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# Refractory

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## WE ARE THE BORG (IN A GOOD WAY): MAPPING THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW KINDS OF BEING AND KNOWING THROUGH INTER- AND TRANS-MEDIAALITY — ANNE CRANNY FRANCIS

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**Abstract:** Digital technologies have enabled new ways of communicating and relating to others and this has fundamental consequences for being and for meaning. In this paper I map the development of concepts of intermediality and transmediality that are used to describe textual practice and audience engagement in order to explore these changes to communication practice. At the same time I explore the new kinds of audience engagement enabled by this technology, which includes active participation in the reconstruction of older narratives in new media and the potential this affords for new meanings. It also includes the dissemination of stories, old and new, across multiple platforms by both makers and audiences, who themselves become makers, and the proliferation of stories and meanings this enables. Finally I consider the possibilities for co-creation—my hardware, your software (or vice-versa)—which can enable new forms of sharing and mutual knowledge-formation.



Sherlock (BBC, 2010-)

### 1. On thinking about inter- and trans-

The research for this paper led me through a range of ideas and arguments about the meanings of intermediation and transmediation, as well as their relationship to intertextuality (for example, Bakhtin 1984; Jenkins 2006; Herzogenrath 2011; Stein and Russe 2012; Phillips 2012). It led me to think about a multiplicity of texts that are all *inter* in some way—either intertextually related texts and the kinds of meanings they make or intermediated narratives that tell their story across a range of media and platforms—and about texts, producers and audiences that are most definitely *trans*—deploying a range of media and platforms to create a composite and complex world, engage with that world, and generate new meanings. This textual multiplicity in the contemporary media environment in turn raised questions about what has caused or generated these differing ways of telling a story and what the significance of different modes of story-telling: whether this reflects simply a change in technology (if that is ever truly simple) or if that change has consequences that move far beyond the material technologies involved—the material artefacts and related communication practices—to our ways of thinking and of being in the world.

My argument is that digital technologies have enabled new ways of communicating and relating to others and that this has fundamental consequences for being and for meaning. Further, we are only just starting to realise the possibilities and potential offered by this technology for new forms of relationship, knowledge creation and sharing. I work through these possibilities by reference to a range of texts that were suggested by my research and which recur in discussions of these new modes of story-telling and text production. My interest is not only in digital texts themselves, but also in the new forms of engagement they offer to readers, viewers and listeners to become active producers or makers of meaning alongside the creators of the work. This engagement includes our participation in the reconstruction of older narratives in new media and the potential this affords for new meanings; the dissemination of stories, old and new, across multiple platforms by both makers and audiences, who themselves become makers; and the proliferation of stories and meanings this enables; and finally the possibilities for co-creation—my hardware, your software (or vice-versa)—which can enable new forms of sharing and mutual knowledge-formation.

This exploration of shared storytelling and textual production occurs through my engagement with the theory used by media and cultural analysts to understand transformations in creativity, knowledge-formation and being. This work includes the concepts of intermediation, which explores the possibilities opened up by new media and focuses on the textual practices that enable new forms of audience engagement, and transmediation, which also explores the effect of new technologies on meaning-making but shifts its focus from textual practice to audience response. This is a subtle shift as both concepts essentially study the same phenomena (including both textual practice and audience responses), but it mirrors what Henry Jenkins called the development of 'convergence culture': 'the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want' (2006, 2). As I will go on to argue, this convergence, this sharing of and linking via new media technologies, has the potential to transform our experience of the world and, along with that, our formation of knowledge and fundamental understandings of being.

### 2. The Consulting Detective and The Doctor

My first thought when beginning this paper was to use the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) version of *Sherlock* (2010-) as my example of intermediation. One of the things that attracted me to this text was that it re-tells Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's original stories in such a fresh and engaging way, not only through the revised characterisations of its principals (Holmes, Watson, Lestrade, Moriarty, Mycroft) and the rapid editing and visual layering of the *mise-en-scène* that creates 21<sup>st</sup> century London as the technological and social successor to Conan Doyle's 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial London, but also by the re-framing of familiar narratives to make them directly relevant to contemporary British society. For example, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1901) is re-written by Mark Gatiss as 'The Hounds of Baskerville' (2012), a story about experiments with nerve agents and genetic mutation at a United Kingdom military base. The story focuses around a local man, Henry Knight who, as a child, saw his father torn apart by a giant hound on Dartmoor, near the Baskerville military establishment. Fear of the hound is produced not, as in the original story, by phosphorescence painted onto a large dog (though the local innkeepers have a large dog that they used to spread the 'giant hound' story to tourists), but by a hallucinogenic drug that is released into the air by nerve pads buried in a certain part of the nearby moors. We eventually discover that Knight's father was killed accidentally when he wandered into the test area for these nerve pads. Under the influence of the air-borne toxin, Knight tripped and hit his head on a rock while attempting to run away from Baskerville scientist, Robert Frankland, who was wearing a gas mask and so appeared monstrous. The young Henry Knight witnessed his father's accidental death but under the influence of the nerve toxin transformed the memory into the story of the giant hound, suggested to him by the initials H.O.U.N.D. on Franklin's jumper.

Gatiss's story uses elements of Conan Doyle's original but reworks them into a contemporary story about the development of chemical and biological weapons and their production within an environment of secrecy that puts citizens' lives at risk. The main characters (Sherlock Holmes [Benedict Cumberbatch], Dr Watson [Martin Freeman], Mycroft Holmes [Mark Gatiss] and Inspector Lestrade [Rupert Graves]) are also developed further in this story, including exploration of Sherlock's ambiguous sexuality and his relationship with Watson, which is mapped explicitly onto the gay relationship of the local innkeepers. It is an engaging tale for the Conan Doyle enthusiast as it preserves the central motif of the narrative—the ghostly hound—but finds a way of re-presenting it that changes the story from one about evil aristocrats (the original Baskerville and his ruthless treatment of the local peasants) and modern greed (a villainous descendant of the original attempting to kill the successor to the title so that he inherits the family fortune) to one about weapons of mass destruction and government secrecy. It also presents a different 'take' on the sexuality of Holmes (also explored in the recent films directed by Guy Ritchie and starring Robert Downey Jr. as Holmes and Jude Law as Watson [2009, 2011]), opening up the possibility that he is either gay or bisexual whereas Conan Doyle presents Holmes as relatively asexual.[1] This re-working of the story and its characters constitutes the text as more than a period adaptation of Conan Doyle's story, set in the late Victorian period with Holmes and Watson inhabiting the world of brougham cabs and steam trains. So is this an example of intertextuality or intermediality, with the literary creation of Conan Doyle cast as another text or medium that incorporates audience engagement with the story?

Perhaps the most obvious answer here is that this re-casting of the Holmes story is an example of intermediality, defined in an early essay by Dick Higgins as generated by 'the desire to fuse two or more existing media' (1966). Berndt Herzogenrath notes, however, that Higgins saw intermediality not as the final text but as 'the uncharted land that lies between' ... different media' (2012, loc. 129-142).[2] The intermediality generated by the *Sherlock* re-visioning of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* enables the presentation of different meanings (about weapons production and secrecy) while maintaining the bones of the original narrative (about the abuse of power and the production of fear). Herzogenrath notes that in *Image-Music-Text* (1977) Roland Barthes related intermediality to interdisciplinarity, which occurs:

...when the solidarity of the old disciplines breaks down—perhaps even violently, via the jolts of fashion—in the interests of a new object and a new language neither of which has a place in the field of the sciences that were to be brought peacefully together, this unease in classification being precisely the point from which it is possible to diagnose a certain mutation. (loc. 129)

This disciplinary transformation might seem a heavy burden to place on *Sherlock*, however it is certainly the case that this production of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in a different medium tells different stories and interrogates different aspects of everyday life (military activity, government control, sexual identity) from Conan Doyle's original. Moreover, as discussed further below, Mark Gatiss's revision of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* might be seen as Bakhtin's *heteroglossia* in

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practice with Gattai's story constituting another voice/telling that reiterates some original narrative elements whilst adding some and transforming others.



Jeremy Brett as Sherlock Holmes (1984-94)

From a contemporary perspective the transfer from literary text to television may not seem a case of disciplinary violence, however, some time ago it did. When television was younger and literature was a canonical art form, the production of a literary work as a television program led inevitably to discussions of what was 'lost' by the transfer to such an 'impoverished' medium. It is only far more recently that we have understood that an intermediated work is offering something new and different, unconstrained by the disciplinary

shackles of the past. This realisation enables *Sherlock* to be written as a contemporary series, while retaining characteristics of its Victorian predecessor—as distinct, for example, from the older BBC series, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* starring Jeremy Brett (1984-1994) that retained the Victorian setting for the stories. This successful relocation of the narrative for *Sherlock* depends on viewers being able to read across media platforms without the disciplinary blinkers of an earlier time; they no longer consider the narrative confined to a particular space/time as defined by the original text. Instead, as regular consumers of postmodern pastiche, they adjust their reading practice for the complex network of intertextual references and narrative transpositions that constitutes this contemporary *Sherlock*.

This is more than simply a change in forms of entertainment or the emergence of new technologies. This radical unhooking of the narrative from its original space/time and the ability to read the stories for a different age, with different values and different concerns, is characteristic of the specificity and locatedness (sometimes read as relativism) of postmodernity. The postmodern producer appreciates the origin of textual forms and practices and is able to re-mediate them in order to make new meanings for a new time. Similarly, the postmodern consumer is able to appreciate the multiplicity of (textual) voices that constitute their world, and is not constrained to one major or canonical form of textual address as the bearer of cultural value. This is a reflexive consumer who maps networks of meaning extending beyond the confines of a specific text and its world; the viewer of *The Matrix* (The Wachowski Brothers, 1999) who knows to 'follow the white rabbit' to a looking-glass world that is our own world, and yet is not.

One of the means by which this reflexive writing and viewing practice has been understood is through the concept of intertextuality—used to describe the practice of referencing from one text to another via a character, icon, event or interaction, along with the meanings associated with that reference. Based on the work of Mikhail Bakhtin who saw every text as the premise for and related to every other text, via the *heteroglossia* (different voices) that constitute(s) our world, intertextuality is a way of mapping the complexity of communication practices and the meanings they convey, along with the impossibility of exerting total control over the meanings associated with a particular utterance (1984, 278). Intertextuality is about meaning and its constant deferral (in Derrida's terms) not just the appearance of story elements in different texts. So intermediality acknowledges the use of different media or platforms to convey a specific narrative while intertextuality is a way of exploring the meanings constructed.

One way of mapping the possible meanings generated by viewer engagement with (intermediated) texts—including their constant deferral of meaning—is through the notion of genre, since this is the way that we typically classify texts in order to render them accessible. In a sense genre imposes order on the chaotic heteroglossia of our world so that it does not become an incomprehensible Babel in which each individual is isolated by a wholly idiosyncratic reading/viewing/meaning-making practice. Not only does genre identify the conventions or characteristics shared by the texts that we recognise as similar and so enable us to trace their history, it also identifies the kinds of issues commonly addressed by those texts. Science fiction, for example, commonly addresses the relationship between human beings and their technology, how technology influences our lives and even the fundamental nature of human being. This is evident in science fiction works such as *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982) and *The Matrix* (1999), both of which explore how we deploy technology and what this tells us about ourselves. And this exploration of identity and technology has its roots in what is commonly regarded the first science fiction text, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* ([1818] 1982), written at the height of the first Industrial Revolution in western societies, when steam power had transformed work practices and social relationships, obliterating older forms of labour and the classes who performed it and reconstructing society into new classes. This industrial context may not be explicit in every reference to *Frankenstein* but it echoes through portrayals of the angry, sad and abandoned creature and his deluded creator, who become the robots/androids of today and us, their sometimes deluded or unaware creators and users.



Moriarty and Sherlock

One of the striking features of *Sherlock* is its stylistic similarity to *Doctor Who*, generated by the visual aesthetic, costuming, editing, and the enigmatic and manic main character, Sherlock/The Doctor and his mirror self, Moriarty/The Master.

This might seem unsurprising given that the same creative team is responsible for both programs; writers, Stephen Moffat and Mark Gatiss devised the idea for *Sherlock* on the train to Wales to work on *Doctor Who* (which is produced in Cardiff). However, that fact does not explain the resulting program and its success. A generic analysis of the two series is suggestive, showing that both science fiction (*Doctor Who*) and detective fiction (*Sherlock*) have their story-telling roots in Gothic fiction, which was preoccupied with questions about being, the nature of the real, the nature of good and evil, and the dual (good/evil) nature of humanity. In science fiction those concerns are directed to an exploration of our relationship with new technologies, as discussed above.



The Doctor and The Master

Detective fiction focuses on the nature of knowing, personified in the detective, beginning with Edgar Allan Poe's brilliant investigator, C. August Dupin in stories the author described as "tales of ratiocination" (2010).

Dupin employs a version of the scientific method (involving observation and analysis) laced with imagination, which enables him to look beyond the obvious. Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes is even more scientific in his practice, but with the same disdain for conventional ways of thinking. This deployment of scientific method in order to solve social (rather than scientific) problems focuses attention on the process of knowledge formation (how we know and understand our world and each other) and its role in our understanding

of morality (whether good and evil are easily identified) and of being (whether human beings are simply good or evil). The contemporary BBC *Sherlock* continues this tradition of the scientific detective informed by an eccentric imagination that enables him to step outside conventionalised patterns of thought and assumption.

Intertextually, *Doctor Who* and *Sherlock* share the Gothic preoccupation with interrogating the nature of being and of knowledge, which is evident in some shared generic conventions and preoccupations, though each also has other specific interests—technology (science fiction), the social construction of good and evil (detective fiction). The value of intertextuality is that it enables us to see how these texts are constituted by the kinds of meanings they are making. It allows us to understand why two genres that we now consider quite different can have shared ontological and epistemological preoccupations, because of a common generic ancestor.

Like intertextuality, intermediality is about textual practice. We saw above that the interdisciplinarity that was generated by the postmodern recognition of diversity and difference (and hence the rejection of certainty, grand narratives and canonical textuality) enabled the production of a *Sherlock* that is not a period drama but a contemporary construct, telling stories of today's world. At the same time, as the brief intertextual study of genre shows, it also deploys a conventional detective with an eccentric mix of scientific method and artistic creativity whose 'ratiocination' at times leads him to find villainy not in evil individuals, but in the government and its representatives. Intermediality is useful for mapping that kind of practice, where a narrative divided in one medium is transposed into another where it deploys meanings enabled by its original production, but also produces new and different meanings that are generated via this transposition.

### 3. Spirituality and stained glass

The stained glass windows in Christian churches deploy a similar practice, taking stories from one medium (the Biblical word of God) and realising them in another medium (coloured glass).

Interestingly the windows feature a complex iconography that would appeal to the modern gamer, with icons emblematic of values and ideas that cluster around the central theme and its story arc but open up depths of spiritual meaning. One reading of these windows is that they told these stories for illiterate peasants who had no access to written versions of biblical tales. Roger Homan notes: "The great translucent window at Canterbury known as the *Biblia Pauperum* (poor person's bible), for example, depends upon an extensive visual vocabulary of symbols and an awareness of the supposed theological links between the biblical scenes featured in adjacent panels" (2005). In this way the windows acted as a point of meditation for the viewer, recalling the story and its religious significance. Homan notes also that many scholars believe that preachers used the windows as a reference point in sermons, especially those delivered in the vernacular of the uneducated. They could literally point to the visual representation of the story and explain their exegesis, so that later viewings of the window would recall not only the details of the story but its religious significance.

In his study, *Religious Art in France XIII Century* (1913) Émile Mâle begins by noting:

To the Middle Ages art was didactic. All that it was necessary that men should know—the history of the world from the creation, the dogmas of religion, the examples of the saints, the hierarchy of the virtues, the range of the sciences, arts and crafts—all these were taught them by the windows of the church or by the statues in the porch. (vii)

Mâle goes on to explain that this art is not easily decipherable to the modern viewer who may mistake elements of the works as purely figurative, bringing a momentary pleasure to the eye. By contrast: "In mediaeval art every form clothes a thought; one could say that thought works within

the material and animates it" (vii). Roger Homan adds to this an appreciation of the role of the material used in the art-work:

But there are properties of coloured glass that are of deeply spiritual significance and have been recognized by, for example, Pseudo-Dionysius in the first century and Bishop Grosseteste in the thirteenth. We view not an image but the light beyond which it mediates for us. The image owes its life to that ultimate light. This sense is much keener than it is in respect of the reflection of light upon opaque surfaces. The stained glass image is therefore like an ikon: we are not to look at it but through it. (2005)

If we regard the stained glass window as an intermediated presentation of religious and spiritual concepts and stories, then Homan's analysis leads us directly to the point of intermediation—the light generated by the glass, which is as critical to the meanings of the windows as the images and icons created. Homan speaks of the role of the stained glass as being "to sedate light": "A stained glass window slows us down; it inclines us to proceed reverently and lower our voices" (2005). The sensory effect of the coloured light produced by the windows is to remove viewers from the everyday world, locating them in an otherworldly space in which to contemplate religious mysteries and spiritual truths. This is surely the essence of the intermedial experience, not a translation from one art form to another, but a transformation of being and knowing generated by the (sensory) engagement of the viewer. Again note that although intermediality does address the effect on viewers of a particular form of text, its focus is on textual practice rather than audience interaction. Which is to say, the concept of intermediality tends to address primarily the ways in which the text positions the viewer, rather than the multiple active engagements of viewers.

#### 4. Boba Fett, children's television and transmediality

The term that seems to best capture the active engagement of audiences or consumers of contemporary texts is transmediality. Henry Jenkins popularised this term in his influential study, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, first published in 2006. Writing about the *Matrix* phenomenon that had recently developed through the Wachowskis' interrelated films, games and online comics, Jenkins identifies the work as transmedia storytelling as follows:

A transmedia story unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinct 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. Each franchise entry needs to be self-contained so you don't need to have seen the film to enjoy the game, and vice-versa. (loc. 1974)

This directly confronts older canonical notions of the text as a bounded entity, with the roles of the reader, viewer or listener being to unlock the meaning of that text. Instead it acknowledges the active role of the consumer (who moves between these different media) in creating story and generating meaning that is implicit in the notion of intertextuality. However, this is a different consumer from the medieval worshipper, and the key to that difference is the accessibility of a range of media.

Some thirty years ago, as a creative consultant to a network television producer of children's programming, my job was to construct the world of a particular television program. Like Lucas's enormously influential *Star Wars* series it was set in a different space—a set of planets orbiting a small star, each with their own names and characteristics. I no longer remember the details of the exercise but the project report was about forty pages long, and detailed everything a child might want to know about living on that planet. The aim of the exercise was to create a world that all the separate sequences of the program—games, stories, cartoons, write-in quizzes, the club—could refer back to, so that the show maintained a basic coherence. We wanted our viewers to feel at home in that universe, to feel a sense of engagement and belonging.

Lucasfilm led the way with this kind of world-formation by marketing a series of products that not only capitalised on viewers' responses to the films, but also provided them with the tools to repeat and enhance that experience imaginatively. And, as Jenkins noted in *Convergence Culture*, Lucas did not simply endlessly repeat the story of the movie: "When *Star Wars* went to games, those games didn't just enact film events; they showed what life would be like for a Jedi trainee or bounty hunter" (2006, loc. 2172). Later in the same chapter Jenkins notes that Lucas found that the value of developing toys based on secondary characters was that they might take on a life of their own: "Boba Fett eventually became the protagonist of his own novels and games and played a much larger role in the later films" (loc. 2273).

Again we might argue that this has happened before, with stories based on earlier texts that expand their imaginary world, including some based on Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes* stories: for example, Nicholas Meyer's novel *Seven-Per-Cent Solution* ([1974] 1993) presents a back-story to Holmes' addiction to cocaine (the novel was made into a film of the same name in 1976). What is new, however, is both the number of different media to which consumers have access and the degree to which they can engage with those media. Jenkins quotes Janet Murray's assessment of the "encyclopedic capacity" of digital media, which she thinks will lead to new narrative forms as audiences seek information beyond the limits of the individual story" (2006, loc. 2283). Jenkins goes on to argue that, unlike some critics, he does not see this as leading to the death of narrative: "Rather, we are seeing the emergence of new story structures, which create complexity by expanding the range of narrative possibility rather than pursuing a single path with a beginning, middle, and end" (loc. 2323). Of course, it is crucial to know who is developing these new stories and how they relate to the original text.

If we use the example of the *Matrix* franchise, the whole massive narrative edifice stayed effectively in the control of the Wachowskis. For some viewers it was too complex to try to follow its development and they found the films increasingly difficult to understand, whilst the more dedicated fans were unhappy with the Wachowskis' attempts to explain every aspect of their narrative, as Jenkins documents (2006, loc. 2436-2446). A fine line exists between the authorial control required to maintain the integrity of the narrative and the dictation of detail that closes down the engagement of the audience. Andrea Phillips discusses this in her practical introduction, *A Creator's Guide to Transmedia Storytelling* (2012). She argues "the most effective tool is to actually create a small piece of your world and give it to your audience to play with" (41).

Phillips' description of transmediality is subtly different from that of Jenkins, perhaps because of their different roles (Jenkins as critic and theorist, Phillips as maker). In her role as storyteller Phillips is concerned not to shut out the audience, so describes her world-building in a way that prioritises audience engagement. In Chapter 8, "Writing for Transmedia Is Different" Phillips notes that "we'll be concentrating mainly on the requirements of telling a single, highly fragmented story across multiple platforms, and most particularly across digital platforms—you might call it social media storytelling as much as transmedia. That's because this is where the methods of traditional single-platform or flat narratives become inadequate" (74-75). She goes on to explain this distinction in terms of the strategies used to enable the world of the narrative to be expanded by the audience: "Transmedia storytelling is an exercise in open-ended storytelling, boundless where a traditional single-medium story is finite" (75). Phillips explains that the storyteller should suggest to the audience that the world of the narrative includes more stories than the one that they have been given (75).

As noted earlier, one of the great successes of *Star Wars* is that its narrative is not confined to a specific set of incidents, rather the narrative contains the seeds of many other stories, featuring characters such as Boba Fett whose role in the core narrative is relatively minor but has the potential for new storytelling and world-building. By contrast, die-hard *Matrix* fans were disappointed when the Wachowskis attempted to lock down the meanings of the trilogy to a specific story by resolving the mystery, leaving little scope for imaginative retellings by fans.

Instead Phillips notes the value of deliberately leaving loose ends that might become the source of new stories, which directly contradicts conventional advice given to writers. Though she also notes that these narrative possibilities have to be executed judiciously so that you do not "accidentally create narrative expectations that never achieve any kind of payoff" (76). Hence her earlier point about the importance of a clear story arc: "It is especially important in transmedia to have a plot that goes from beginning to end before you launch" (57). Another strategy to enhance narrative openness is "to create story elements in one medium that have their payoffs in another medium" (78), such as a game based on a film. All of this has to be achieved in relation to the basic premise with which she opens the study: "every single element of a transmedia story has to be fulfilling a narrative purpose, without exception" (40-41). And as she notes the aim of transmedia storytelling, as well as the marketers who use it, is engagement: "Transmedia storytelling can provide more engagement and more potential points of sale for any given story, and when it's done well, each piece can effectively become a promotional tool pointing toward every other piece of the whole" (39). Every strategy used by the storyteller, therefore, should be about giving the audience "things to do, not just things to consume" (117).

Phillips' *Guide* addresses textual practice directly in relation to audience or consumer engagement, though Phillips also stresses the need for a critical understanding of textuality (63). This engagement is both the reason for transmedia production (to sell products, to tell a story) and the result of audience access to multiple media. As Phillips reiterates in her book, this engagement, and the textual openness that enables it, makes transmedia storytelling different from earlier forms of media narratives and audience-media relationships.



*The Matrix (1999)*

cultures based on collective intelligence. Our schools are not teaching what it means to live and work in such knowledge communities but popular culture may be doing so. (2006, loc. 2477)

For Jenkins this makes literacy training for children essential so that they can "develop the skills needed to become full participants in their culture" (loc. 5295), as Phillips argued when she stressed the need to be critical. The joy of transmedia engagement is that of discovery, of finding a way to contribute to the meanings of a text through your own creativity so that your stories are

#### 5. The joy of discovery and the fossilised dolphin

I return here to Jenkins' crucial insight in *Convergence Culture*, that this different form of storytelling, described so well by Phillips, and common to the popular culture that preoccupies most children, signifies a new way of being and knowing:

Our workplaces have become more collaborative; our political process has become more decentralized; we are living more and more within knowledge

woven into that ever-expanding composite text. As Jenkins notes, however, this is more than a solitary venture. It is about being able to collaborate with others and to contribute to a collective venture without feeling a loss of individual achievement.

Digital technology has enabled this kind of sharing on an extraordinary scale—whether through kids playing games online with others across the globe, researchers collaborating on a project across cities, countries or continents or fans world-wide expanding a beloved narrative. It is also evident in the ways that older media such as radio and television use online resources to expand their research, engage their audiences, and incorporate audience responses and knowledge into their broadcast formats. Museums and libraries too are sharing resources and inviting visitors to become part of the knowledge-production for the institution. For example, by checking the digitisation of older manuscripts and newspapers for verisimilitude. On the one hand, this reflects economic necessity and the poor resourcing of many public institutions. On the other hand, it creates a wholly different, expanded knowledge base for the library, an enhanced level of engagement for visitors. Effectively, this visitor/user involvement changes the nature of the library from that of a central authority giving access to knowledge to a collaborative, creative, knowledge-building project. In December 2013 the British Library released an archive of over 1,000,000 images onto *Flickr Commons* for free use and reproduction. Dan Colman reported in *Open Culture* (2013):

The librarians behind the project freely admit that they don't exactly have a great handle on the images in the collection. They know what books the images come from. (For example, the image above comes from *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España y islas de Tierra Firme*, 1867.) But they don't know much about the particulars of each visual. And so they're turning to crowdsourcing for answers. In fairly short order, the Library plans to release tools that will let willing participants gather information and deepen our understanding of everything in the Flickr Commons collection.

Many other libraries and art galleries around the world have released part of their archives to open access and at the same time invite visitors to join them in becoming producers of knowledge.

Recently the Smithsonian Museum in Washington D.C. announced *Smithsonian X 3D*, a web portal that enables visitors to use the museum's 3D scans of artefacts to build their own models using 3D printers. Günter Waibel, Director of the Digitization Program Office, explains:

These projects indicate that this new technology has the potential not only to support the Smithsonian mission, but to transform museum core functions. Researchers working in the field may not come back with specimens, but with 3D data documenting a site or a find. Curators and educators can use 3D data as the scaffolding to tell stories or send students on a quest of discovery. Conservators can benchmark today's condition state of a collection item against a past state—a deviation analysis of 3D data will tell them exactly what changes have occurred. All of these uses cases are accessible through the Beta Smithsonian X 3D Explorer, as well as videos documenting the project. For many of the 3D models, raw data can be downloaded to support further inquiry and 3D printing.

And he concludes:

With only 1% of collections on display in Smithsonian museum galleries, digitization affords the opportunity to bring the remaining 99% of the collection into the virtual light. All of these digital assets become the infrastructure which will allow not just the Smithsonian, but the world at large to tell new stories about the familiar, as well as the unfamiliar, treasures in these collections.

This venture confirms many of Jenkins' earlier predictions about how digital technologies will change our ways of producing knowledge. One of the artefacts currently available is the fossilised skull of an unknown species of dolphin, found in rocks that are 6-7 million years old. The *Smithsonian X 3D* website now supplies the software and instructions to print your own 3D copy of the skull. Even though this will not be the original skull, the value of a tactile engagement with the reproduction should not be underestimated. As a number of recent studies have argued (see Classen 2005, 2012; Howes 2005; Chatterjee 2008; Candlin 2010; Cranny-Francis 2013) tactile contact, indeed all kinds of sensory engagement, generate bodily responses that in turn produce new ways of knowing and understanding an object and our relationship to it. By sharing these knowledges, we learn more about not only the objects, but also ourselves.

## 6. Conclusion

The terms intertextuality, intermediality and transmediality map the development of new communication technologies through the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. They all effectively interrogate older canonical notions of textuality and of reading, as closed practices controlled by the author. Intertextuality was used to argue that texts have never been closed but part of an infinite conversation to which all texts contribute, and that each textual reading adds another voice to the conversation. Intermediality reflected the beginnings of popular access to multiple media, enabling users to explore the ways in a particular narrative or text may be transposed from one medium to another, expanding or enhancing the original story or idea. Transmediality is an articulation of convergence culture, whereby audiences are able easily to traverse and correlate a range of media in order to explore a complex and growing narrative or argument. The difference between intermediality and transmediality is not simply quantitative, however, it reflects a new way of understanding our relationship to texts, knowledge, and each other. It reflects, as Jenkins notes, the development of a collective knowledge culture in which collaboration is a key component of thinking and being. Further, the materials and practices that new technologies are making available, which incorporate bodily knowledges into this collaborative production of knowledge, presage new kinds of understanding and self-knowledge. As both Jenkins and Phillips argue above, the element required to lessen this heady mix is critical awareness—of the texts we produce and the meanings we make.

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**Notes:**

[1] Steven Moffat has been reported as saying that he sees Sherlock as asexual. However, the iconography used with Sherlock and the way in which his relationships with Watson and Moriarty (among others) are presented allow for the many fan readings of him as gay or bisexual—as Carlen Lavigne argues (2012).

[2] References to Kindle books are given as locations, unless the book also provides page numbers.

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