Paolo Cirio – Media Art
info@paolocirio.net - www.paolocirio.net

A workshop on Tactical Transmedia Fictions by Paolo Cirio.

More material and information about the workshop:
http://www.paolocirio.net/press/recombinant-fiction.php
Information about the artist Paolo Cirio:
http://www.paolocirio.net

The workshop will explore '*Cross Media*' practices for producing fiction, such as '*Transmedia Storytelling*', '*Alternate Reality Games*' and '*Dispersed Fiction,*' and how these products are changing cinema, theatre, marketing and games through internet platforms and networked devices.
Nowadays, these practices are leading the entertainment industry, from film schools to international film festivals. There are always more investments and attention to these new forms of ways to tell stories, which hybridize disciplines and media through audience participation.

The workshop will introduce major exemplary productions in Cross-Media and Transmedia, and the main international opportunities to present, raise funds and learn more about new developments in Transmedia.

In particular, the workshop will focus on how Transmedia storytelling can also be used for educational and political goals, thus for engaging people in social change and raising awareness about real world problems, or even for psychotherapy.

The artist who leads the workshop, Paolo Cirio, has been following and researching in Cross-Media field and related techniques for several years as a natural continuation of his studies in theatre and film theories, as well as his acclaimed practices in net-art and radical media interventions.
His theory of tactical Transmedia fiction with activist aims has been presented in several international new media academic conferences and it is related to two of his art projects, which have been exhibited in several museums and new media festivals.

On the theoretical side, the workshop will provide a wide presentation of various theories and practices, from aspects of the history of experimental theatre, to recent forms of participatory Transmedia. The analyses on previous practices will help to understand historic innovations in storytelling through the internet and other digital technologies, as well as the development of the use of new media in theatre and cinema.

The theoretical session of the workshop will also outline aspects in way to tell stories through new media, like explanations of the concepts of convergence, infosphere, interactivity, participation and manipulation in media, as well as identification of networked media species like Social Media, Personal Media, POD, Geolocation, etc.

Working in the Cross-Media field means operating with several media technologies, various types of content, linguistic methods and strategic tactics. There are several peculiarities in the way stories are told and how the characters are developed in different media. The workshop will focus on practical techniques and methods to create successful Transmedia projects.

Some examples and ideas will be proposed in ways so as to trigger the participation of the audience and engage people through infiltrating and purposefully changing daily realities by the use of fiction.
Other practical indications will help to use media through producing Trasmedia projects, from dealing with actors to creating characters on Social Media and writing storyboards for participatory and interactive plots.

Telling a story across multiple media platforms creates a different kind of experience for the audience.
It's an experience that needs to balance the active – finding phone numbers, teasing out email addresses, solving puzzles, live events – with the pleasures of experiencing a story in more traditional ways, like watching video, reading text.

The practical session of the workshop will be a valuable exercise: the students will work together on a specific project in order to develop a Transmedia story. The two main aims of the production are to develop an awareness of historical and theoretical concepts, and to address technical and tactical problems in the use of media through engaging with audiences.

Participants in the workshop will try their hand at developing a unified storyline across multiple platforms. They will be given a base story on which to construct a design that involves elements including, but not limited to, web pages, blogs, social networking, printed posters, text messages, photos, videos and interventions in public spaces as well in the local media.

Making use of the opportunity to see many different theories and media technologies in action, the workshop will deliver a comprehensive analysis of the complexity inherent in the contemporary new media entertainment.

Program of the workshop in Transmedia fiction:
The workshop will be separated in two parts: a theoretical one in the morning, and a practical one in the afternoon, during which the students will develop a small project to try out Transmedia techniques. However the modules can be extended or cut, if required depending on the needs, time and resources of the host.

Module 1: Introduction to Transmedia:
Definitions, examples, industry, resources.

(1.1) - Differences and Characteristics:
Cross-Media, Transmedia, ARG, Digital storytelling, Locative and Expanded cinema, etc.
Convergence, Pervasivity, Participation, Interactivity, Manipulation, Documentation, Fiction, etc.

(1.2) - Crucial projects:
Major and minor projects of Transmedia that illustrate the field.

(1.3) - The industry of Transmedia:
International festivals, conferences, agencies, schools and resources.

Module 2: Politics and power of telling stories:
Theories, science, examples.

(2.1) - Human biological and anthropological dependence on stories.
Examples of Neurological, Psycholinguistic and Physiological studies through storytelling.

(2.2) - Use of storytelling for social control.
Propaganda, marketing, religions and storytelling.

(2.3) - Influencers of political Transmedia.
Invisible theatre by August Boal and Recombinant Theatre by Critical Art Ensemble.

(2.4) - Recent "Serious Transmedia" and activist strategies.
Groups and activists performing and promoting activism through storytelling.

Module 3: Brief history of the development of braking reality by fiction.
Breaking the roles of stage, audience and general conventions of fiction.

Module 3.1:
- First example of breaking reality by fiction through power of "new" media.
Literature: "The castle of Otranto", Radio "War of the Worlds", Reality TV Allen Funt's Candid Camera.
- Origin and meaning of breaking the Fourth Wall, theatre avant-gardes.
Bertolt Brecht, Anton Artaud, Luigi Pirandello, Fernando Pessoa, etc.
- Happenings and Performance of seventy in North America.
Richard Shechner, Micheal Kirby, Living Theatre, Allan Kaprow, etc.
- Pranks and Hippies in North America.
Alan Abel, Abbi Hoffman, Jeffrey Vallance, etc.
- Research Theatre of eighty and ninety in Europe.
Fura dels Baus, Teatrini 90, etc.

Module 3.2:
From the mid eighty to end ninety, use of New Media in live narratives.
- Net-Art and Culture Jamming
Recombinant Theatre, CAE, RTMark, Luther Blisset, etc.
- Digital Storytelling, Web Cinema and MOO and MUD.
Joe Lambert, Abbe Don, Luca Barbeni, etc.
- Smart Mobs and Electronic Disturbance Theatre.
Howard Rheingold, Rodrigo Dominguez, etc.
- Expanded Theatre, Digital Narratives expanded in the unconventional spaces.
Blast Theory, Rimini Protokoll, IRAA Theatre, Improv Everywhere, Rotozaza, etc.

Module 3.3:
Transmedia Storytelling theories.

- Convergence Culture, Transmedia Storytelling and Supergaming.
Henry Jenkins, Jane McGonigal, Christy Dena, etc.
- Alternative Reality Game.
John Gosney, John Harrigan, etc.
- Serious ARG, fiction with social and educational approach.
Chris Dahlen, etc.

- ARG parlance and technical terms:
Puppepetmaster, Cloudmakers, Rabbitholes, TINA.

Module 4: Theory for Transmedia practice:
Designing and Producing Transmedia Fiction.
Technologies, content, structures and strategies.

(4.1) - Introduction to fiction development:
Drama structures, Characters structures and Scriptwriting.

(4.2) - Creating Transmedia through networked media:
Media Critics, Mediated identity and environments.
Drama, Characters, Stage in networked media.

(4.3) - Designing Transmedia storytelling:
Extending the story, characters, themes and experiences through a variety of media technologies.
Timeline, Plot, Characters, Atmosphere, Structure, Narrative Voice, Clues.

(4.4) - Configuring and orchestrating the narrative convergence:
Coherence and harmony among media, platforms, models and languages.

(4.5) - Building an audience and making storytelling participatory:
Dramaturgical Interaction, Collective Intelligence, Identification, Empathy, Emotions.
Tactics for engaging audiences and fostering participation.

(4.6) - Purposefully infiltrating daily realities and real-world patterns:
Strategies and tactics of reality manipulation.

(4.7) - Planning Transmedia fiction:
Which Media, Audience, Actors, Time, Space.

(4.8) - Planning the production:
Budget, resources, legal and timing issues of Transmedia productions.

Module 5: Practical development of a tactical Transmedia fiction.

Students will work in small groups or individually to develop several pieces of a simple story prosed by the artist and designed by the students in several media.
After the first phase of development the students will work as a group to bring the pieces of the story together, using interventions in media and public spaces to stage the Transmedia fiction and engage an audience in it.

Students' skills that can be used in the practical session of the workshop:

- Screenwriting - Video shooting - Video editing - Graphic design - Web design - Social Media

Module 1: Introduction to Transmedia:
Definitions, examples, industry, resources.

Module 1.1 - Differences and Characteristics:

- Cross Media : any entertainment and promotional product spread on several media.

- Transmedia Storytelling : specifically cross-media storytelling, often participatory.

- Alternate Reality Games : cross-media game with tangles to solve.

- Serious ARG : cross-media game with educational or social aims.

- Viral and Guerrilla Marketing : Transmedia for marketing, often for Tricking the consumers.

- Digital Narrative : Storytelling for digital platforms and devices.

- Locative Cinema : Storytelling through geo location technology.

- Expanded Cinema : type of video-art with large use of mixed-media installations.

Underline differences:

- Participation : users/audience can become part of the entertainment product.

- Interactivity : users/audience can interact with the entertainment devices.

- Manipulation : the entertainment product wants to change the users/audience.

- Documentary : the entertainment product documents facts (or fiction if it's a mock-doc).

- Fiction : Fiction is the form of any narrative or informative work that deals, in part or in whole, with information or events that are not factual, but rather, imaginary.

- Narrative : A narrative is a constructive format (as a work of speech, writing, song, film, television, video games, photography or theatre) that describes a sequence of non-fictional or fictional events.

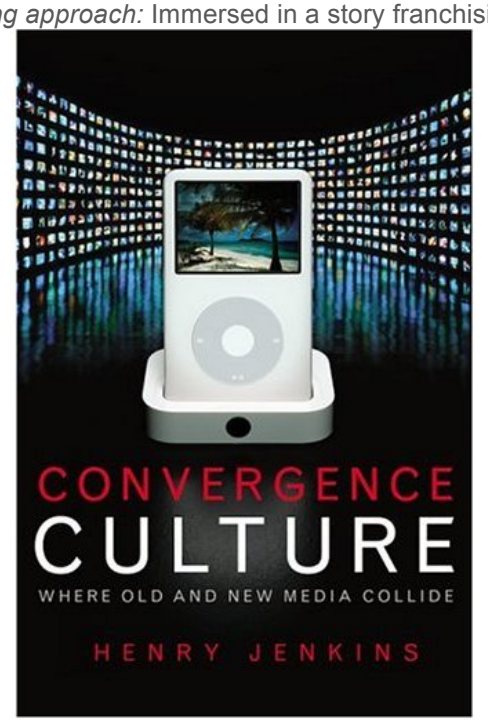
- Convergence : the information is directed to ricurrent direction, or it can be accessed by several platforms.

- Content : any kind of information wrapped in format that fits a medium.

Semiotics *begins with the individual building blocks of meaning called signs; and* ***semantics****, the way in which signs are combined into codes to transmit messages. This is part of a general communication system using both verbal and non-verbal elements, and creating a discourse with different modalities and forms.*

The Concept of Participation:
Henry Jenkins distinction between "interactivity" and "participation," where "interactivity" refers to "preprogramed entertainment experiences" and "participation" to "taking the resources offered by a text and pushing it in a range of directions which are neither preprogrammed nor authorized by the producers." So, to put it simple, interactivity gives the users a pre-set choice (ending a, b, or c; should the character do this or that next) while participation has users do their own thing with the existing content – expanding it, altering it, continuing it, etc.

"Convergence Culture" by Henry Jenkins
Marketing approach: Immersed in a story franchising and merchandising.



Transmedia storytelling also called **multiplatform**, 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.

Common point for Transmedia narratives:

- Storytelling as archaeology. Instead of presenting a chronologically unified, coherent narrative, designers scatter pieces of the story across the Internet and other media, allowing players to reassemble it, supply connective tissue and determine what it means.

- Platformless narrative. Stories are not bound to a single medium, but exist independently and use whatever media is available to make itself heard.

- Real life as a medium. Games use players' lives as a platform. Players are not required to build a character or role-play being someone other than themselves. They might unexpectedly overcome a challenge for the community simply because of the real-life knowledge and background they possessed. Participants are constantly on the lookout for clues embedded in everyday life.

- Collaborative storytelling. While the puppetmasters control most of the story, they incorporate player content and respond to players' actions, analysis and speculation by adapting the narrative and intentionally leave "white space" for the players to fill in.

Conferences / Summits / Festival

POWER TO THE PIXEL (London and Berlin)

Transmedia Storytelling (Berlin)

Transmedia Next | Training for Experienced Media Professionals (London)

Transmedia Lab (London)

Crossover Labs and Sheffield Doc/Fest (UK)

Rotterdam Film Festival Tiger (NL)

DIY Days (US)

New Frontier | Sundance Film Festival (UK)

New Frontier Story Lab | Sundance Institute (US)

Transmedia L.A. (US)

StoryWorld Conference + Expo | Transmedia Storytelling (US)

SXSW News (US)

MIT Convergence Culture Consortium (US)

Agencies / Producers

Six to Start (UK)

the Storytellers (UK)

Red Bee Media (UK)

Mind Candy (UK)

The Company P (SE)

Submarine Channel (NL)

Fourth Wall Studios (US)

Babelgum (US)

Website Resource Info:

Transmedia Storytelling Around the World: Jan Libby | Transmedia Storytelling Berlin

WorkBook Project :: an open creative network (!!)

ARGNet - Alternate Reality Gaming Network (!!)

ARGology

Alternate Reality Games SIG

AvantGame by Jane McGonigal

Pervasive Games: Theory and Design

Center for Digital Storytelling

Transmedia-Activism.com (!!)

5 Examples of Transmedia Activism | Movements.org

Alternate reality game for education – ARGuing

FUTURE-MAKING SERIOUS GAMES

Games for Change (G4C)

Pivotal Projects

The Tulse Luper Suitcases by Greenway

lonelygirl15 - Web Series

The Beast for A.I. (!!)

Year Zero by NIN (!!)

Blast Theory (!!)

The Lost Experience

Hope is missing

Lucasfilm - StarWar

I Love Bees - Microsoft game

Perplex City - Table Game expanded

Fourth Wall Studios - Agency

Catfish - Mock-Documentary (!!)

'The 21 Steps' on Google Map

Lance Weiler :: story architect / experience designer of 21st century stories and social experiences

"Pandemic 41.410806, -75.654259" - YouTube

Module 2: Politics and power of telling stories:
Theories, science, examples.

Module 2.1
- Human biological and anthropological dependence on stories.
Examples of Neurological, Psycholinguistic and Physiological studies through storytelling.

The Neurobiology of Narratives put on by (DARPA) Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.
Since the brain is the proximate cause of our actions, narratives have a direct impact on the neurobiological processes of both the senders and receivers of them.

Self-Narratives promises to make an enduring contribution to the rapidly developing field of constructivism and psychotherapy. The narrative psychological approach can be classified as broadly social constructionist insofar as it attempts to examine the cultural structuration of individual experience.

Investigations these fileds by like:

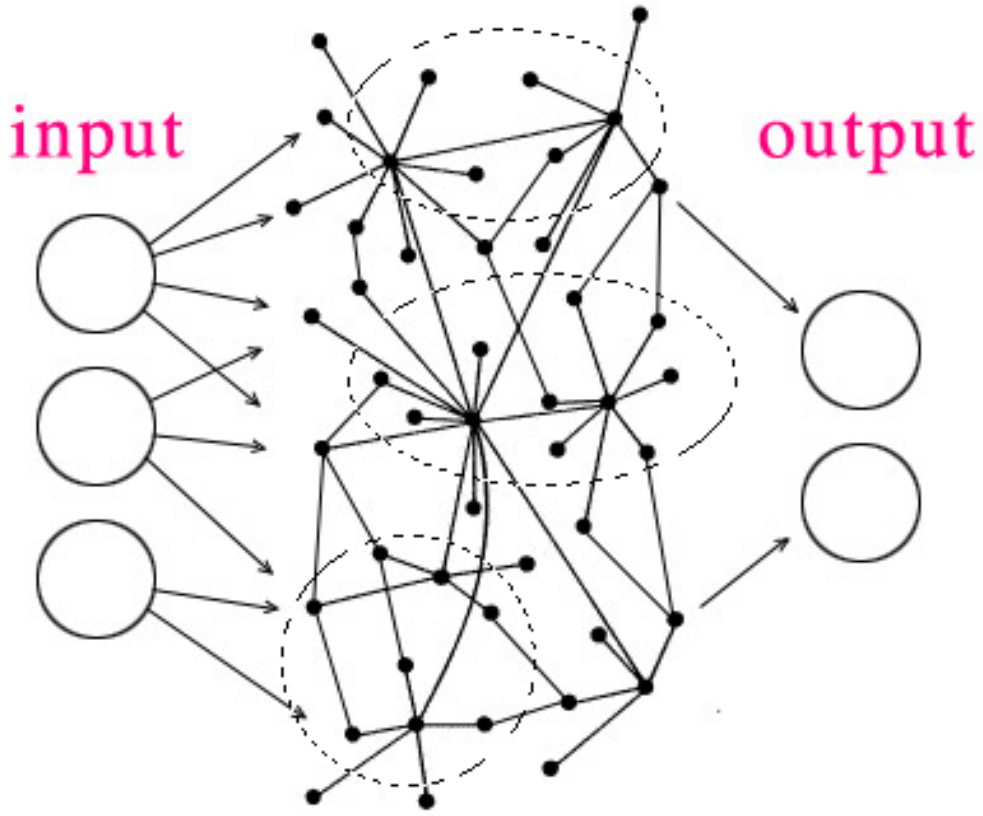
Slavoj Žižek (psychoanalyst)

Roland Barthes (semiologist)

Noam Chomsky (linguistic)

Paul Watzlawick (psychotherapist)

Network Structures
Interactions and variation of data flows over a set of nodes in a general network can affect the entire functionality of a system.



In this case they are functions of narrative interpretation and signification, which means functions concerning the construction of reality.

Networked nodes as model of:
Neurological Circuits, Semiological structures, Cognitive Functions, Visual Communication, as well as, Story Elements, Digital Media.

Hacking networks by knowing pre-established *Schemas* of information processes, functions and characteristics of *sets of nodes*.

A mental representation or Schema is "activated", bringing to mind other information, which is linked to the original concept by association.

This activation often happens unconsciously and automatically.

We can find examples in Cognitive Neuroscience and Neurolinguistic or Psychoanalysis, or in Cognitive Neuropsychology.

Or like Google, or the whole Internet that becomes a network of signifiers.

We may apply structural characteristics of a network to semiotic and socials contexts, then research in these structures as a neural system also for **hacking pre-existing brain's Shemas**.

Module 2.2

- Use of storytelling for social control.

Propaganda, marketing, religions and storytelling.

Most of religions are based on stories of engaging and charming characters, which often are not even proofed as real.

Advertising circumnavigates reason through using of storytelling devices. In TV commercial clips advanced storytelling management for telling very influential and emotional stories in a few seconds.

Celebrity gossip as a form of storytelling. With emphasis on their personalities, and dramas of celebrities' personal lives, this in politics as well.

"There is a politics that discourages democratic engagement yet speaks persuasively to the desire of people to live within and through fantasy, and give to people aesthetic identification." W.Benjamin about fascism.

"We are living in an age where spectacles makes us stupid, but we can engineer them to make us smarter" by Stephen Ducombe.

How to Hack Brains through Reality Hack

Where is reality? Inside or outside of your head?

Mentioning constructivism, relativism, solipsism, so on..

Reality hack is a very frequent concept in media culture and science-fiction. However here, I wont speak about Cyber-Worlds, but about the daily reality in which we live nowadays.

Douglas Rushkoff

About Being Programmed.
“ We live in a designed reality ... we can reality hack... anyone can redesign reality ...
…by writing our own code.”
By digital media we can design alternative realities.

To hack brains is about dealing with biological, cognitive, psychological and language factors:
SOCIAL NEUROSCIENCE

Storytelling to process and arrange information in a very digestible way for the brain.
Brains absorb reality and interact with it, through stories of characters.

Douglas Rushkoff's statement:
“ From Moses to modems: Demystifying the storytelling and taking control. ”

Advertising and political propaganda that hack brains cognitively, psychologically, linguistically and biologically by sophisticated storytelling management.

Technology and storytelling:
“What and the How. In moments when new technologies of storytelling develop, medium can be more influential than the value of the message.“ by Rushkoff.

Memes as storytelling:
A meme is a contagious information pattern, an idea that has taken on a life of its own. Memes are self-replicating cultural units such as ideas (“Fair Trade”), rituals (shaking hands), and symbols (the Nike swoosh or the peace sign) that spread virally from person to person. Memes are like capsules for larger stories. When we reproduce the meme, by using the phrase, discussing the idea, or replicating the ritual or symbol, we spread the story.

Memes can of course be carriers for oppressive stories (like the myth of white supremacy), or become misleading sound byte packaging on complex systems (like the story of “better living through chemistry”). But memes are also an effective way for social movements to create a common story that unifies people to make change – “Think Globally, Act Locally” or “Black is Beautiful.”

When storytelling control comes to social media:
US Air Force had solicited private sector vendors for something called "persona management software." Such a technology would allow single individuals to command virtual armies of fake, digital "people" across numerous social media portals.

Module 2.3

- Influencers of political Transmedia and breaking reality through Fiction.
Invisible theatre by August Boal and Recombinant Theatre by Critical Art Ensemble.

Theatre of the Oppressed by Agusto 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.

Module 2.4

- Recent "Serious Transmedia" and activist strategies.
Groups and activists performing and promoting activism through storytelling.

Examples:

- Ebay Attack
With the help of 188 Amnesty activists, we launched an overnight offensive, planned to the last detail. We used eBay to get our message across: In hundreds of live auctions, we offered women for sale. The message was always put into context of the respective product category. A closer look and the consumer discovered the ad's true meaning and realized how shockingly easy it is to buy a woman these days.

-It Gets Better Project
After a series of suicides by young gay teens in the United States, syndicated columnist and author Dan Savage and his partner Terry created a YouTube video to inspire hope for young people facing harassment and bullying. Their message to young gay and lesbian adolescents: It gets better.
On the site, visitors can tell their own “It Gets Better” stories via video or the written word. The site (and related Facebook and YouTube pages) has become a powerful community for sharing stories, offering support, and providing resources for teens. A Google map of the videos shows just how far around the world the message has spread.

- World Without Oil, centered on a serious near-future scenario
World Without Oil combined elements of an alternate reality game with those of a serious game. The game sketched out the overarching conditions of a realistic oil shock, then called upon players to imagine and document their lives under those conditions. Compelling player stories and ideas were incorporated into the official narrative, posted daily. Players could choose to post their stories as videos, images or blog entries, or to phone or email them to the WWO game-masters.
The World Without Oil game asked players to imagine a world reeling from a sudden oil shortage, describe how the crisis is unfolding where they live, and work together on simple and practical ways to adapt.

Groups:

Transmedia activism
It is a framework that creates social impact by using storytelling by a number of decentralized authors who share assets and create content for distribution across multiple forms of media to raise awareness and influence action.
http://transmedia-activism.com

SmartMeme
Storytelling has always been central to the work of organizers and movement builders. Narrative is the lens through which humans process the information we encounter, be it cultural, emotional, experiential, or political. We make up stories about ourselves, our histories, our futures, and our hopes.
http://smartmeme.org

Paolo’s Recombinant Fiction

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 mutable 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.

Module 3: Brief history of the development of breaking reality by fiction.
Breaking the roles of stage, audience and general conventions of fiction.

Module 3.1 - Breaking reality by fiction through “new” media.

Literature
“*The castle of Otranto*”, 1765.
Many others attempts to pass off fictional literature work as nonfiction.

Radio
“*War of the Worlds”* by O.Walles, 1938.

Reality TV
Candid Camera by Allen Funt's, 1948.

Origin and meaning of breaking the Fourth Wall and political avant-garde theatre:

- Andrè Breton, broke conventions with surrealism through theatre without actors.

- Anton 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)

- Bertolt Brecht, the characters are not hide behind the mask, they became “real”. The play became political agents for social change.

- Luigi Pirandello, developed the characters during the play. Alike F. Pessoa in literature.

- Détournement, Situationist, 1957
“For a Theatre of Situations” from J.P. Sartre.

Happenings and Performance of seventy in North America:

- Richard Shechner, defined performances as a new type of spectacle: time, place, transformation

- Michael Kirby, defined happenings as performances in ’60 during hippies and fluxus movements.

- Allan Kaprow, with his happening the audience is invited to be part of the show.

- Living Theatre, created political theatre in which audience could participate in it, and wanted join “art with life”. The most participative work: “Paradise now”, 1968

Pranks and Hippies in North America:

- Alan Abel, did many media hoaxes, like the movement against naked pets.

- Abbi Hoffman, one of the most important American hippie, he designed several hoax.

- Jeffrey Vallance, American artist, he infiltrated several power structures.

- Cum Transmission, Coil, Stewart Home were punks in ’80 doing several hoaxes.

Research Theatre of eighty and ninety in Europe:

- Fura dels Baus, broke the stage and had contact with the audience, often involving it by force.

- Teatrini 90, Italian theatre scene in which the plays were staged in unusual locations.

Module 3.2:

From the mid eighty to end ninety, use of New Media in live narratives.

- Digital Storytelling, Web Cinema and MOO and MUD:

Chat-Drama MUD (Multi user domain), 1983
Web-Theatre, J. Matthew Saunders, 1996
Digital Storytelling, Joe Lambert, Abbe Don, '90
WebCinema, Entropy8Zuper, '90
Joe Lambert, Abbe Don, etc.
MOO / Second Life, Eva and Franco Mattes, '00

- Smart Mobs and Electronic Disturbance Theatre:

Rodrigo Dominguez, Electronic Disturbance Theatre, 1997
Howard Rheingold, Flash mobs, 2000

- Net-Art and Culture Jamming:

Recombinant Theatre by CAE

RTMark

AdBuster

a.f.r.i.k.a. Gruppe

Luther Blisset, etc.

- Expanded Theatre and Digital Narratives expanded in the Public Space:

Blast Theory

Rimini Protokoll

IRAA Theatre

Improv Everywhere

Rotozaza

Module 3.3 - Transmedia Storytelling theories.

[Attached theoretical paper in the directory “pdf_docs_papers”]

- Convergence Culture, Transmedia Storytelling of Henry Jenkins:

- Alternate Reality Game and Supergaming important academic theories:

Jane McGonigal, Christy Dena, etc.

Others authors of publications on ARG:

John Gosney, John Harrigan, etc.

- Serious ARG, fiction with social and educational approach:

Transmedia can be:
Critical Thinking, Collective Intelligence, Agent for Social Change

In pedagogy:
- Learning through a playful experience.
- Developing awareness about media influences.

In psychotherapy:
- Finding solutions of real world problems.
- Duplicity of the self and of the reality like in Self-narrative therapy.
- Changing the Image of Reality.

In activism:
- Raising awareness about a social issues.
- Infiltrating opponents or authority with effective outcomes.
- Involving communities in political participation.
- Promoting specific campaigns through alternative strategies.

Examples:

- Tomorrow Calling, focused on environmental themes and activism
As the player progresses, an intriguing narrative unfolds. The player is initially sent an email from a company that appears to have received digital contact from a future relative of theirs. On accessing this message, the player is warned that the world in 2083 is a grim place, with hyperbolic temperature rises causing widespread damage to the environment and suffering for humanity. Players are then directed to various sources of information in which more of the story unfolds, and throughout which players are required to take an active role in exposing. Without ever explicitly being about learning or activism (deliberately), players work their way through the story by solving problems using Google Earth, interacting with characters, finding clues and eventually posting evidence of their own positive environmental actions.

- Traces of Hope, by The British Red Cross
Vicious war in Northern Uganda has destroyed Joseph's home and torn his family apart. He has one goal: to find out from the Red Cross if his mother is alive or dead.

- ARG parlance and technical terms:

Puppetmaster:
A puppetmaster or "PM" is an individual involved in designing and/or running an ARG. Puppetmasters are simultaneously allies and adversaries to the player base, creating obstacles and providing resources for overcoming them in the course of telling the game's story. Puppetmasters generally remain behind the curtain while a game is running. The real identity of puppet masters may or may not be known ahead of time.

The Curtain:
The curtain, drawing from the phrase, “Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain,” is generally a metaphor for the separation between the puppetmasters and the players. This can take the traditional form of absolute secrecy regarding the puppetmasters' identities and involvement with the production, or refer merely to the convention that puppetmasters do not communicate directly with players through the game, interacting instead through the characters and the game's design.

Rabbithole/Trailhead
A rabbithole, or trailhead, marks the first media artifact, be it a website, contact, or puzzle, that draws in players. Most ARGs employ a number of trailheads in several media to maximize the probability of people discovering the game. Typically, the rabbithole is a website, the most easily updated, cost-effective option.

This Is Not A Game (TINAG)
-Setting the ARG form apart from other games is the This Is Not A Game sentiment popularized by the players themselves. It is the belief that “one of the main goals of the ARG is to deny and disguise the fact that it is even a game at all.”

Module 4: Theory for Transmedia practice:
Designing and Producing Transmedia Fiction.
Technologies, content, structures and strategies.

Module 4.1. - Introduction to fiction development:

[APPENDIX ATTACHED]

Module 4.2 - Creating Transmedia through networked media:
Media Critics, Mediated identity and environments.
Drama, Characters, Stage in networked media.

Media Critics:
- The media function in our society.
- The difference between experience and a mediated composed view of reality.
- Transmedia as an expression/identity of characters or as a larger examination of the media.

- Our environment of the everyday full of multi-mediated and multi-dimensional self.
- Identity as informational body, a stratification of our public online presence.
- Splitting personality we experience on social network web platform.
- Internalization of spectacle to such an extent that the way we relate to each other.

Representations / Spectacle / Theater convention:

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*
New Media: *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.

Module 4.3 - Designing Transmedia fiction:

Extending the story, characters, themes and experiences through a variety of media technologies. Timeline, Plot, Characters, Atmosphere, Structure, Narrative Voice, Clues.

Texts	Social Media
Pictures	Web pages
Videos	Printed media
Graphic design	Newspapers/Radios/Tv
Objects	Email - Chat
Interventions	Text Sms - Telephone calls
Events	Public spaces interventions
Maps	Flash mobs

Media innovation – networked media:

- Emerging real time of the networks.

- Building audiences through spreading information.

- Move audience from an experience to another, from different devices.

Characters:

- The multilayer identity is expanded in several media.

- The media that the character uses are expression and identification of the character.

Narrative voice:

- The first-person footage is quite self-conscious since it explicitly references the video-maker personal desire to get to the bottom of the story.

- The third-person footage is an expression of minor characters, which eventually become primary and may tend to be a narrative voice.

- What the character shows us becomes a major dynamic driving the story. Since the character controlling the media has an agenda, a subtext, the story maintains interest precisely because we in the audience are invited to engage it.

- The character as narrator is choosing to show us, thus the writer has an additional expressive tool to work with. Thus how the character's use of the media reveals the character to us.

Timeline:

- It would create a totality that goes beyond the individual moment.

- It’s a simultaneous story, not sequential! It is nonlinear.

- It’s live.

- Time management of platforms, locations, media.

- Taking in account the lifetime of the characters.

- Taking in account the lifetime of the media.

Empathy/Experience

- We experience the intimacy of the diary combined with the directness of a confession. The closet equivalent to this experience is that of reading an epistolary novel.

- We feel closer to the character through the media that we use most often to relate to each other.

- The participation and the interactivity are natural and spontaneous.

- Places, languages and devices are familiar and common in daily life.

Audience:

- Audience must be active, but the story should be accessible for everyone.

- Rethinking the use of point of view.

- Managing the shift to the outside and inside media perspective.

- It is less true and less reliable than is the implied "objective" narrative.

- Much in the same way we watch a character's behavior to discover whether there might be more going on than dialogues revels.

- The audience can infer a number of broader issues, such as the nature of investigative reporting, how individual perspective tends to blur truth, and questions of whether we can ever know these answers.

Atmosphere/Theme:

- Graphic and visual design of narratives in the media.

- Language used by the characters in the dialogues and statements.

- Information available about the characters and clues of the plot.

- The design of the story itself and its promotion for the press.

Editing:

- Monologues and texts should be very very shorts and video edited in short clips.
- Pictures and videos made by the characters should have amatorial aesthetic.

Module 4.4 - Configuring and orchestrating the narrative convergence:

Coherence and harmony among media, platforms, models and languages.

Convergence:

All the information should converge in the same story, bits narrative must point to each other as a distributed network.
There is not convergence of media technology, which instead is often impossible to keep connected.

Managing the links inside the story:

- Indications of all the name of the characters, locations, websites, and other contacts always present and recursively quoted in all the media and in all the narrative bits spread.

- Events and facts quoted by the characters should have explicit references that can be browsable.

- Dialogues with references and quotes to several others characters and clues.

- Events and artifacts in the public spaces should allow connections to others bits of the story.

- Real-worlds patterns are included by references and quotations of names, facts, locations, etc.

Managing coherence across media platforms:

- Recapitulations. (recaps)

- Elaborating story events more than continuing it.

- Expanding and connecting sub-characters and sub-plot.

- Restriction and controlling access to the content.

- Creating artifacts that can be easily recognizable and reachable (website, objects, etc)

- Fragments of the story should be like puzzle pieces.

Atmosphere:

- Harmonic relationship among the screens/media.

- Tension among the media of a multi-framed story.

Aggregators of narrative information:

- *Mata-data*
- *Keywords*
- *Google*
- *Documentation*
- *Hash Tags*
- *YouTube related videos*
- *Facebook groups/pages*
- *RSS platforms*

Official website of the Transmedia project:
The project's official website and the keyword/tags on the Internet weld together the episodes and pieces of the fiction, presenting a whole that can be enjoyed by audiences all over the world.
It should be a universe guide: the index of the Transmedia fiction.

Eventual offline installation as documentation of live event:
The installation in exhibitions is the materialization of the narrative devices, bringing into the art show the paradigm of the nonlinear and actively unfolding story by the audience, who can enjoy the story, through physical stable mediums.

Module 4.5 - Building an audience and making storytelling participatory:

Dramaturgical Interaction, Collective Intelligence, Identification, Empathy, Emotions.
Tactics for engaging audiences and fostering participation.

Theories and practices of participatory:

- Professor and philosopher Pierre Levy who writes about “Collective Intelligence”
- Flash Mob by Howard Rheingold.
- Augusto Boal and Henry Jenkins.

Keys for participatory and interactive Fiction:

Experience – Satisfaction – Scalability

Designing routes for leading participation and interactivity of the audience:

- Providing limited topics to talk about.

- Providing what the audience is expecting.

- Providing all the clues necessary to solve and continue the fiction.

- Using often a type of language-genre-patterns that audience can keep using.

Building an audience:

- Who is your audience?
- Spend time thinking like your audience.
- Create two-ways conversation.
- Build trust.
- Have a clear call to action.
- Reward and respect the audience.
- The audience cannot be controlled much.
- Giving creative power and not exploiting them.

Strategies for participation in the fiction:

- Proposing topics that can be discussed, familiar or very provocative.
- Giving and talking about something to share, common culture and content.
- Being a bit silly and awkward, so that audience won’t be worry of making mistakes in participating.
- Fake audience that participates, people don’t want to be alone in doing stuff.
- Promoting the fiction to an audience that it’s easy to engage, like students, gamers, and creative minds.

Examples:

- Asking them direct help, or providing very intriguing clues about interesting topics to them.
- Asking interviews or questionnaires or polls or just comments.
- Asking pictures from people about their local environment or things as part of the participation.
- Asking and quoting local news that are close to the people.
- Using accessible media as sms, Facebook comments.

Module 4.6 - Purposefully infiltrating daily realities and real-world patterns:

Strategies and tactics of reality manipulation.

Tip: The infiltration may work better if no one knows who is behind the fiction, but in some cases being officially labeled may be better, because audience may need to know the author of the fiction to trust it.

Infiltration realities:

- Environmental: working places as offices, schools, neighborhoods, subways, stations, etc.
- Identities: famous persons, mysterious, or common persons similar to the target.
- Events: concerts, political conventions, religious celebrations, fairs, etc.
- Communities: sport, politics, music, educations, technical, scientific, etc.
- Brands and cults: like identities, including brands or cults in the fiction can involve their fellows.

It's all about using, quoting and referring to real-world things. It can be done by stealing and cloning identities, or fabricating them.
Or just using real data and information of real-world, not as inspiration but with direct references from which the fiction can be based.

- Placing elements of the fiction in the physical world like actors in public space, or printed narrative devices or setting an event where people can come to attend.

- Particular attention must be given to the language used by the characters of the fiction, which should be familiar to the target. Language as the one that the audience is used to understand, and Language as the one that the audience speaks.
Language as written, visual, spoken, dressed, stylized, and by any medium that today define an identity.

- The study and the definition of the audience as a target to infiltrate will help to plan a strategy case by case.

- The fiction should infiltrate the routine of daily-life-reality and breaking its boredom, to maximize its effects.

- The fiction should expose to the audiences details of their environment, or the people familiar to them, these details should be integrated in the fiction in form of various references, which will help to bring the audience inside the fiction and participate in it.

Module 4.7 - Planning Transmedia fiction:

Which Media, Audience, Actors, Time, Space.

Media:

video as Home recording
video as Diary
video as Cheap ad
video as Local news feature
video as Investigative television

printed as Flyers
printed as Postcards
printed as Billboards
printed as Free magazines
printed as T-short and other gadget
printed as Books

pictures as Profile Pictures
pictures as Family or Class photos
pictures as Postcard
pictures as Journalistic photos
pictures as Historical photos
pictures as Fashion
pictures as Paparazzi

social media as individual identities
social media as source/provider of information
social media as groups that share affinity

website as blog
website as corporation
website as groups/affiliation/etc
website as e-commerce

artifact as digital support CDROM or FlashDrive
artifact as objects for the narrative
artifact as sculpture or interior design
artifact as intervention in urban location and things

events as a Party or Celebration
events as a Conference
events as a Flash Mob
events as a Protest

maps as Clues route
maps as Subjectification and Identity

Audience:

It should be thought as a target, the ultimate objective.
[look at the other modules]

Time:

- The Transmedia fiction will be “broadcasted” live, it should be considered as a live performance.
- The pre-production should be precise and finished before of going live on the stage.
- All should be set and perfect also in case of malfunctions, plans B and C should be available.
- The participation and interaction of the audience should be considered in the timeline span.

Space:

- Exploring the environments very well it’s pivotal, for logistic reasons and for the setting.
- It should be logistically easy to collect documentation of the location of the setting.
- It should be legal to do interventions and documents the actions.

Actors:

- Professional actors will give to the project an engaging dimension to the fiction.
- They should know how to use the media, since they will often shot by themselves.
- Not only having recorded acts from the actors, but asking from them pictures, and everything that can help to build a representation of an identity over media.

Clues:

- They must be evident to converge all the pieces of the fiction together.

Module 4.8 - Planning the production:

Budget, resources, legal and timing issues of Transmedia productions.

[look at the documents attached inside Resource directory]

Budget:

- Different budget costs for different potential producers.
- Different presentation of the budget for different type of producers.

Timeline:

- Having it essential, from the pre-production to the presentation of the project.
- Considering the participatory window that may shape the timeline.

Pitching and Proposal:

- Logline.

- The Project in abstract.
- Synopsis.
- Characters description.

- Production Partners.
- Producer endorsements.

- Outreach and Engagement.
- Local and global Impact.

- Status Creation and Development.
- Material / Footage ready,
- Last steps of the project, to be completed.

- Media Technology details.

- Crew and credits of the project.

- Theoretical details.
- Sample former works.

Casting:

- Publications, agencies or website like:
http://www.mandy.com
http://www.craigslist.org/about/sites
http://www.castingcallpro.com
http://www.modelmayhem.com
http://home.castingnetworks.com
http://www.exploretalent.com

- Auditions with contacts of the actors, little details and notes.
- Never trust an actor! They needed to be subjugated!

Legal:

- Contracts for actors that work in Transmedia project.
- General contracts for walking on actors.

Module 4.1. - Introduction to fiction development:

Fiction? Narrative? Fake Or What?

The Fourth Wall first of all.
The suspension of disbelief between a fictional work and audience.

Conventional Dramatic structure:

Freytag's analysis:

Exposition or Introduction
The exposition provides the background information needed to properly understand the story, such as the problem in the beginning of the story.

Rising action
During rising action, the basic internal conflict is complicated by the introduction of related secondary conflicts, including various obstacles that frustrate the protagonist's attempt to reach his goal.

Climax
The third act is that of the climax, or turning point, which marks a change, for the better or the worse, in the protagonist's affairs. If the story is a comedy, things will have gone badly for the protagonist up to this point; now, the tide, so to speak, will turn, and things will begin to go well for him or her.
If the story is a tragedy, the opposite state of affairs will ensue, with things going from good to bad for the protagonist. Simply put, this is where the main part happens or the most dramatic part.

Falling action
During the falling action the conflict between the protagonist and the antagonist unravels, with the protagonist winning or losing against the antagonist. The falling action might contain a moment of final suspense, during which the final outcome of the conflict is in doubt.

Resolutions or catastrophe
Conflicts are resolved, creating normality for the characters and a sense of catharsis, or release of tension and anxiety. The comedy ends with a conclusion in which the protagonist is better off than at the story's outset. The tragedy ends with a catastrophe in which the protagonist is worse off than at the beginning of the narrative.

More storytelling devices:

They create tension and concern for the fate of the character. But too many of them tend to depreciate impacts. However the story shouldn't be flat as series of events, it should keep the audience involved in it.

- **Discovery:** Surprise with unexpected revelation.
- **Reversal:** Plot twists manifest like a reversal of fortune.
- **Turning Points:** Anticipation, Tension, Help, Surprise to maintain attention and they open up the story and provide a broader spectrum of options for the characters.
- **Intensify the conflict:** it gets worse or it gets always better

- **Show Don't Tell:** What is the imagery of this story—what pictures linger in our minds? Are there anecdotes that we tell people to show them what we're talking about? What about songs? Poems? Metaphors that describe the issue?
- **Foreshadowing:** What is our vision of resolution to the conflict? What is our solution to the problem? How do make the future we desire seem inevitable?
- **Assumptions:** What are the assumptions underlying the story we want to change? How can we expose and challenge them?

Subplot/Subtext:

Foreground story: About the main aspects of the story.
Opposed to ..
Background story: About the deeper aspect elements of the story, like character relationships, which are the most meaningful, or like emotional link and interio actions.

- Interior struggle/conflict.
- Story of solutions before that they come.
- General human emotional state: hate/love – life/death

* In a deepest level, subtext can reach the audience in a more complex and griping manner than action.

* More than one subplot can intensify the story, but also confusing the audience.

Postmodernity and Alternative structures:
It became all reversed, scattered and fragmented.

Drama structure in Transmedia:

In Transmedia storyline becomes a circular sinusoid.
- The exposition is constant.
- The resolution comes through the participation.
- There may be not a proper end of the story.

The key of any fiction structure is to drive the attention and the focus of the audiences and so have the control over them.

Character developing:

Audiences should identify themself with the character's dilemma.
Thus the character should appear foolish or vulnerable.
Another trick is humor, which servers to put us at ease with the characters.
We like more readily after we've shared a laugh with a character.
However the character should be always engaging.

Some information that define a character:
Who is? What does it want? What is it good and bad in? Who love and hate it? Past and future problems of it? Its fears, hopes, weaknesses.

Methods of developing characters:

A good way it's to ask questions to the characters during the development of the scriptwriting. And so asking what they want to do and check their credibility.

Conventional character devices:

- Appearance explains or describes the character's outward appearance so the readers can picture them, and identify them relative to other characters.
- Dialogue is what characters say and how they say it.
- Action is what characters do and how they do it.
- Reaction of others is how other characters see and treat a main character.

In Transmedia characters devices:

- Self-description of the self through monologues, diaries, and statements.
- Which media the character uses.
- How the character uses the media.
- What the character publish on media.

The identity through media is about layering and juxtaposing bits of the self.
Thus the clues that are left online by all the characters are very important.

Character theory:

Conventional Vladimir Propp's Character theory from tales:

1. The villain (struggles against the hero)
2. The donor (prepares the hero or gives the hero some magical object)
3. The (magical) helper (helps the hero in the quest)
4. The princess (person the hero marries, often sought for during the narrative)
5. Her father
6. The dispatcher (character who makes the lack known and sends the hero off)
7. The hero or victim/seeker hero, reacts to the donor, weds the princess

Jonathan Bishop developed a character theory for analysing online communities.
he found the following character types:
1. Lurker - may experience a force, but not fully taking part in the community.
2. Troll - would post provocative comments to incite a reaction.
3. Big Man - will seek to take control of conflict, correcting inaccuracies and keeping discussions on topic.
4. Flirt Driven - will seek to keep discussions going and post constructive comments.
5. Snert - will seek to offend their target because of something they said.
6. E-venger - will seek to get personal justice for the actions of others that wronged them.
7. MHBFY Jenny - will seek harmony among other members.
8. Chat Room Bob - will seek more intimate encounters with other actors.
9. Ripper - seeks advice and confidence to cause self-harm
10. Wizard - will seek to use online tools and artefacts to produce creative works
11. Iconoclast - will seek to destroy content that others have produced

Secondary and minor characters:

Conventional:
Alike subplots, sub characters help to have other supporting narratives for the main characters.

In Transmedia:

- Characters who record / post content of other characters.
- Characters who are strangers to the intimacy of the characters but dialogue as commentators.

Dialogues:

It plays the most important role in the creation of the character credibility.
Audience believe in the story only if they believe in the characters (actors).

- Speech Patterns: origins, professions, emotions.
- Having a hierarchy or dialogues, central and secondary.

Dialogues in Transmedia:

The language of the media: native and natural:
- Amatorial / Intimate
- Professional / Official
- Cheap Ad / Cheesy

Symbolism:

Conventionally it can be details of the scenography/location or the dressing, makeup, or just objects used by the characters and plot.

Symbolism in Transmendia:
It is much broader; it includes most of visuals, and graphics that can be found in media. It includes the pop cultures imaginary as well as graphic and design, or even behaviors. It's the contemporary hyper-semiotization.

Atmosphere:

Accumulation of details that creates the illusion of a single, coherent world on the page.
Details are the key.

Conflicts:

General types:

Person vs. self
Person vs. person
Person vs. society
Person vs. nature
Person vs. supernatural
Person vs. machine/technology

More variations:
Sex, Ages, Cultures, Religions, Wealth, Judgment, Temperaments.