

Lostpedia. 2007b. Apollo lost magazine.jpg. Lostpedia. http://lostpedia.wikia.com/wiki/File:Apollo_lost_magazine.jpg (accessed Sept 5, 2007).

Lostpedia. 2007c. Kateeating.jpg. Lostpedia. http://lostpedia.wikia.com/wiki/File:Kateeating.jpg (accessed Sept 5, 2007).

Lotman, Yuri. 1990. The Notion of Boundary. In *Universe of the Mind: a Semiotic Theory of Culture,* 131–143. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press.

Lotz, Amanda. 2007. *The Television will be Revolutionized*. New York: New York Univ. Press.

Lucas, George. 2009. How George Lucas Got The Rights To the Star Wars Sequels. AFI Youtube Channel. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPJ2gQdKXqk (accessed Nov 10, 2009).

Lulu. 2006. Tales from the Third Planet. Lulu.com. http://www.lulu.com/content/225745 (accessed Dec 20, 2006).

Lynch, David. 2007. David Lynch on Product Placement. Youtube. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4wh_mc8hRE.

Maras, Steven. 2009. *Screenwriting: History, Theory and Practice*. London: Wallflower Press.

Marinetti, F. T. 2001 [1916]. The Futurist Cinema. In *Multimedia: from Wagner to Virtual Reality*, ed. Randall Packer and Ken Jordan, 10–15. New York: Norton.

Marshall, P. David. 2002. The New Intertextual Commodity. In *The New Media Book*, ed. Dan Harries, 69–81. London: British Film Institute.

Mateas, Michael and Andrew Stern. 2000. Towards Integrating Plot and Character for Interactive Drama. In *Proceedings of Socially Intelligent Agents: The Human in the Loop AAAI Fall Symposium 2000*.

May, Geoff [thebruce, pseud.]. 2008. Codex of the Lost Ring. Wikibruce. http://olympics.wikibruce.com/Codex_of_the_Lost_Ring (accessed June 30, 2008).

———. 2009. The Lost Game, Labyrinth Run (Kitchener Ontario test run). Flickr. http://www.flickr.com/photos/thebruce0/2377705467/ (accessed April 10, 2009).

McCall, Anthony. Line Describing a Cone. AnthonyMcCall.com. http://www.anthonymccall.com/pg1.html (accessed April 15, 2008).

McGonigal, Jane. 2003. 'This Is Not a Game': Immersive Aesthetics and Collective Play. Paper presented at *MelbourneDAC, the 5th International Digital Arts and Culture Conference*, May 19–23, in Melbourne, Australia.

———. 2005. I Love Bees: A Buzz Story. Paper presented at *AD:TECH*, April 25–27, in San Francisco, USA. http://avantgame.com/McGonigal_42%20Entertainment_ADTECH_April%202005.pdf.

———. 2006. This Might Be a Game: Ubiquitous Play and Performance at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century. PhD diss., University of California.

———. 2008a. The Lost Ring - the alternate reality game for the 2008 Olympics. Avantgame. http://blog.avantgame.com/2008/03/lost-ring-alternate-reality-game-of.html (accessed March 14, 2008).

———. 2008b. We Found the Lost Ring - UPDATED. Avantgame. http://blog.avantgame.com/2008/03/lost-ring-alternate-reality-game-of.html (accessed Aug 27, 2008).

McLuhan, Marshall. 1967. *The Medium is the Message*, Bantam Books/Random House.

———. 2003 [1960]. Popular/Mass Culture: American Perspectives. In *Understanding Me: Lectures and Interviews*, ed. Marshall McLuhan, Stephanie McLuhan and David Staines, 12–43. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.

McSweeney, Terence. 2008. The Eighth Wonder of the World Meets the Eighth Art: Some Thoughts on Medium Specificity and Experience in King Kong and Peter Jackson's King Kong: The Official Game of the Movie. *Refractory: a Journal of Entertainment Media* 13(Games and Metamateriality).

Meadows, Mark. 2003. Game Complement to A.I. (loosely called The Beast or Cloudmakers) [Interview with Elan Lee and Adrian Hon]. In *Pause & Effect: the Art of Interactive Narrative,* 131–138. Indianapolis: New Riders.

Meehan, Eileen. 1991. 'Holy Commodity Fetish, Batman!' The Political Economy of a Commercial Intertext. In *The Many Lives of Batman: Critical Approach to a Superhero and His Media*, ed. Roberta Pearson and William Uricchio, 47–65. New York: Routledge.

Melesse. 2008. 9thWonderScreenCap.jpg. Wikipedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:9thWonderScreenCap.jpg (accessed June 10, 2009).

Miller, Jon. 2008. Space Siege Review. Gamespot. http://au.gamespot.com/pc/rpg/spacesiege/review.html?om_act=convert&om_clk=gssummary&tag=summary;read-review (accessed July 10, 2009).

Miller, Lia. 2006. To Counter the Doldrums During Summer Reruns, 'Lost' Fans Can Get Lost in a Game Online. The New York Times. http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/24/business/media/24lost.html?_r=1&scp=5&sq=abc+the+lost+experience&st=nyt (accessed May 25, 2006).

Mind Candy Design. Perplex City Season One Retrospective. Perplex City Stories. http://seasonone.perplexcitystories.com/ (accessed Oct 30, 2007).

Mind Candy Design. Seaside Press. Seaside Press. http://www.seaside-press.com (accessed April 11, 2007).

Mind Candy Design. 2005. Seaside Announces Plan to Release Earth Anthology. Perplex City Sentinal. http://www.perplexcitysentinal.com (accessed April 11, 2007).

Mind Candy Design. 2006. Earth Anthology Sells Well Despite Cool Critical Reception. Perplex City Sentinal. http://www.perplexcitysentinal.com (accessed April 11, 2007).

Mintz, Jessica. 2007. Microsoft's Mystery Game is Vista Promo. MSNBC. http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16549073/ (accessed April 25, 2008).

Misloski, William. 2005. Marketing's Neo-Renaissance: An Opportunity for Tomorrow's Multi-Channel Integrated Marketer. *Journal of Integrated Marketing Communications:* 17–25.

Mittell, Jason. 2006. Lost in an Alternate Reality. *Flow* 4(7). http://flowtv.org/?p=165.

Mittelstrass, Jürgen. 2001. On Transdisciplinarity. Science and the Future of Mankind, Vatican City: Pontifical Academy of Sciences, The Holy See, 495–500.

Montfort, Nick and Scott Rettberg. 2004. Implementation: Project Description. NickM.com. http://nickm.com/implementation/description.html (accessed Jan 12, 2008).

Montola, Markus. 2005. Exploring the Edge of the Magic Circle: Defining Pervasive Games. Paper presented at *Digital Arts and Culture*, Dec 1–3, in Copenhagen, Denmark.

———. 2009. Games and Pervasive Games. *Pervasive Games: Theory and Design*, ed. Markus Montola, Jaakko Stenros and Annika Waern, 7–23. San Francisco: Elsevier Science & Technology.

Montola, Markus, Jaako Stenros and Annika Waern, ed. 2009. *Pervasive Games: Theory and Design*. San Francisco: Elsevier Science & Technology.

Müller, Jürgen E. 1996. Intermedialität. *Formen moderner kultureller Kommunikation*. Münster: Nordus Publikationen.

———. 1997. Intermediality: A Plea and Some Theses for a New Approach in Media Studies. In *Interart Poetics: Essays on the Interrelations of the Arts and Media*, ed. Ulla Britta Lagerroth, Hans Lund and Erik Hedling, 295–303. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Myers, Jack. 2009. Bio: Jack Myers. Jack Myers.com http://www.jackmyers.com/about-us/bios/8550962.html (accessed Jan 10, 2009).

Navas, Eduardo. 2009. Remix: The Bond of Repetition and Representation. Remix Theory. http://remixtheory.net/?p=361 (accessed April 24, 2009).

Ndalianis, Angela. 2004. *Neo-Baroque Aesthetics and Contemporary Entertainment*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Nelson, Robin. 1997. *TV Drama in Transition: Forms, Values, and Cultural Change.* New York: St. Martin's Press.

Newman, Mark and James Landay. 2000. Sitemaps, Storyboards, and Specifications: a Sketch of Web Site Design Practice. In *Designing Interactive Systems*, 263–274. New York: ACM.

Nicolescu, Basarab. 2002. *Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Noys, Benjamin. 2005. Tulse Luper Database: Peter Greenaway, the New Media Object and the Art of Exhaustion. *Image and Narrative: Opening Peter Greenaway's Tulse Luper Suitcases Issue* (12). http://www.imageandnarrative.be/tulseluper/noys.htm.

Nünning, Ansgar. 2003. Narratology or Narratologies?: Taking Stock of Recent Developments, Critique and Modest Proposals for Future Usages of the Term. In *What is Narratology?: Questions and Answers Regarding the Status of a Theory*, ed. Tom Kindt and Hans-Harald Mèuller, 239-275. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

O'Toole, Michael. 1990. A Systemic-Functional Semiotics of Art. *Semiotica* 82: 185–209.

Ong, Walter J. 1984. Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word. New York: Methuen.

Örnebring, Henrik. 2006. Extending the Narrative of Alias: the emerging cultural economy of Alternate Reality Gaming. Paper presented at *TV Fiction Exchange Conference*, Sept 5–8, in Crewe, UK.

Ox, Jack and Jacques Mandelbrojt. 2001. Special Section Introduction: Intersenses/Intermedia: A Theoretical Perspective. *Leonardo* 34(1): 47–48.

Pasco, Allan. 1994. *Allusion: A Literary Graft*. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press.

Pearce, Celia. 2007. Narrative Environments: From Disneyland to World of Warcraft. In *Space Time Play: Computer Games, Architecture and Urbanism: the Next Level*. Frederich von Borries, Steffen P.Waltz and Matthias Bottger, 200–205. Boston: Birkhauser Verlag AG.

Pearlman, Karen and Richard James Allen. 2007. The Physical TV Company and Thursday's Fictions. Paper presented at *Opensource: Videodance Symposium*, in Findhorn, Scotland.

Peeters, Heidi. 2005. The Tulse Luper Suitcases: Peter Greenaway's Mediatic Journey through History. *Image and Narrative: Opening Peter Greenaway's Tulse Luper Suitcases Issue* (12). http://www.imageandnarrative.be/tulseluper/peeters_art.htm.

Penny, Simon. 1996. From A to D and Back Again: the Emerging Aesthetics of Interactive Art. *Leonardo Electronic Almanac* 4(4).

Perry, Dave. 2007. Main Page. Top Secret Project.
  http://www.videogameteam.com/wiki/index.php?title=Main_Page (accessed April
  10, 2009).
———. 2008. Design Document. Top Secret Project.
  http://www.videogameteam.com/wiki/index.php?title=Design_Doc (accessed
  April 10, 2009).
Perplex City Wiki. 2005. Tales from Earth. Perplex City Wiki.
  http://perplexcitywiki.com/wiki/Tales_From_Earth (accessed Dec 10, 2006).
Pervasive Media Studio. 2009a. Extended Theatre Experience. Pervasive Media Studio.
  http://www.pmstudio.co.uk/project/theatre-extended-reality-experience (accessed
  June 30, 2009).
———. 2009b. Extended Theatre Project. Flickr.
  http://www.flickr.com/photos/pervasivemediastudio/3468508626/ (accessed June
  1, 2009).
Peters, Steve. 2004. I Love Bees Breaks into the "Real World". Alternate Reality
  Gaming Network.
  http://www.argn.com/2004/08/ilovebees_breaks_into_the_real_world/ (accessed
  Sept 1, 2004).
Petersen, Anya Bechmann. 2006. Internet and Cross Media Productions: Case Studies in
  Two Major Danish Media Organizations. *Australian Journal of Emerging
  Technologies and Society* 4(2): 94–107.
Petergreenaway.info. 2006. Tulse Luper VJ Performance. Petergreenaway.info.
  http://www.petergreenaway.info/content/view/37/57/ (accessed April 20, 2008).
Phillips, Andrea and Adam Martin. 2006. Business Models. 2006 Alternate Reality
  Games White Paper, ed. Adam Martin and Tom Chatfield, 49–57. IGDA
  Alternate Reality Games SIG.
Poel, Joki van de. 2005. Opening up Worlds: Intermediality Reinterpreted. PhD diss.,
  Universiteit Utrecht.
Porter, Lynnette and David Lavery 2006. *Unlocking the Meaning of Lost: An
  Unauthorized Guide*. Naperville: Sourcebooks.
Powell, Michael and Emeric Pressburger. 1999 [1948]. The Red Shoes, Criterion
  Collection.
Primatech Paper (NBC). 2007. Assignment Tracker. Primatech Paper.
  http://www.primatechpaper.com/AT_2.0/assignmentTracker.php (accessed Jan
  30, 2007).
———. 2007. Primatech Paper Careers. Primatech Paper.
  http://www.primatechpaper.com/career_form.shtml (accessed June 12, 2009).
Prince, Gerald. 1987. *A Dictionary of Narratology*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press.
Rajewsky, Irina. 2002. *Intermedialität*. Francke: Tübingen.
Reznor, Trent. 2007. [unknown]. The Spiral.
  http://www.nin-thespiral.com/ (accessed April 25, 2007).
Riewoldt, Otto, ed. 2002. *Brandscaping: Worlds of Experience in Retail Design*. Basel:
  Birkhauser.
Riffaterre, Michael. 1979. La Syllepse Intertextuelle. *Poétique* 40.
———. 1980. La Trace de l'intertexte. *La Pensée*.
Rogers, Bob. 2000 [1997]. The Coming Revolution in Themed Entertainment. Themed
  Attraction. http://www.themedattraction.com/future.htm (accessed Dec 10, 2007).

Rose, Frank and Trent Reznor. 2007. Trent Reznor on Year Zero, Planting Clues, and What's Ludicrous About Being a Musician Today. Wired. http://www.wired.com/entertainment/music/magazine/16-01/ff_arg_reznor? (accessed Jan 10, 2008).

Rothenberg, Jerome. 1985 [1968]. *Technicians of the Sacred: A Range of Poetries from Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Oceania, Second Edition, Revised and Expanded*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.

Rouse, Richard. 2005. The Design Document. In *Game Design: Theory and Practice,* 355–381. Plano: Wordware Pub.

Ruberg, Bonnie and Elan Lee. 2006. Elan Lee's Alternate Reality. Gamasutra. http://www.gamasutra.com/features/20061206/ruberg_01.shtml (accessed Dec 20, 2006).

Ruppel, Marc. 2005a. Learning to Speak Braille: Convergence, Divergence and Cross-Sited Narratives. Paper presented at *PhD Qualifying Exam presentation*, Nov 22, in Maryland, USA.

———. 2005b. Triggers and Traces: Cross-Sited Narratives and Medial Materialities. Paper presented at the *Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts Conference*, Nov 10–13, in Chicago, USA.

———. 2006. Many Houses, Many Leaves: Cross-Sited Media Productions and the Problems of Convergent Narrative Networks. Paper presented at *Digital Humanities 2006 Conference*, July 4–9, Paris-Sorbonne.

Ryan, Marie-Laure. 1991. *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press.

———. 1997. Postmodernism and the Doctrine of Panfictionality. *Narrative* 5(2): 165–187.

———. 2001. *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.

———. 2003. On Defining Narrative Media. *Image and Narrative* (6).

———. 2004a. Introduction. *Narrative across Media: the Languages of Storytelling*, ed. Marie-Laure Ryan, 1–40. Lincoln, Univ. of Nebraska Press.

———. 2004b. Multivariant Narrative. In *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, ed. Susan Schreibman, Raymond George Siemens and John Unsworth, 415–430. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

———. 2006. *Avatars of Story*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press.

———. 2007. re: transfictionality. Emailed to the Georgetown University Narrative listserv March 31, 2007.

———. 2008. Transfictionality Across Media. In *Theorizing Narrativity*, ed. John Pier and José Ángel García Landa, 385–418. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Saint-Gelais, Richard. 2005. Transfictionality. In *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan, 612–613. Oxfordshire, Routledge.

Salen, Katie and Eric Zimmerman. 2004. *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Saunders, Alan and Arthur C. Danto. 2006. Is it Art? ABC Radio National. http://www.abc.net.au/rn/philosopherszone/stories/2006/1580766.htm (accessed June 10, 2008).

Schrier, Karen. 2007. Reliving the Revolution: Learn and Play with Augmented Reality. In *Space Time Play: Computer Games, Architecture and Urbanism: the Next Level*. Frederich von   Borries, Steffen P.Waltz and Matthias Bottger, 272–273. Boston: Birkhauser Verlag AG.

Schultz, Don, Stanley Tannenbaum and Robert Lauterborn. 1993. *Integrated Marketing Communications: Putting it Together and Making it Work*. Lincolnwood: NTC Business Books.

Segal, Erwin M. 1995a. A Cognitive-Phenomenological Theory of Fictional Narrative. In *Deixis in Narrative: A Cognitive Science Perspective*, ed. Judith Duncan, Gail Bruder and Lynne Hewitt, 61–78. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

———. 1995b. Narrative Comprehension and the Role of Deictic Shift Theory. In *Deixis in Narrative: A Cognitive Science Perspective*, ed. Judith Duncan, Gail Bruder and Lynne Hewitt, 3–17. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Sell, Roger. 2002. *Children's Literature as Communication*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Sermon, Paul. A Body of Water. Paul Sermon. http://creativetechnology.salford.ac.uk/paulsermon/herten/state.html (accessed Sept 20, 2007).

Shanken, Edward A. 2002. Art in the Information Age: Technology and Conceptual Art. *Leonardo* 35(3): 433–438.

———. 2003. From Cybernetics to Telematics: The Art, Pedagogy, and Theory of Roy Ascott. *Telematic Embrace: Visionary Theories of Art, Technology, and Consciousness*, ed. Edward A. Shanken, 1–95. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.

Sheffield, Brandon. 2007. H&G: Heroes' Alexander Talks ARG Influence. Gamasutra. http://www.gamasutra.com/php-bin/news_index.php?story=14481 (accessed Feb 22, 2008).

Shefrin, Elana. 2004. Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, and Participatory Fandom: Mapping New Congruencies between the Internet and Media Entertainment Culture. *Critical Studies in* Media Communication 21(3): 261–281.

Siegel, Marjorie. 1995. More than Words: The Generative Power of Transmediation for Learning. *Canadian Journal of Education* 20(4): 455–475.

Sijll, Jennifer Van. 2008. *Cinematic Storytelling*. Studio City: Michael Wiese Productions.

Sikora, Drew. 2007. Pirates of the Caribbean: Writing Across Game Platforms. GameDev.net http://www.gamedev.net/columns/events/gdc2007/article.asp?id=1046 (accessed Oct 17, 2007).

Sinclair, Brendan. 2006. Film Company Turns Horror Flick into MMO: Big Screen Entertainment Group begins Work on a Game Tie-in to its Upcoming Babysitter Wanted. Gamespot. http://au.gamespot.com/news/6154799.html (accessed July 28, 2006).

Singer, J. B. 2006. Partnerships and Public Service: Normative Issues for Journalists in Converged Newsrooms. *Journals of Mass Media Ethics* 21(1): 30–53.

Smith, Aaron. 2009. Transmedia Storytelling in Television 2.0: Strategies for Developing Television Narratives Across Media Platforms. Honours, Middlebury College.

Smith, Hazel and R. T. Dean. 1997. *Improvisation, Hypermedia, and the Arts since 1945*.

Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers.

Sondheim, Alan. 2004. email sent to Empyre mailing list, Jan 2.

Southern Planner. 2008. How can Trent Reznor be Dead Wrong and a Genius at the Same Time? Southern Planner. http://southernplanner.wordpress.com/2008/01/27/how-can-trent-reznor-be-dead-wrong-and-a-genius-at-the-same-time/ (accessed Jan 28, 2008).

Spingarn, Joel Elias. 1963 [1899]. *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance*. New York: Harbinger Books.

Stacey, Sean. 2006a. [RABBIT HOLE] Sammeeeees. Unfiction Unforums. http://forums.unfiction.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=16964 (accessed Oct 10, 2006).

———. 2006b. UnDefining ARG. Unfiction Compendium. http://www.unfiction.com/compendium/2006/11/10/undefining-arg/ (accessed Dec 12, 2006).

Stacy, Mitch. 2003. 'Bruce Almighty' Fans Give God a call: Phone Number in Movie Reaches Families, Church, Radio Network. Lawrence.com http://www.lawrence.com/news/2003/may/29/bruce_almighty/ (accessed Oct, 11, 2007).

Stam, Robert. 1988. Mikhail Bakhtin and Left Cultural Critique. In *Postmodernism and Its Discontents*, ed. Ann Kaplan, 116–145. London: Verso.

Stamp, Robbie, ed. 2005. *The Making of The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy: The Filming of the Douglas Adams Classic*. London: Boxtree.

Stern, D. A. 1999. *The Blair Witch Project: A Dossier*. London: Boxtree.

Stern, Eddo. 2002. A Touch of Medieval: Narrative, Magic and Computer Technology in Massively Multiplayer Computer Role-Playing Games. In *Proceedings of Computer Games and Digital Cultures Conference*, 257–276. Tampere: Tampere Univ. Press.

Stewart, Sean, Jordan Weisman and Cathy Briggs. 2006. Cathy's Book. Cathy's Book. http://www.cathysbook.com/ (accessed Dec 20, 2006).

Suhor, Charles. 1984. Towards a Semiotics-Based Curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 16(3): 247–257.

Sutton, Gloria. 2004. Network Aesthetics: Strategies of Participation within Net.Art. In *Networked Narrative Environments: As Imaginary Spaces of Being*, ed. Andrea Zapp, 16–31. Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan Univ.

Swalwell, Melanie. 2002. New/Inter/Media. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 8(4): 46–56.

Swann, G. M. Peter and Tim Watts. 2002. Visualization Needs Vision: The Pre-Paradigmatic Character of Virtual Reality. In *Virtual Society?: Technology, Cyberbole, Reality*, ed. Steve Woolgar, 41–60. New York, Oxford Univ. Press.

sweatypants. 2007. The kwik-e-mart is really... d'oh!. I Stole the TV. http://www.istolethe.tv/blahblahblah/2007_07_01_marcore_archive.html (accessed June 10, 2009).

Swedlow, Tracey and Jesse Alexander. 2008. Exclusive!: ITV Emmys Winners Discuss Their Applications. Blog Talk Radio. http://www.blogtalkradio.com/itvttvoftomorrow/2008/09/18/ITV-Emmys-Winners-Discuss-Their-Applications (accessed Sept 21, 2008).

Szulborski, Dave. 2005. *This Is Not A Game: A Guide to Alternate Reality Gaming*, New Fiction Publishing.

Taylor, T. L. and Beth Kolko. 2003. Boundary Spaces: Majestic and the Uncertain Status of Knowledge, Community and Self in a Digital Age. *Information, Communication & Society* 6(4): 497–522.

Terdiman, Daniel. 2006. Newsmaker: Drawing on the Wii, Reality TV. CNET News. http://news.com.com/2008-1043_3-6146088.html (accessed Dec 30, 2006).

Thompson, Brooke. 2006. Understanding Your Audience. In *International Game Developers* Association Alternate Reality Games White Paper, ed. Adam Martin and Tom Chatfield, 43–48. IGDA Alternate Reality Games SIG.

Thompson, Kristin. 2007. *The Frodo Franchise: The Lord of the Rings and Modern Hollywood*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.

Thyen, Michael. 1996. A Compilation of 555 Numbers from Movies, Television and Radio. Michael Thyen website. http://home.earthlink.net/~mthyen/ (accessed Dec 30, 2007).

Toffler, Alvin. 1980. De-Massifying the Media. In *The Third Wave,* 155–167. New York: Morrow.

Tofts, Darren. 2003. On Mutability. In *Prefiguring Cyberculture: An Intellectual History*, ed. Darren Tofts, Annemarie Jonson and Alessio Cavallaro, 2–5. Cambridge: MIT Press.

TonyJohansen.com. 2005. GoFigure.net.au. Go Figure. http://gofigure.net.au (accessed Nov 10, 2005).

toon-city. 2009. Breakfast with the Simpsons cel. eBay. http://cgi.ebay.com/Breakfast-Simpsons-cel-HAND-SIGNED-Matt-Groening-PSADNA_W0QQitemZ370284993056QQcmdZViewItemQQimsxZ20091104?IMSfp=TL0__911041910004r26590 (accessed Nov 20, 2009).

Tosca, Suzanna. 2003. The Quest Problem in Computer Games. Paper presented at the *Technologies for Interactive Digital Storytelling and Entertainment (TIDSE) Conference*, March 24–26, in Darmstadt, Germany. http://www.itu.dk/people/tosca/quest.htm.

Ulmer, Gregory. 1994. *Heuretics: the Logic of Invention*. Baltimore: John Hopkins Univ. Press.

Valentine, Maggie. 1994. *The Show Starts on the Sidewalk: an Architectural History of the Movie Theatre, starring S. Charles Lee*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.

Varela, David. 2007. Perplex City: An Alternate Reality Game. *Scriptwriter Magazine* 36: 21–25.

Viitamäki, Sami. 2009. What to do with campaigns that are too successful? Flirting with the Crowds. http://www.samiviitamaki.com/?p=404 (accessed Nov 30, 2009).

Waern, Annika. 2009. Information Technology in Pervasive Games. In *Pervasive Games: Theory and Design*, ed. Markus Montola, Jaakko Stenros and Annika Waern, 163–174. San Francisco, Elsevier Science & Technology.

Waern, Annika, Markus Montola and Annika Waern. 2009. The Three-Sixty Illusion: Designing for Immersion in Pervasive Games. In *Proceedings of CHI'09: International Conference on Computer-Human Interaction*, 1549-1558. Boston: ACM.

Wagner, Richard. 2001 [1849]. "Outlines of the Artwork of the Future," The Artwork of the Future. In *Multimedia: from Wagner to Virtual Reality*, ed. Randall Packer and Ken Jordan, 3–9.  New York: Norton.

Waite, Jonathan. 2006. ReGenesis: Season Two to Debut. Alternate Reality Gaming Network. http://www.argn.com/archive/000395regenesis_-_season_two_to_debut.php (accessed March 19, 2006).

Walker, Jill. 2004. Distributed Narrative: Telling Stories Across Networks. In *Internet Research Annual 2004*, ed. Mia Consalvo and Kate O'Riordan, 91–103. Brighton: Peter Lang.

———. 2005. Pattern Recognition: Reading Distributed Narratives. Paper presented at the *Society for Literature, Science and the Arts 19th Annual Conference*, Nov 10–13, in Chicago, USA.

Wallis, Alistair and Henry Jenkins. 2006. GameSetInterview: Henry Jenkins On The Responsibility of Games. Game Set Watch. http://www.gamesetwatch.com/2006/06/gamesetinterview_henry_jenkins.php (June 27, 2006).

Weedon, Alexis. 2007. 'Behind the Screen' and 'The Scoop'. *Media History* 13(1): 43–60.

Weiler, Lance. 2007. Play Again. *Filmmaker Magazine* (Fall). http://www.filmmakermagazine.com/fall2007/play_again.php.

———. 2009a. Creating a Storyworld Part One. Seize the Media. http://seizethemedia.com/creating-a-storyworld-part-one.html (accessed May 27, 2009).

———. 2009b. The Evolution of Storytelling. Paper presented at *Power to the Pixel*, Oct 14–15, in London, UK. http://www.slideshare.net/lanceweiler/the-evolution-of-storytelling.

———. 2009c. Bardo Pond. Flickr. http://www.flickr.com/photos/headtraumamovie/493681076/ (accessed Sept 20, 2007).

———. 2009d. The Good Word. Flickr. http://www.flickr.com/photos/headtraumamovie/871895678/ (accessed Aug 5, 2007).

———. 2009e. A New Model for Discovery and Distribution. Paper presented at *Tales from the Digital Frontier*, June 23–24, Edinburgh, UK.

———. 2009f. Tent. Flickr. http://www.flickr.com/photos/headtraumamovie/870988913/ (accessed Aug 5, 2007).

———. 2009g. What is Transmedia? Seize the Media. http://seizethemedia.com/what-is-transmedia/ (accessed July 25, 2009).

Wikia24. 2006. Fan Phone. Wikia24. http://24.wikia.com/wiki/Fan_phone (accessed June 10, 2009).

Wikipedia. 2005a. T2 3-D: Battle Across Time. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T2_3-D:_Battle_Across_Time (accessed Nov 6, 2007).

Wikipedia. 2005b. TMNT1987Series.jpg. Wikipedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:TMNT1987Series.jpg (accessed Aug 7, 2008).

Wikipedia. 2005c. Tmnt-box.jpg. Wikipedia.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Tmnt-box.jpg  (accessed Aug 7, 2008).

Wikipedia. 2008. TMNTMoviePoster.jpg. Wikipedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:TMNTMoviePoster.jpg (accessed Nov 8, 2008).

Wolf, Werner. 2002. Intermediality Revisited: Reflections on Word and Music Relations in the Context of a General Typology of Intermediality. In *Word and Music Studies 4: Essays in Honor of Steven Paul Scher on Cultural Identity and the Musical Stage*, ed. Suzanne Lodato, Suzanne Aspden and Walter Bernhart, 13–34. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi.

———. 2005a. Intermediality. In *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan, 252–253. Oxfordshire: Routledge.

———. 2005b. Metalepsis as a Transgeneric and Transmedial Phenomenon: A Case Study of the Possibilities of 'Exporting' Narratological Concepts. In *Narratology Beyond Literary Criticism: Mediality, Disciplinarity*, ed. Jan Christoph Meister, 83–108. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

———. 2008. updates_corrections concerning metalepsis. Metareference in the Arts and Media. http://www.uni-graz.at/phorum/read.php?32,175 (accessed Aug 20, 2008).

Wright, Will. 2009. The Stupid Fun Club. The Stupid Fun Club. http://www.stupidfunclub.com/ (accessed June 10, 2009).

Wyatt, James. 2008. *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Renton: Wizards of the Coast.

Xenophile Media. Xenophile Media Technology. Xenophile Media. http://www.xenophile.ca/html/technology.html (accessed April 10, 2009).

Young, Clive. 2008. *Homemade Hollywood: Fans Behind the Camera*. New York: Continuum.

Youngblood, Gene. 1970. *Expanded Cinema*. New York: Dutton.

Zajonc, Arthur, ed. 2004. *The New Physics and Cosmology: Dialogues with the Dalai Lama*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.

Zapp, Andrea. 2004. 'A Fracture in Reality': Networked Narratives as Imaginary Fields of Action. In *Networked Narrative Environments: As Imaginary Spaces of Being*, ed. Andrea Zapp, 62–81. Manchester: Metropolitan University.

———, ed. 2004. *Networked Narrative Environments: As Imaginary Spaces of Being*. Manchester: Metropolitan University.

———. 2007. For we are where we are not: Mixed-Reality Narratives and Installations. Paper presented at *Disrupting Narratives*, July 13, in London, UK.

Zer-Aviv, Mushon, Dan Phiffer, Kati London, Thomas Duc, Ran Tao, and Charles Joseph. 2006. You are Not Here. You are Not Here. http://www.youarenothere.org/ (accessed Dec 17, 2007).

Zubin, David and Lynne Hewitt. 1995. The Deictic Center: A Theory of Deixis in Narrative. In *Deixis in Narrative: A Cognitive Science Perspective*, ed. Judith Duncan, Gail Bruder, Lynne  Hewitt, 129–155. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.