Recombinant Fiction Manifesto

Outlining a revolutionary genre of fiction

in the networked media society

Theatre's conventions:

Stage – Characters – Drama

Stage

The story is staged in a cross-media space.

What are media? Anything that broadcasts messages.

Traditional mass media: *Newspapers, TV, Radio, Magazines*

Advertising: *Billboards, Merchandizing, ADS, Banners, Virals*

NewMedia: *Websites, Social Network, Devices like SmartPhones*

Digital networked content is easy to create and distribute:

more **Devices** that broadcast more **Messages** in more **Spaces.**

InfoSphere *denotes the informational environment constituted by all informational entities broadcasted by multiform and diffused media.*

How to organize media in order to have a distinct Stage?

The stage is a rhizome of media synchronized and organized by digital networks. The convergence of narrative elements broadcasted by the media is facilitated by the semiological links that can be created among them. Each media in the rhizome is directed organically to broadcast narrative elements of the story that refer to each other. The networked convergence of rhizomatic scenographic elements, create a whole, perceptible as individual stage, where the story is told and evolves.

Characters

The story is told by actors that enact engaging characters.

What is an Identity/Personality? Traits and qualities of the self.

Characters are defined by their masks: what and how they broadcast via multiform media over the **InfoSphere's stage**.

Characters show their masks digitally created and tell their stories through disseminated media that fit and build their personalities.

As in daily reality, common people and any agency, use media to communicate and define the identity that they would depict.

*People internalized the spectacularization of representation of the self. They show off personalities through appealing to general audiences. This is accentuated by the compulsory desire and joy to publish personal thoughts, intimacies and emotions on **Social Media**.*

How do characters and audience members communicate?

Social Media enable **audience to participate in stories** by converging real or fictional identities, interacting by **Personal Media** with direct conversations with the main characters or even by creating new characters and building new parts of the story.

Drama

The story interweaves situations among characters.

What is a drama? Conflicts, resolutions, twists.

The story is told through dialogues, statements, monologues, public interventions and actions, portraying conflicts and resolutions that take place in a storyline on the Infosphere's stage.

The drama is about human condition with social dimensions: political claims are combined with internal struggles and subplot of the characters. There are not gaming elements and challenges.

The drama is unfolded by audiences with the same media and content of the real world. By infection / infiltration of the perception of reality through media, reality is re-mixed with fictional events and characters.

How does the drama penetrate reality and change it?

The fiction involves real entities, facts and places: real-world patterns are included in the story, they are cloned, quoted and used as elements linked to the fictional parts of the drama in order to blur reality and fiction, transporting the real to fiction and vice versa.

By the dramatization of the mediated reality (recursive fictionalization) audiences became aware and rehearse solutions of real world plights.

The Recombinant Fiction Manifesto

1) The fiction is told through traditional news media, online social media and public space interventions. The pieces of the fiction converge and evolve in one rhizomatic stage, synchronized and organized by networked digital media.

2) The fiction has conflicts and resolutions among characters with engaging personalities.

There are not challenges or gaming aims for the audience, it must be pure fiction and its nature should be obscured but not hidden.

3) The fiction penetrates reality by including real entities in the narrative. The created fictional reality is made from contemporary real-world patterns, which are semiologically relinked and mutatable in the narrative elements.

4) The fiction is interactive and participative.
It is unfolded with the active interaction of an
audience that can participate in it by creating
characters and reshaping the storyline through
their personal media and by public Interventions.

5) The fiction has activist and educational qualities to achieve social change goals, by spotting controversial identities or organizations, or by increasing awareness of real world plights. It must be without commercial or promotional purposes at all.

Historical

Backgrounds – Inspirations – Differences

Breaking reality by fiction

Literarature

"The castle of Otranto", 1765
Many others attempts to pass off fictional work as nonfiction.

Radio

"*War* of the *Worlds"* by O.Walles, 1938

Reality TV
Allen Funt's Candid Camera, 1948

Theatre

Antonin Artaud, "The theatre and its double", 1938

it describes the concept of breaking down the traditional wall that separate performer from the audience, and thus creating a more immersive (and powerful) context to experiencing art (and as a result, the world, too)

Living theatre, "Paradise now", 1968

Allan Kaprow and Happenings in New York, '60

Augusto Boal, "Theatre of oppressed", '60

Art theory

Detournement, Situationist, 1957
"For a Theatre of Situations" from J.P. Sartre.

Political Hoaxes

Hippy Pranks '70
Abby Hoffman, etc.

Punks Pranks '80
Cum Transmission, Coil, S. Home, etc.

Net-Art Pranks '90
The Yes Men, 01, CAE, etc.

Culture Jamming
Adbuster, Blisset, Afrika gruppe, etc.

Digital Narrative

Chat-Drama MUD (Multi user domain), 1983

Web-Theatre, J. Matthew Saunders, 1996

Electronic Disturbance Theatre, Dominguez, 1997

Digital Storytelling, Joe Lambert, Abbe Don, '90

WebCinema, Entropy8Zuper, '90

MOO / Second Life, Eva and Franco Mattes, '00

Digital Narratives expanded in the Public Space

Blast Theory (UK)

Improv Everywhere (US)

Rimini Protokoll (DE)

IRAA Theatre (IT/AU)

Theatre of the Oppressed by A. Boal '60

Participative, Political and Social approach:
Image theatre, Invisible theatre, Simultaneous dramaturgy, Forum theatre

Theatre is a weapon of liberation.

**The Spect-Actor, is not fictional, he exist in the scene in a dual reality.
Not just in the fiction, but also in his Social Reality.**

Spectator a bad word:

The spectator assumes the protagonist role, changes the dramatic action, tries out solutions, discusses plans for change: trains himself for real action, that is something of capable of changing society.

Critical Art Ensemble - Steve Kurtz, '90

Political approach: Recombinant Theater and the Performative Matrix

Prophetic CAE's intuitions:

New Stages:

Virtual stages and Traditional in Streets, recombination of spaces.

New Performers:

Recombination of Identity. Individuals must have control over their image in all stages. Representations of self and the body, are simultaneously present in numerous locations, interacting and recombining with others. The electronic identity.
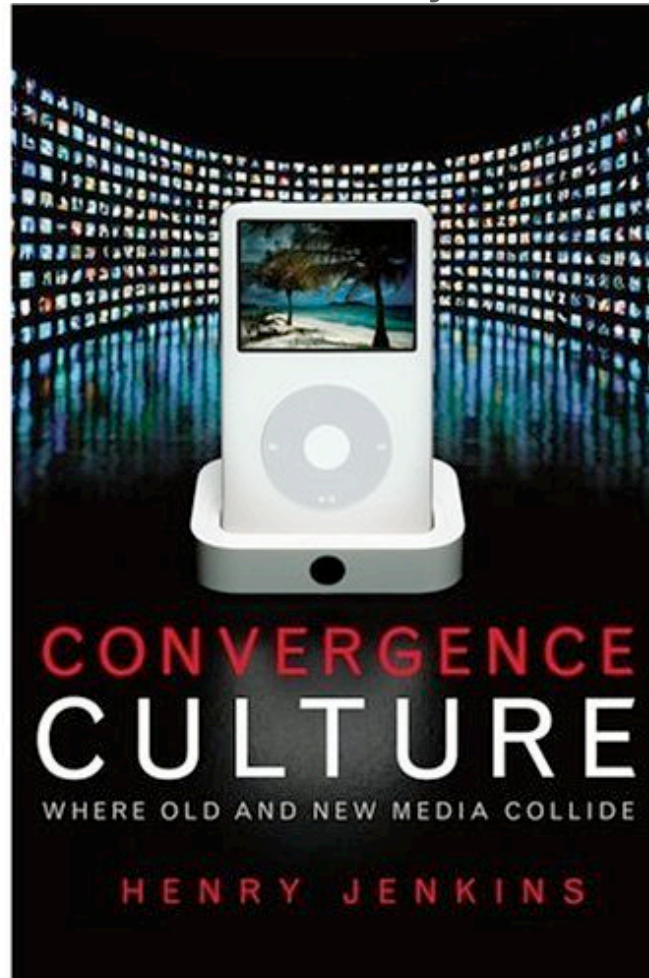
New Modes:

The dramaturgical grid of everyday life. Leakage from the fiction into the real (and vice versa), blurring of the boundaries between the two.

"Convergence Culture" by Henry Jenkins

Marketing approach: Immersed in a story franchising and merchandising.

Transmedia storytelling also called **multiplatform**, **crossmedia** or **enhanced storytelling**, **is storytelling across multiple forms of media,**

From the Proliferation of new media forms and the demand for content in each.

The principle of **Hypersociability**, storytellers hope that fans will build on the story themselves either over the Internet or through direct conversation.

The aim of this immersion is decentralized authorship, or **Transmedial Play**.

Alternate Reality Game

Participative, Challenging and Marketing Approach

An ARG is an interactive narrative that uses the real world as a platform, often involving multiple media and game elements, to tell a story that may be affected by participants' ideas or actions.

The form is defined by intense player involvement with a story that takes place in real-time and evolves according to participants' responses.

Serious ARG:
Participative, Educational and Social approach

- **World Without Oil**, centered on a serious near-future scenario

- **Tomorrow Calling**, focused on environmental themes and activism

- **Traces of Hope,** by The British Red Cross

Critical Thinking, Collective Intelligence, Agent for Social Change