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BUILDING A DISCOURSE: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN NEW MEDIA'S CONVERGENCE AND RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION'S MULTIMODALITY

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BUILDING A DISCOURSE: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN NEW MEDIA'S
CONVERGENCE AND RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION'S MULTIMODALITY

By

Katherine G. Aho

A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In Rhetoric and Technical Communication

MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

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This dissertation has been approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in Rhetoric and Technical Communication.

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Dissertation Abstract

My dissertation emphasizes the use of narrative structuralism and narrative theories about storytelling in order to build a discourse between the fields of New Media and Rhetoric and Composition. Propp's morphological analysis and the breaking down of stories into component pieces aides in the discussion of storytelling as it appears in and is mediated by digital and computer technologies. New Media and Rhetoric and Composition are aided by shared concerns for textual production and consumption.

In using the notion of "kairotic reading" (KR), I show the interconnectedness and interdisciplinarity required in the development of pedagogy utilized to teach students to develop into reflective practitioners that are aware of their rhetorical surroundings and can made sound judgments concerning their own message generation and consumption in the workplace. KR is a transferable skill that is beneficial to students and teachers alike.

The dissertation research utilizes theories of New Media and New Media-influenced practitioners, including Jenkins' theory of convergence, Bourdieu's notion of taste, Gee's term "semiotic domains," and Manovich's "modification." These theoretical pieces are combined in order to show how KR can be extended by convergent narrative practices. In order to build connections with New Media, the consideration and inclusion of Kress and van Leeuwen's multimodality, Selber's "reflective practitioners," and Selfe's definition of multimodal composing allow for a greater establishment of conversation order to create a richer conversation around the implications of metacognitive development and practitioner reflexivity with scholars in New Media.

My research also includes analysis of two popular media franchises Deborah Harkness' *A Discovery of Witches* and Fox's *Bones* television series to show similarities and differences among convergence-linked and multimodal narratives. Lastly, I also provide example assignments that can be taken, further developed, and utilized in classrooms engaging in multimodal composing practices. This dissertation pushes consideration of New Media into the work already being performed by those in Rhetoric and Composition.

Chapter 1

Introduction: Setting Forth the Conversation

The Beginning

In taking on discussion of the terms convergence and multimodality, it is my goal to build a common dialogue about their usage between those in the fields of New Media and Rhetoric and Composition. In order to address this goal, I historically situate narrative practices that are relevant to the composing and textual generation process. This piece will also briefly investigate narrative structuralism and its influence on storytelling in various guises including convergent and multimodal. I contend that the influence of convergence on composition practices is of great importance to the field of Rhetoric and Composition and can be put into conversation with already established definitions and theories of multimodality.

The narrative structures associated with convergence have the power and potential to influence composition production and consumption practices for many years to come. Convergence relies on the practice of transmedia storytelling to relay its information to a body of participants (Jenkins *Convergence* 20). A brief definition of the term notes that "convergence refers to a situation in which multiple media systems coexist and where media content flows fluidly across them" (Jenkins *Convergence* 322). These stories are a sum of movable parts and allow for kairotic reading and the generative development of knowledge and understanding by readers. Currently, New Media and convergence scholars are involved in much of the discussion related to the development of transmedia storytelling and narrative production. Rhetoric and Composition scholars have yet to

offer much insight into the development of these products or in the development of critical thinking practices for the consumption and creation of such items. These scholars have, however, discussed in earnest the notion of multimodality and its application to Rhetoric and Composition in classroom learning settings, the development of pedagogical practices, and in research contexts (Kress and Van Leeuwen, Kress, Selber, Gee, and *The New London Group*). Multimodality can be connected to convergence because of each term's relationship to the flow, sociocultural acceptance, and production of a variety of items labeled as texts or textual extensions. Multimodality can be briefly defined as the state of being made of many modes ("Multimodal"). Narrative textual generation has a history that is rich with systemization and also communities forming around characters and socially accepted practices. Narratives that are multimodal need not necessarily be convergent in nature. Multimodal pieces can convey parts of a story, but they do not necessarily come together around a point/person. Convergence-linked narratives are in their very nature multimodal, but must come together around or in a reader/user/participant's mind. The coming together of content is crucial for the convergent narrative to work.

A disconnect arises out of a difference in terminology between those in New Media and convergence studies and those in the field of Rhetoric and Composition. Convergence and transmedia narrative can allow for New Media scholars already involved in the flow, social acceptance, and production of media to find a common language with Rhetoric and Composition scholars that already engage with multimodality and its pedagogies. Such usage will help to further develop the relationship between convergence and multimodality and bring new insights into both fields and their

relationship to generative narrative development. There is great importance in the establishing of stronger communities of practice both in scholarship and in the classroom. Community generation and establishment can also further enable the creation of a lingua franca based on multimodality and convergence elements. This reciprocity and common terminology is important because it can rework the use of multimodality into a newer convergence-centric model that can aid in students' understanding, creation, and consumption of multiplatform/modal texts.

Chapter Introduction

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction into the notion of convergence, its major players, and its relevance to Rhetoric and Composition's multimodality. For example, I will look to Vladimir Propp and his theoretical frameworks concerning structuralism briefly to connect to the importance of narrative and the need for story structure. Propp and narrative structures are considered more fully in Chapter 2. Then, I discuss Henry Jenkins' definition of convergence and potentials for engagement, James Gee's work on learning and identity, and Lev Manovich's work with new media interfaces and cinematic influence to broaden the discussion to new media elements. In order to further the dialogue between convergence and multimodality scholars, I consider how Jenkins, Gee, and Manovich connect to the development of transmedia narrative and how transmediated elements work together to create meaning within a narrative world/space/universe. These theories allow for a broader consideration of how to utilize convergence within a media franchise and in relation to multimodality in order to develop metacognitive practices in student populations. The contentions of these scholars allow me to flesh out what it means to participate in an environment/narrative space that is

overwhelmingly populated by consumer franchises and is also polysemic in its

relationship to information collection, creation, and gathering.

Narratives as a Starting Point: Morphology According To Propp

At the beginning, convergence is a topic that is best served by going back to the

story. That story concerns narrative classification and development. Propp's study

examines works that are exclusive to Russian storytelling practice, but these stories allow

for a more generalized consideration of narrative elements (*Morphology*). He applies an

analytical schema to how the stories are presented in chronological time and in a mostly

linear fashion. These tales provide a starting point, but also allow for more of a

generalized reading and usage to other media outlets. According to Dundes, in his

introduction to the second edition of *Morphology of the Folktale*, "Propp's analysis

should be useful in analyzing the structure of literary forms (such as novels and plays),

comic strips, motion-picture, and television plots, and the like" (xiv). Narrative structural

analysis can be applied to any item that has a narrative structure or is rife with story

elements.

In this era, texts can be broadly construed to include games, novels, Youtube

videos, song playlists, community boards, and fan fiction. Propp notes that "(f)or the

sake of comparison we shall separate the component parts of fairy tales by special

methods; and then, we shall make a comparison of tales according to their

components…a morphology (i.e., a description of the tale according to its component

parts and the relationship of these components to each other and to the whole)"

(*Morphology* 19). This discussion of narrative constructs also helps to situate

convergence into the narrative conversation because convergence is also associated with

component parts coming together to form a holistic view of a story, world, or universe. It also blends well with theories related to new media including the theoretical frameworks of Jenkins, Gee, and Manovich, which are discussed later in this chapter in greater detail.

Commonalities in structure and elements also bring together conversations between how pieces, transmedia, or modes function within the course of the narrative. Propp notes that "Functions constitute the basic elements of the tale, those elements upon which the course of the action is built" (*Morphology* 71). The functionality of elements also relates greatly to participation and a convergence-linked text's readability. Narratives involved in the actions of convergence require user participation or they fail to enter into more than just a passing conversation or click of the mouse. To touch the largest portion of participants, these narratives must follow traditional story structures and also allow for new technologies to relay the message and create more knowledge allowing for meaning making to occur.

Connecting To Convergence: Key Terms of Jenkins, Gee, and Manovich

Key terms are useful when starting to interrogate and compare convergence and multimodality. One place to begin is with the definition of convergence and transmedia storytelling. These terms exemplify and foster the interconnectedness of various media and narrative touch points. Henry Jenkins provides observations that allow for the historical consideration of various moves within convergent media. It also allows for a potential critique of consumption practices and what it means to "participate." Convergence and transmedia storytelling serve as the starting catalyst for further discussion and connection of narrative into new media interfaces and semiotic domains.

There are also two additional theoretical lenses that provide perspectives from which to critique narrative development. The first is James Gee's work on playing and engagement with literacy through computer games. Games are a significant convergence element because participants can engage in alternative ways and see the "world" from their point of view. The key term Gee uses that closely relates to convergence is the notion of semiotic domains. These domains are spaces where human cultural and social paradigms come into play and have an effect on the stories be conveyed.

The second additional theoretical framework comes from Lev Manovich. His work highlights the relationship between new media interfaces and cinematic influence on computers. Here he redefines the notion of new media in relation to language construction and development. The work of these three scholars interrelates and extends into the multiplatform work of convergence itself. This varied assemblage of work coalesces into a solid foundation for creative consumption, critical thinking and metacognitive skill development, and fruitful discussions of what it means to tell a story. The rest of the chapter explores insights in to the theoretical lenses of Jenkins, Gee, and Manovich. It also places them into conversation concerning the development of narrative elements and there furthering/complicating what it means to tell a story in this digital age as well as offering summaries of subsequent chapters.

Convergence: Defining the View and Exploring Transmedia Storytelling

Narratives are exceedingly integral to the media convergence process. Without a story to drive users to participate and engage with different elements, there would be no media franchising or pop culture icons to come together around. Stories are inherently

important and can be seen in many recent book to movie to game cycles. Most recently these include *Dr. Who, Twilight Saga*, *Harry Potter*, and *The Avengers*. These media megaliths have changed the way in which companies develop their media instantiations and also how the users participate in and with one another in a community surrounding the story. Convergent elements are not exclusive to this time period or are only a new media happening. They have existed as far back as stories and audiences have. People coming together to share their thoughts, ideas, and extensions of a story have always enriched participation and also driven the creation and re-interpretation of stories. This is seen in much of the work surrounding folk tales, archetypical structures, and myths. The two most relevant to this discussion are Vladimir Propp and Joseph Campbell. Propp's work *Morphology of the Folktale* concerns the placement of events and choices within Russian fictive tales. By cataloging the various ways and elements that occur in a story, Propp is able to analyze structurally the producer's intent and the audiences' reception of the story, through the studying of thematic elements. In the case of Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, his work highlights the similarities of myth throughout the world and also discusses the many layers of archetypes that create his "monomyth." These two theoretical lenses allow for a historically situated look at narrative and the various ways stories come together to share some form of "truth." Because these elements can be studied and reproduced in many modalities, they can be transferred from oral to written to visual communication methods. This shift allows for a change in how stories can be connected to and shared within a community. When stories go online or occur in a networked space, they take on new meanings and potentials for consumption

and discussion. One such current view of convergence and the movement within narrative universes and sites comes in the work of Henry Jenkins.

Henry Jenkins has written on the development of convergence media and transmedia narratives with examples including *The Matrix*, *Harry Potter*, *American Idol*, and *Survivor* (*Convergence*). His work serves as the foundation for much of the current industry work with transmediated elements and multiple-tier media platforms and franchises begun in his consideration of participation and fan culture in the early 1990s. In *Convergence Culture*, from 2006, Jenkins defines convergence and provides significant artifact examples from popular *culture* and multiplatform narratives. Convergence is:

> A word that describes technological, industrial, cultural, and social changes in the ways media circulates within our culture…the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, the search for new structures of media financing that fall at the interstices between old and new media, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who would go almost anywhere in search of the kind of entertainment experiences they want." (Jenkins *Convergence* 322)

This definition entails a great many layers and active structures, but it relies heavily on the notion of narrative flow and movement associated with constructing and relaying a transmedia narrative. Participation from the fan and user communities must also happen or convergence fails to work. All pieces must come together in order for a participant to make meaning from the diverse grouping of narrative texts. Users/participants have to want to read the original narrative and experience the world and engage with characters generated as the story unfolds.

Another important term related to convergence and understanding its related processes is the notion of "transmedia storytelling." "Transmedia storytelling is the art of world making. To fully experience any fictional world, consumers must assume the role of hunters and gatherers, chasing down bits of the story across media channels, comparing notes with each other via online discussion groups, and collaborating to ensure everyone who invests time and effort will come away with a richer entertainment experience" (Jenkins *Convergence* 21). This experiential learning relates strongly to the development of literacy and metalevel knowledge production. Users seek out and gather as many of the elements of a story as they wish. They can be as connected to the story as much or as little as they choose. Because the elements of the transmedia world are based on one narrative universe, users can look to traditional storytelling cues/formats in order to engage with archetypical structures in new ways. Half of the fun/importance comes from engaging with others to find details, share understandings of passages, or extend a favorite character's background story (backstory). In this functional way, the perfect form of transmedia storytelling allows each narrative functional element to perform to its best ability (*Convergence* 97-8). For example, it can be "introduced in a film, expanded 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" (*Convergence* 97-8). Jenkins shows this in many of the artifacts and elements presented as textual studies throughout *Convergence Culture*. He discusses these narrative communities in relation to fan participation, media platform exchange, and various thematic/narrative elements.

Throughout his research, Jenkins notes that:"(m)y goal is to help ordinary people grasp how convergence is impacting the media they consume and, at the same time, to help industry leaders and policymakers understand consumer perspectives on these changes" (*Convergence* 12). This goal can be extended into classroom interactions with texts and students. Creating a community of practice that can discuss how elements of popular culture are developed and marketed to users is extremely important in working in a convergence-linked world. Students could even use a story that they connect to in order to develop a critique of structure, style, and audience. By starting close, students can extend outward to more generalized media experiences. They allow students to take away something from their engagement that can influence their future consumption and creation processes. Knowing becomes collaborative and public in nature as it moves into transmediated worlds and this can change a community from within and also allows for contradictions to be worked out among its members (*Convergence* 44). It is also important to note that not everyone, designers and developers included, know all media platforms and can work equally well in all of them. This variation can be as fruitful and engaging as it can be daunting. But, by acknowledging that convergence is becoming a new norm, we can begin to show our students how to interact in and contribute to an ever shifting paradigm.

Semiotic Domains: Game Narratives, Meaning Making, and Defining SD

Narrative texts come in all shapes and forms and none more popular than video or pc games. Games work on a similar principle of learning and performing actions to a

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predetermined storyline with many potential outcomes. Games can include first person, third person, hidden object, and massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs). Each of these tiers adapts the narrative form to the creation of interest in characters and completing tasks/missions/outcomes. Online games in the forms of *Defiance*, *World of Warcraft*, or *League of Legends* take game play and convergent storytelling to new levels by connecting players from all over the world and creating various communities and factions of learners/users/players. This movement of participation to online stories and transmediated worlds also can change the frame of reference or semiotic domains for the players. One such window into literacy theory and metacognitive critique comes in James Gee's work with video games and is another facet of the convergence experience. Even though he mainly discusses video games and player participation within his research, two interlinked facets concern the potential convergence experience. These notions can add to the broader discussion of learning in relation to meaning making and knowledge production in transmedia narrative texts. Gee says, "If we think first in terms of semiotic domains and not in terms of readings and writing as traditionally conceived, we can say that people are (or are not) literate (partially or fully) in a domain if they can recognize (the equivalent of 'reading') and/or produce (the equivalent of 'writing') meanings in the domain" (*What* 20). These domains add to experiential learning and knowledge formation because they allow for external and internal discussions about what constitutes meaning, language, play, and movement. Coming from an educational and literacy background, Gee took to a risk discussing the ramifications of utilizing non-traditional story structures to create and convey information. His theory offers another more pedagogically centric consideration of

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literacy development and persona development. By considering what it means to be a player, a character type in game, and also the whole person, one shifts through many meta-level decisions that form the whole of one's experience. Different archetypical structures in games can play on traditional story lines or completely shift them in order to create new opportunities for meaning construction.

Much of the current research into videogame narratives and playing styles also takes on popular texts and archetypical structures in order to tap into creativity and learning practices of students. By extending to games, narratives can be examined and discussed in terms of cultural relationships and various practices within a social structure. In this case, the social structure was what he terms a semiotic domain. According to Gee, "Semiotic domains are human cultural and historical creations that are designed to engage and manipulate people in certain ways. They attempt through their content and social practices to recruit people to think, act, interact, value, and feel in certain specific ways" (*What* 36). This manipulation and ideology embedded in game structures could be overlooked or missed out on entirely because they are play objects. Items that are enjoyable and playful are perceived by more traditional disciplines as frivolous or innocuous. The study into game worlds and Gee's personal learning observations also help to galvanize the academic aspects that including convergence in classroom projects can bring.

Even though, Gee solely focuses on games, his work with semiotic domains and player literacy can be broadened out to include other narrative texts and transmedia stories. These items help to get students thinking metacognitively and help to make meaning construction more concrete. In this way, "*(t)hey situate meaning in a*

multimodal space through embodied experiences to solve problems and reflect on the

intricacies of the design of imagined worlds and the design of both real and imagined

social relationships and identities in the modern world" (*What* 40-1, italics are original).

This situated meaning making allows play to become a meaningful and experiential

potential for learning. The adage becomes that if students can do things with popular

texts, they can do even better and perform at a higher standard in academic settings. It is

a version of the classroom bait and switch where learning can be "fun." Games also

influence interface design and also use cinematic qualities or shots to establish certain

cues or meanings.

New Media: Interfaces and Communication

New Media franchises and convergence linked media help to instantiate

ideologies and theories about the practices involved in the creation of textual enterprises

and socially engaged communities of participants.

Many scholars are concerned with what makes the "perfect" narrative while

producers and companies are concerned with the monetary aspects and creating future

consumers. For others a main issue becomes, "Is anything ever really new?" Based on

my research into convergence and interfaces, I say that much is a re-interpretation of

original mediations. Even though it is not "wholly new," media in the form of

convergent narratives are still a highly salient product and one that has the power to

influence how communication is handled in the 21st Century. One theorist who helps

clear up many of the debates about what is "new" about new media is Lev Manovich and

his work in *The Language of New Media*. This text explores the development of new

media products through interfaces and cinematic developments that help to layer and

create technology that is a sum of movable parts. He notes that there is much in terms of

technological convergence and development of multiple levels of media and meaning

formation. Throughout *The Language of New Media*, Manovich connects developments

made in early cinema with technological and computational developments that allowed

for the growth of user interfaces and interactivity between story/media pieces and user.

Changes in technology allow for different types of flows and articulations of narratives.

Technologies also were and are prone to the application of new abilities that are present

when technological convergence occurs and continues. Technological convergence

refers to "(t)he combination of functions within the same technological device" (Jenkins

Convergence 333). On the computer image, video, sound, and text come together

because the development of technological capabilities and movable content. These

movable parts include cinematic, televisual, and textual flows that occur in both

narratives and through technological mediums. Manovich tracks technology and

narrative movement through adaptations in film, computers, telephones, and their related

functionalities. He notes that "while new media strengthens existing cultural forms and

languages, including the language of cinema, it simultaneously opens them up for

redefinition ,..cultural possibilities that were previously in the background, on the

periphery, come into the center" (Manovich 333). This "plug and play ability" is

referenced by Manovich as modularity and also relates to the concept of modification.

Modification can be briefly defined as the ability of the user to delete, add, or substitute

pieces in a narrative unit (Manovich 31). Things can be taken from one

work/play/meaning space and be adapted to a new technology and a new method of communication.

The ability of media to be taken and made into new instantiations or new meaning objects is fascinating because it allows for more participation and more coming together into communities that converge and can shift the nature of the story. These communities have a long established history in relation to analog media. For example, Henry Jenkins' *Textual Poachers: Television, fans, and participatory culture* provides examples of fan fiction writing as a media extension of narrative, Pearson's "Fandom in the Digital Era" highlights the movement of trends in narrative and technology from analog to digital media, and Black's "Access and affiliation: The literacy and composition practices of English-language learners in an online fanfiction communities" offers historical cues and recommendations of the applications of previously established paradigms for analog media to digital storytelling, especially fanfiction writing. These texts offer further discussions of fandom and participation and serve as reading extensions that will not be full considered in the rest of the piece. Participation of communities in narrative storytelling can be linked to the notion of fandom. Fandom is defined, in its most general sense, as "the state or attitude of being a fan" ("Fandom"). In analog media, encounters there were more face to face communications between fans. All authors have noted this, but there is also a place for the digital to take hold and thrive. Though members of the fandom may be on different continents, they can come together and connect to their stories in their own chosen ways. Stories are still based on sociological models of historically accepted fan works/participatory behaviors. Narrative shifts can occur through the development of fan fiction, agreement/dissent about other media franchise

opportunities, fan created memorabilia, wikis, blogs, viral videos, and coming together to participate in real-life conventions such as *ComicCon*, *BlizzCon,* or *RTX*. People can dress up as their favorite character from a franchise and act out their fantasies or see what it's like to exist as their character for a brief period of time. It is also a coming together of those who are like minded and allow for the suspension of disbelief. Creativity, social interactions, and meaning making are enhanced because the user/participant makes the choice to engage with these materials because they are "fun, playful, and enjoyable" and the users also have some skill and knowledge set that allows the community to develop/create a body that can do many things and has a heterogeneous skill set. For example, one member of a fan community can be a computer programmer, one can be interested in website development, one can be a fan fiction writer, and one can be a music producer. All of these fans come together under the shared auspices of convergent narratives and their many interfaces. These fans create a body that is capable of more together than it could ever perform as separate entities. "(I)n contrast to cinema, where most 'users' are able to 'understand' cinematic language but not 'speak' it (i.e., make films), all employing it to perform many tasks: send e-mail, organize files, run various applications, and so on" (Manovich xv).

New Media and convergence also allow for multiple border crossings between media units and semiotic domains for users. Each media outlet can be allowed to form its own message in relation to the main narrative structure. As such "(b)orders between different worlds do not have to be erased; … individual layers can retain their separate identities rather than being merged into a single space; different worlds can clash

semantically rather than form a single universe" (Manovich *The Language* xix). This

separation of story universe into multiple chunks/texts without clashing is important

because each piece of the transmedia narrative and element of convergence is supposed

to make its own contribution in a significant way or allow for room for the story to grow.

Because of past, current, and future development of computer technologies,

Manovich notes that " the computer media revolution affects all stages of

communication, including acquisition, manipulation, storage, and distribution; it also

affects all types of media—texts, still images, moving images, sound, and spatial

constructions" (*The Language* 19). This revolution in technology has an impact on

transmedia narrative because it changes how the story can be told or shared with a

specific community. But, narrative still remains an important point because new

technologies are used to tell archetypical, traditional, and structural stories in new and

diverse ways. Technology makes it easier to tell these stories and combine media

elements into dynamic ways to tell and distribute narrative (Manovich 130).

Each of the new media elements of a transmedia/convergent narrative, also allow

for active use and participation by the user/fan. This active use entails critical

engagement with various types of media, whether they be book, movie, or game. Propp

continues to be relevant to discourse concerning convergence and semiotic domains

because the process of telling the story helps to move it forward and there are certain

expectations for how a story will flow. According to Manovich, "Narratology, the branch

of modern literary theory devoted to the theory of narrative, distinguishes between

narration and description. Narration is those parts of the narrative that move the plot

forward; description is those parts that do not" (*The Language* 216). This constant

movement forward with story and technology will continue to draw convergence and transmedia narratives to the forefront.

Chapter Summaries

       The following chapters continue the discussion, comparison, critique, and application of convergence and multimodality to narrative constructs. The following chapters of this study are meant to extend and exemplify each of the terms/theories discussed and show what it means to be a practitioner engaged with convergence in the classroom. What follows are summaries of Chapters 2-5.

Chapter 2, "*The Story Remains the Same: the genre of Narrative plus new content*," considers elements of narrative construction and its relationship to both rhetoric and composition practices and the convergence of new media. Narrative theory comes in many varieties, but for the purposes of my research I use Vladimir Propp and his work with morphology in order to discuss similarities in narrative structure between old and "new" stories. I offer comparisons between stories from convergence/transmedia narratives and those from rhetoric and composition/multimodality. Tzvetan Todorov 's structuralist frameworks are also used to offer more insight into narrative through the consideration of poetics and polysemic understanding. They also provide a foil against the earlier version of structuralism shown by Propp. I also discuss the implications of narrative relationships and theories by Anna Friedberg and Roland Barthes in order to build on Propp's and Todorov's foundations and extend/critique them.

Chapter 3, "Generative Elements of Taste and Reading Kairotically: A Consideration of Harkness's *A Discovery of Witches* and *Shadow of Night*," serves as an example study of a specific convergence universe. There will be textual and contextual analyses of the novels as well as the media content developed by the author, publisher, and fans. By getting users to participate on multiple levels within a story world or media franchise universe, producers are able to create stories that allow for generative behavior and the potential of engaging with kairos. By reading kairotically, users/participants are allowed to use their own "opportune moments" to move through and learn information. Media convergence and transmedia storytelling have the potential to allow for the development of taste and critical awareness through the generative nature of consumption and production of convergent media elements/texts.

Chapter 4, "*Multimodality Moving Forward: Convergence and Transmedia Storytelling*," considers the importance of multimodality to the field of Rhetoric and Composition and the potential of media convergence to move composing practices and students' critical thinking skills forward.   One artifact that allows for consideration of multimodality and connects to the previous notions of convergence, kairos, and taste is the television series *Bones* and its related multimodal products. These come in the form of 8 seasons of television show, multiple books by Kathy Reichs, web pages, and a fan created graphic novel. By incorporating the work of Gunther Kress and Cynthia Selfe on multimodality with previous convergence and new media theory, I contend that the space for a common dialogue exists and has the potential to change the face of composition

practice and within the production of narratives/narrative elements in relation to the *Bones* artifacts.

Chapter 5, **"Convergence"** Goes to School-The Work of Transmedia Storytelling in the Composition Classroom," puts theory into practice by providing some example assignments that blend convergent media with current multimodal composition practices. It also offers some final thoughts/wrap up the theoretical discussions offered in previous chapters. By embracing and learning to teach students in composition courses to consume and construct these narratives, practitioners can help them to deal with information overload and be able to make metacognitive decisions about why and how a specific story appeals to them. It also creates a common dialogue among the two groups and fills a gap in terminology between these varied practitioners.

Chapter 2

Stories Need a Foundation: *Propp, Todorov, Barthes,* and *Friedberg* Weaving a Web of Vocabulary

Chapter Introduction and Overview:

      The chapter considers elements of narrative construction through structures associated with storytelling. It builds upon those constructive elements and potential intersections with stories under the umbrellas of the terms convergence and multimodality. Generally, I am interested in how people tell stories and make meaning. This interest is influenced by my own work with pedagogical settings, educational background, and also fan/participant relationship with specific narrative universes and stories. In writing this dissertation, I employ narrative theory to create conversations and a common dialog between teachers and scholars in the fields of New Media and Rhetoric and Composition. This chapter seeks to set the stage and deliver terminology to build a conversation around.   Narrative theory comes in many varieties, but for the purposes of my research I stay closer to a more structural approach offered in the theoretical frameworks of Vladimir Propp, using morphology, and Tzvetan Todorov, using poetics and polysemic understanding, to examine how traditional and archetypal narratives have experienced a resurgence in popularity that speaks to the cyclical and kairotic nature of narrative development and functionality.

      The above mentioned theorists and their works help to provide the historical foundation for further contextualization of narrative. These works and their concepts are also shaped into newer theories and studies by theorist Roland Barthes. For example, in

an "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives," Barthes posits how narratives

can be distributed cross-culturally and also through various media. These distributions

can have a regular and repeating path through a culture. In this manner, there can be a

plurality in both content and in meaning. Each culture is not necessarily affected the same

way by the same story; there are multitudes of potential meanings and choices for content

within those stories These differences and potentialities can make story reception

something worth studying in further detail. Anne Friedberg, in "Chapter 5: The

Multiple" from her work *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft,* establishes

how multiplicity works on the screen in relation to cinema and interface development. In

regard to structure, multiplicity refers to the created elements that are used in order to

convey information and meaning. According to Friedberg, "'Multiplicity,' [is] an

awkward back-construction of an adjectival term into its noun form" … [and is] "invoked

to contrast two forms of time-based representation: the single-frame image, seen in

sequence, and the multiply framed image, seen in adjacency and simultaneity" (330).

This means that multiplicity can be used to refer to how story constructs and various

media elements are combined, altered, and presented to an audience with differing time

scales.

The screen (theater or computer) allows the viewer/reader many different options

for viewing, cognitively framing, and generating meaning from information. The screen

represents, conveys, and reorders many layers. This many layered screen can allow for

various connections to be made between a reader and his or her participation with the

narrative cycle through choices in attention and engagement with meaning. Terms

relevant to narrative openness and possibility for an individualization of participation take the form of multiplicity defined in concert with the term morphology, potentiality defined in regard to polysemy and poetics, and plurality defined in relation to social and cultural distribution. In pulling from possibility for narrative, I aim to consider how these narratives allow for various levels of reader engagement and participation. These theories coalesce into a historical foundation that builds on the common dialogue of narrative and applies it to more modern and newer contexts within convergence and multimodality. The creation of this common terminological foundation and dialogue matters to teachers of writing and composition because narrative, storytelling, and plot inhabit what students, creators, and producers do in building a contextually relevant and audience aware version of reality. In this generalized case, producer means "someone or something that grows or makes particular goods or products" ("Producer").

Various versions of reality are navigated by each narrative participant on a constant basis. Participant means "a person who is involved in an activity or event" ("Participant"). This can be seen in the example of a child's home narrative, school narrative, and friend narrative. The child has to navigate between different expectations and rhetorics in order to fit in with society and also establish him or herself in that specific narrative community and discourse. Because popular and fictive narratives communicate specific messages about norms and societal roles, they are no less important than the skills students develop during context and discourse shifts in their own real lives. In considering structuralism, I hope to foster in students a foundation upon which to build skills and cognitive tools in order to help them develop strategies for

coping in their own various discourses and are coping as they move between discourses.

Considering how structuralism is historically situated bears relevance to a blended analysis because it allows the researcher to show what has remained the same in archetypical story structure and what has changed over time. These comparisons subsequently add to the discourse surrounding the tale and allow for a potentially fuller participation by both the audience and the creator of the content. Historical analysis corresponds to the tracing of narrative symbols and constructs through time. It also relates to the present narrative moment as stories move to different mediums and modalities of telling, sharing, and communicating information. This chapter builds on historically significant narrative terminology in order to provide a working vocabulary for analysis. These terms build upon one another through their relationships to narrative theory, structure, and the consideration of component parts. The consideration of how components can be structured through development and consumption of the tale is important because these elements can come from a more traditional history of narrative and be applied to the current media forms. Academic conversations relating to narrative theory and structure can be seen between the works of Propp, Todorov, Barthes, and Friedberg.

The academic conversation about early adoption and current usage of structuralism come in the works of Propp and Todorov. In the case of Propp, structuralism is seen through the term morphology. Todorov takes the structuralist mantle and empiricist flavor and incorporates the terms poetics and polysemy. Poetics lines up with morphology because they both denote a formalized structure that is

established for analysis. However, morphology is more concerned with the breaking down of narratives, whereas poetics is all about creating a theory to place on a genre. Polysemy also adds to the discussion by allowing for potentiality and the absence of a one-to-one meaning for a concept or narrative element. It provides the space for the reader to make his or her own decisions in response to a story's content and narrative arc. Janet Murray's work with narratives in online spaces helps to showcase the importance of readers' participation with knowledge building and the skills required to interact with one another and with the story.

In moving on from morphology, poetics, and polysemy, Barthes takes structuralist narrative theory and the part to whole movement and pushes it into a more open and place of potentiality. The term plurality comes from this movement and the continued academic dialog between Barthes and Todorov. The term plurality refers to both the story content and narrative elements and also the various potentials for the reception of meaning by the audience. Paralleling Barthes' concept of plurality and considering the new media aspect is the term multiplicity provided by the work of Friedberg. Multiplicity relates to the many timescales that are presented by works in on screen media. Taken together the terms offered by these theorists help to build a foundation for narrative theory that can be applied to works from New Media and Rhetoric and Composition. This foundation is also enhanced by Murray's discussion of "story" as it relates to the modern movement to online multimodal narratives.

Grounding in Narrative Theory: Forming Connections to the Discourse

By starting with narrative theory, especially the discussion of storytelling, I create

a common foundation in order to analyze potential similarities and differences in how the fields of new media and Rhetoric and Composition construct and communicate stories. As we move toward ever increasingly heightened interactivity, convergent or multimodal narratives allow for more individuality, which aids in the production of theory and development of culture in online and transmediated contexts. My work attempts to establish common foundations through the examination of narrative terminology and its relevance to modern storytelling through convergent and multimodal methods. Teachers of writing could benefit from this work because, in their roles as writing and composition instructors in a rhetorically based writing program, they have students create and/or develop texts based on the students' understanding of a specific audience inhabiting a real-world context. As students enter into the world, narrative theory and archetypical story structures can aid them in comprehending other individuals and other cultures on a global stage. These terms are seemingly interchangeable; however, morphology, polysemy, poetics, plurality, and multiplicity connote differences that exist in meaning and narrative theory. They also consider the scholarly lenses of Propp, Todorov, Barthes, and Friedberg in relation to one another. The terms under consideration in this piece are an ever changing locus of storytelling. Meanings change as new texts are realized. Archetypal stories provide frameworks for cross-cultural understanding and (within an individual) for moving seamlessly between, for example, home and school discourses.

The theorists and their terms are discussed in the following order within this piece: Propp's morphology, Todorov's poetics and polysemy, Barthes' plurality, and Friedberg's multiplicity. The terms offered here show a chronological trajectory through

structuralism within context of narrative theory. This trajectory is important in order to develop a strong foundation that is historically and contextually situated within academic analyses of narrative.

Morphology, poetics, polysemy, plurality, and multiplicity build on one another and move historically across narrative time in a linear fashion. They demonstrate how convergence and multimodality can be a natural progression of narrative through time and across technology. By using this blend of narrative terminology, I create a dissertation that pulls from rhetorical, historical, and textual analyses. A blend of these methodologies is needed in order to build a contextually relevant and historically informed base for narrative analysis and its application to modern media and modes. There is an inherent interdisciplinarity with these terms because the theorists come from different fields, but share a foundation in narrative structuralism. Narrative theory establishes a common core from which to view the many variations on the simple story structure. The terminology and theorists are provided in a chronological order. These terms allow for a re-affirmation that the topics they discuss are related but also modifications on a narrative analysis theme. Murray's work with narrative in online spaces moves the consideration from print narrative sites to online and transmediated spaces. Definitions are provided to create common vocabulary in order to compare stories from convergence/transmedia narratives and those from rhetoric and composition/multimodality to further situate the theoretical structures offered. Taken together these frameworks, terms, and definitions allow a more balanced and nuanced consideration of where narratives have been. But, more importantly, it offers a potential

trajectory and place for them to go.

Propp's morphology gives a strong beginning point for analysis. A morphological analysis of content could include the study of the hero archetype through various narratives from different cultures and eras. At the core is an ideal of hero as a strong and god-like figure. But, this ideal morphs to meet cultural and historical expectations. Propp's lens is important to narrative theory because it establishes the more scientific and empirical deconstruction of a story into its elements. These structural elements can include characters, settings, movement, scene placement, and the like. They are taken as modular pieces whose combinations allow for meaning to be made by the reader and knowledge of narrative construction to be studied by those interested in narrative theory, storytelling, and empirical research. The morphological study of a text is also meant to generate a theory that is more generalizable and discusses how story components work together to create a meaning that is regular and reproducible. The generalized structure and its influence on culture within narrative theory is more fully developed by later theorists. The most noteworthy and the next focus of this piece is Tzvetan Todorov's work.

Tzvetan Todorov's theoretical lens moves structuralism to a more culturally aware and applicable form of narrative theory. The terms, poetics and polysemy, each allow for their own movements toward narrative ideals. In the case of analysis, poetics takes the reproducibility and generalizable genre establishing theory to the next level. Poetics is a classical term and has a strong and storied history. Todorov's usage of the term, in relation to prose, provides a foundational set of rules or norms in the creation of

a specific genre. Poetics, in this way, denotes the importance of moving from linguistic word combinations to recognizing the combination of terms into a literary or narrative concept. These include the terms characters, plot, and settings. The term "poetics" establishes a foundation for and a relevancy of narrative theory to convergence and multimodality. Poetics also can be seen as a logical and worthwhile extension of storytelling that moves into more modernized and online contexts. Modernized story contexts include multiple types and mediums of storytelling, such as: videos, blogs, games, fan fiction, novels, television shows, etc.

The second term relevant to this discourse that comes from Todorov is the notion of polysemy. Polysemy takes the generalizable and complicates narrative theory because Todorov's usage implies that a reader can or is able to construct many convergent and divergent potential meanings and points of view about narrative events. The term is demonstrative of the complexity that can surround the telling and reception of a story. In the case of narrative analysis, a working knowledge of polysemy can further the study because it allows for the consideration of how research can be carried out in reference to multiple meanings and ideations. These differences are important to acknowledge because the various audiences engaging with the story can take many layers of meaning/concepts away with them to other audiences and relationships. This notion of many ideas from one carries over into narrative theory through an academic conversation about multiple meanings and cultural theory between Todorov and Roland Barthes.

Roland Barthes enters into the narrative conversation with Todorov through narrative research and the use of his term plurality. Plurality refers to the potentiality for

multiple narrative meanings for each story component. The potentiality for meanings is just the tip of the theory iceberg. In Barthes' usage, plurality also refers to the irreducibility of the text and its narrative components. Several stories can exist depending on how the reader or audience member interprets the story. This leads to the acceptability of multiple textual interpretations by readers or audience members. Acceptability permeates the modern narrative space because of all the potentialities that exist for an audience member to participate in. Narratives can function variously as border crossing, multi-tiered universes, and many-layered dissemination events that allow for cultural and personal difference in story engagement (Barthes IMT 159). This provides opportunities for further development in conversations surrounding narrative among authors, readers, and audience members. In this manner, plurality acknowledges that the text can be broken down, but there are more layers to empirical research and academic conversations that should be considered or more fully fleshed out.

Barthes and Todorov have an academic conversation about the importance of narrative theory and its applicability to cultural concerns and meaning making. This conversation carried on through various articles and texts of both theorists. The main focus concerned how structuralism allowed for the story and also allowed for the discourse about the story (Barthes IMT 87 and Todorov "Structural" 71). This again connects plurality, polysemy, and poetics to morphology. As Barthes writes, the purpose of "a narrative is not merely to move from one word to the next, it is also to move from one level to the next" (IMT 87). Narrative movements from macro-level concerns— those associated with layers and cultural contexts—and micro-level concerns—those

associated with word by word analysis—can be set into juxtaposition with one another. The narrative as a dynamic entity when read is prone to all manner of shifts from the macro to micro-level and back depending on the reader's knowledge and context. This layered movement can be witnessed on the cinematic screen and also the computer screen in the theory offered by the work of Anne Friedberg.

Friedberg offers her term multiplicity in relation to the screen in the context of cinematic and computer-mediated communication. It refers to the multiple versions of a film and time scales that are created in a cinematic discourse. Multiplicity reflects two potentialities that exist in the scale of time on the screen. One potential is for the single image viewed in a sequence. The other is for the image viewed in the multiple with adjacent and simultaneously related images (Friedberg 330). For example, a movie director can choose to shoot a scene with images viewed in sequence (one at a time in a chronological order) or the director can choose to create an image collage (multiple images at the same time in close proximity) where any number of images, colors, and windows can be juxtaposed against one another. These two different arrangements of images allow for different viewings to take place and also allow the participants to take away the meaning that fits with their understanding and conceptualization of the film's message.

Multiplicity links to the previous terms in the following manner. In the case of morphology, it acknowledges the many parts that can exist within narrative elements. There are cultural contexts and frameworks in play when viewing something on the screen. Poetics and polysemy connect to the watcher viewing a piece on the screen by

their shared relationship for forming a norm or rule of generation and also by allowing

for many possible variations of content and meaning. These variations can be seen in

how a genre is analyzed and also how different cuts of a film can allow for different

meanings. For example, a film could have a director's cut, an extended cut, and an

unrated cut. These various cuts allow for differences in meaning and comprehension

among the audience members to take place during narrative participation. They can also

be re-interpreted and mixed by fans of the film or story. Multiplicity connects to plurality

through a shared sense of acknowledgment of the many possibilities for content. They

also share the notion of irreducibility of various textual interpretations and versions of the

story being told. Multiplicity as a term connects with all the previously mentioned terms

in order to develop a foundation that extends narrative theory to more modernized story

mediums and methods.

More modernized methods and mediums are largely considered in Murray's

Hamlet on the Holodeck. In this work, she notes the importance of storytelling and the

potential for growth when stories move to online spaces and encompass different

technological attributes. Technological improvements can allow for an increase in

engagement and participation. But, these stories require skills derived from past narrative

exploits in order for the reader to understand what is being asked of him or her.

Participants must learn new ways in which to interact with the narrative and with one

another.

Readers have the choice to participate or engage with narrative content as much

or as little as they wish. Because of the reproducibility and nature of online technology,

that participation can come in a time scale that is acceptable to the reader or audience. What that means to the fan is that he or she can create a time and knowledge space that works within the context of his or her life. According to Barthes, "All classes, all human groups, have their narratives, enjoyment of which is very often shared by men with different, even opposing cultural backgrounds...narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself" ("Introduction to Structural" *Image, Music, Text* 79). All stories are meant to share common bonds of meaning and bring groups of individuals together to agree, disagree, or otherwise engage in conversation. Technological innovation has allowed for the opportunity for people to engage in more ways than ever before. Technology does have limitations, but engagement still grows as the story moves through populations and across the globe.

The creation of stories and the art of storytelling have undergone many different incarnations as narrative and narrative theory progressed through time. Students from the fields of new media and Rhetoric and Composition are unwittingly exposed to multi-tiered narratives and discourses throughout their academic and non-academic lives. Neither act of storytelling nor the act of providing a structure to learn from storytelling is not a new or even recently developed concept. Starting with oral traditions, moving to the written word, transferring to film, and then mediated into online multimodal and convergent narratives, storytelling and application of stories to learning have undergone much scrutiny and development. Storytelling and narrative theory have a strong history filled with many significant cultural movements. Narrative theory and its applications to stories in various media allows for all possible manner of multiplicities, potentialities,

and pluralities to come through to the reader at many culturally and historically situated points. These points are reflective of the story as a contextually situated communication that is influenced by societal norms and rules that are governed by things like taste and participation. Participation is defined as "forms of audience engagement that are shaped by cultural and social protocols rather than by the technology itself" (Jenkins *Convergence* 331). Readers, fans, and audience members are participants within the narrative universe and they can participate by engaging in conversations via blogs, playing a character in an online roleplaying game, writing fan fiction, or writing letters to the author or producers. Morphology allows all of these elements to be considered in a narrative relevant way.

Deconstructing Narratives for Meaning: Propp and Morphology

By historicizing narrative theory, beginning with Propp's consideration of narrative morphological analysis and the term morphology, I offer a contextually relevant foundation to begin studying texts and their communicated messages. Propp's term and related theoretical constructs come from his work, *Morphology of a Folktale*, which focuses on establishing a new way to quantify and qualify story elements that are present in the community where the narrative is generated. Morphology is defined as the breaking down of a larger and broader structure into its simplest component parts (Propp 6-7). By concentrating on morphology as a relevant term to narrative, Propp's definition allows me to more fully consider how story information is parsed by readers in order to

develop motifs, frames of reference, and connections to a story's context. This plays out in convergent and multimodal narratives by providing a definition of the seemingly limitless modalities available for producers (professional and fan) to generate content. Morphological analysis can also allow for a consideration of the multiformity and uniformity present within narrative sites. These sites and their associated structures can and do serve a dual-layered purpose, which includes "amazing multiformity ,... and color, and on the other hand," narrative has a "no less striking uniformity… repetition" (Propp 21). Because narratives have structures that allow for an amazing number of potential outcomes and interpretations, multiformity and uniformity must reach a balance point. Balance between multiformity and uniformity is a persistent tension within story and narrative tier development.

In those early years, Propp aides in the generation of the structuralist conversation by noting that "(i)t is scarcely possible to doubt that phenomena and objects around us can be studied from the aspect of their compositions and structure, or from the aspect of those processes and changes to which they are subject" (*Morphology* 4-5). Narrative elements and their usage within the context of a story can tell a great deal cross-culturally and socially, even though Propp's research was only considering Russian folktales. Story structures and related processes can be classified and analyzed. His research provides one empirical way to conduct an analysis and consider how narrative elements come together in order to convey a specific message or version of reality. The morphological variants (empirical narrative structures) and their assessment are prized in this type of research. Scholars, producers, and participants can begin to develop a common

understanding of the communication these variants provide and also begin to classify and codify those understandings.

Developing some comprehension of meaning and component codification allows the reader to assemble the skills and vantage points from which to see any narrative and its structural possibilities. Narrative possibilities and outcomes can change when they make the move to digital and pervade online space. Dieter Grasbon and Norbert Braun discuss the application of traditional narrative morphology to digital interactive storytelling. In "A Morphological Approach to Interactive Storytelling" the authors note how that application can shift a story's timeline. The research surrounding this lens and its application comes from their work (Grasbon and Braun 337). Moreover, Grasbon and Braun note that "(i)nstead of viewing different plots as distinct and linear entities, Propp's classification is continuously aware of the storyteller's branching possibilities between morphological variants" (338). The branching possibilities allow for the author or producer to generate spaces and relationships between story elements that can differ from the typical linear or chronological narrative path. These spaces and relationships are seen by the readers, fans, and/or participants as a highly developed semantic map that can be linear, contextual, or circular depending on the digital medium used. These potentialities give researchers a place to begin to build a collection of codifications and allow for additions and the furthering of theory. Narrative study has moved past the simple cataloging of elements and their purposes to understanding how a story can be influenced by and also influence societal and cultural aspects. The shift in theoretical approach is most notable between Propp and Todorov when it comes to narrative

construction and the relevance of this construction to learning through the reader's

comprehension of various media forms. By starting with Propp, it has been my intention

to build a strong foundation for my audience and also the academic conversation

surrounding narrative theory, convergences, and multimodality. In moving from Propp to

Todorov, I intend to show the change in structuralism over time to account for digital

modalities and newer ways of storytelling through various technologies.

Balancing a Story: Todorov, Poetics, and Polysemy

Stories require a negotiated balance of meaning and content in order to further

develop reader engagement. Balance of these factors is shown in a reader's

comprehension of the tale and a producer's economic and social success. This can allow

for more potentials of meaning and leads to new story content and forms to be created.

The notion of potential growth and furthering of narrative frameworks blend well with

the work of Tzvetan Todorov in relation to his terms poetics and polysemy. The terms

and their definitions add to narrative study by giving a common foundation for readers,

producers, and scholars to use when discussing how meaning is made within a text. An

understanding of poetics is necessary for those involved in story production in order for

them to appropriately judge how well a narrative text or structural element works.

Poetics is defined as "a particular theory of poetry or other literary form" ("poetics").

Conceptually, poetics has been involved in Rhetoric and Composition since Ancient

Greece. Originally, Aristotle used poetics to refer to poetry and other enactments of

meaning making (McKeon *The Basic* 1459-1461). But, as study into literature progressed, poetics was applied to more genres as they developed. Application to other genres furthers understanding and permits the story to be studied in relation to its component parts.

Todorov's work is a continuation of the formalist/structuralist call for story elements that can be codified and generalized. But, this voice is modulated out from the original perspective in order to consider the social implications of theories behind the narrative and also allow for a multiplicity in meanings and reader interpretations of content over time. Poetics pertains to the study of theory and aesthetics of a specific genre. But, it also allows for a more thoughtful consideration of the structural elements involved in a more generalizable study of all narratives. Structural study is an inherent requirement in convergence and multimodality because narrative structural elements allow for stories and storytelling to move to a more scientific and reproducible level. How is this possible? In narrative, poetics function in order "to emphasize possibilities even when examples do not readily come to mind" (Keen 25). These potentialities allow for a deepening of comprehension and reader engagement with a text or story cycle. The more a reader wants to participate in and explore a narrative, the more time and effort is spent with the textual materials. It also allows the reader to develop comprehension and cognitive skills, which can be applied to future narrative examples. From Keen's work with narrative theory and the construction of the novel, the term "'story' represents the whole narrative content as (re)constructed in a reader's understanding" (17). The reader bears the brunt of restructuring the narrative into his or her own mindset or conceptual

view. Many factors can influence this mental construction of meaning and can include engagement, knowledge retention, and information return. Again, the importance of the developing of mental skills and meta-level story awareness to writing and composition pedagogy and scholarship is in the establishing of a terminology and a foundation for a conversation about narrative theory's influence on transmediated and multimodal storytelling.

Todorov extends the concept of story elements in relation to morphological components by noting that they are constantly in flux. The readers are constantly comparing the pieces of the story to the story as a whole. According to Todorov, "it would be unable to state the individual specificity of each work. In practice, it is always a question of going continually back and forth, from abstract literary properties to individual works and vice versa" ("Structuralism" 71). In oscillating between the part and whole, researchers can see how works transform their components and also allow for many different interpretations of meaning.

In a similar modulation on narrative genre and meaning, Tzvetan Todorov works with poetics and polysemic understanding in order to discuss a narrative's impact on the norms of a culture, but that is not to say that he gives up on forms and the discussion of structures. "(P)oetics asserts that interpretation is not the goal of literary study… the goal of literary study is to understand literature as a human institution a mode of signification" (Todorov *The Poetics* 8). This frame errs more to the understanding of how story elements work in a specific culture and establish societal rules and boundaries. Theories of form are significant to narrative discussion and also extend morphological

analysis because they continue to establish foundations for analysis. Poetics in this case

applies to the reproducibility of the theory and also the generalizability of that theory to

other texts in the same genre. Polysemy is also germane to any critical assessment of

narrative-based texts, because it allows for a multitude of meanings and potentialities for

story direction or narrative framing. Each reader can have a different connection to

language or the reader can also notice something from another point of view. According

to Todorov, an important point of language is "the absence of a one-to-one relation

between the sounds and the meaning" (*The Poetics* 22). Sounds and meanings are

primarily conveyed through speech, but this moves into a different realm when these

sounds and meanings are mediated via technology.

Technology allows for further deconstruction and reconstruction of meaning.

This meaning is contextually dependent upon the culture, community, and universe of the

narrative.   In reference to the movement from speech to written literature and the

development of meaning via technology, "the *interpretations* of each unit are countless,

for they depend on the system in which that unit will be included in order to be

understood" (*The Poetics* 24). By recognizing that meaning depends upon the system

and has many potential outcomes, the process of analysis and schemas can be used

rhetorically in order for the reader to scale the narrative and relate concepts that are

needed for critical assessment of content. Because stories have an archetypal basis in

human history, these archetypes can be used to help readers understand how online

multimodal narratives are changing and adding to these historical structures.

In moving from print narratives to online multimodal narratives, polysemy is

applicable to the studies of convergence and multimodality because stories have inter-related concepts and some similar archetypical forms. What is different in polysemically involved analysis, in this instance, is the application of this knowledge to new forms and discourses. Polysemic understanding takes on a new role as narratives converge and move across new technologies and into online spaces. This type of awareness and understanding shows how decisions made by the designer can influence the comprehension and cognitive constructions the reader makes. In a transmediated, convergent, and/or multimodal narrative, primary texts, secondary texts, and tertiary texts are permeated with these polysemic relationships. These design transformations occur between texts as well. This adds to the development of fan culture and societal constructs because fans participate in meaning making in part as individuals and as a whole body. The development of fan culture and societal constructs are relevant to convergence-linked and multimodal stories because without interest these narratives, stories, and tales would fall by the wayside. This lack of interest or failure to engage would essentially kill the story, its narrative universe, and any potential community developed around it. The fans as participants take some responsibility for keeping narratives alive. This death of narrative is one potential outcome of the narrative cycle, but there are so many more possibilities for the story. These possible outcomes can include learning how to extend and critique modern multimodal and convergent stories using narrative theory and structuralism. This extension adds more to the academic conversation and also allows for the continued development of a foundational terminology.

Moving to Multimodal Narrative: Murray and Online Storytelling

Multimodal and convergence-linked narratives are based on historically archetypal instantiations of oral, visual, and written narratives. They share the commonalities of the "story" in that they convey information about the world in which they are constructed and by which they are critiqued. In her work, *Hamlet on the Holodeck*, Murray discusses the importance of the story and its development across and recodification through technology. For her, "A story is an act of interpretation of the world, rooted in the particular perceptions and feelings of the writer" (*Hamlet* 204). This means that as writers create and disseminate their content, they establish their own versions of the world based on perceptions, personal influences, and ideas about the surrounding culture. Story as an interpretation of the world connects with the previously discussed terms morphology, poetics, and polysemy through societal and cultural elements. A writer, creator, or producer makes narrative choices that influence what is included in a text and thereby potentially construct participant groups and audiences. Interpretation is also reified in the cognitive activities of meaning generation for the reader or participant involved in the narrative. For example, the writer creates a version of the world that appeals to his or her intended audience. But this audience can shift from intended, those with whom the author was trying to connect, to all members of a society when texts go online or are mediated through technology. Participants can see the text on Youtube, hear about it on someone's blog, read a review on Amazon, or really like a certain character archetype (i.e. prince, vampire, wizard, army officer…) and want to read more. The reader then interprets the message of the text in his or her own way and

that interpretation is influenced by what appeals to him or her. According to Murray, readers must "be always in search of secret information, in pursuit of refused reward" (173). This pursuit fosters a desire to gain knowledge and also talk with others about shared opinions and disagreements. In creating a common foundation for discussion, readers, authors, and scholars can engage in conversations about what it means to participate in a narrative and also work on metacognitive skill development. This metacognitive skill development (i.e. thinking about thinking, talking about what connections are made to a story, what elements are appealing, and creating a generalizable theory about why readers and authors make certain choices) is paramount because readers can get lost in an information glut. This glut comes with the ability to access all of the narrative texts imaginable via technologically mediated spaces. Developing skills related to the parsing and classifying details is significant to those consuming and engaging with these stories. Murray notes that "A particular of technology of communication—the printing press, the movie camera, the radio— may startle us when it first arrives on the scene, but the traditions of storytelling are continuous and feed into one another both in content and form" (*Hamlet* 28). Narrative theory is a useful base to draw from when discussing storytelling because, no matter the modality or means of conveying the message, readers are still influenced by traditional storytelling methods and archetypal structures.

As archetypical characters move through a story cycle and across technologically mediated spaces, they have the power to engage readers at many levels. When the reader engages with the text in any form, he or she builds a relationship with the text and the

discourses surrounding the text or textual elements. These discourses include blogs, reviews, wikis, message boards, and newsletters. Online activity has increased the interactivity and connectedness of the readers; they can form groups and discuss how they relate to a text, character, or story setting. As the material consumption continues, he or she makes connections involving meaning and social reality. The reader can form friendships with like-minded participants or argue over problems in the flow of the narrative. These conversations and their participants can benefit from developing a common and narrative theory influenced terminology to discuss why they feel a certain way about story content. This creates informed consumers who can understand and also make informed judgments about the texts, universes, and worlds they are navigating. Connections between participants help to reflect the larger society and also related heavily to the structuralist mantle taken up by Barthes in relation to plurality and added to by Friedberg in relation to multiplicity. Both theorists and their terms are concerned with the recognition for variation and the allowance for possibility within a narrative text and its socio-cultural environment.

Narratives and the Many: Barthes on Plurality and Friedberg on Multiplicity

Narrative theory has a history and must be considered for its historical merits as well as the places it can go in the future. The dynamic nature of text development in relation to meaning generation and timescale is at the heart of discussions of narrative theory and storytelling offered in the works of Roland Barthes and Anne Friedberg. These discussions are germane to the theoretical lenses and terms previously offered

because they help by providing a context and a firm foundation for study. By knowing where the theory has come from, scholars, students, authors, and fans can see the places it can potentially move and grow.

In the case of Barthes, he takes up the term plurality in relation to meaning making through story elements and engagement. He also connects with Propp and Todorov in conversations surrounding narrative generation and its impact on the audiences engaged in it. In his works *Image, Music, Text* and *Mythologies*, Barthes provides another interpretation of narrative elements offered by Propp and Todorov. This additional consideration is relevant when placing narrative into a historically situated context with a rhetorical purpose. When considering the Russian Formalists, Barthes notes that:

> Propp and Levi-Strauss have taught us to recognize the following dilemma: either a narrative is merely a rambling collection of events, in which case nothing can be said about it other than by referring back to the storyteller's...art, talent, or genius…or else it shares with other narratives a common structure which is open to analysis, no matter how much patience its formulation requires. (IMT 80)

These theoretical influences help researchers to situate themselves within the discourse surrounding the academic study of stories. Narratives are much richer than just a storyteller's art, deserve more consideration as an object with significant meanings, and share commonalities that are open to various types of analyses. Barthes in this quote has sarcastic overtones and of course notes that storytellers go through a multi-step process when generating content. There is more to the story than just a random collection of elements and devices. Stories, narrative elements, and devices are subject to analysis and

can establish the way that a genre is studied and disseminated in the future.

Barthes considers the process of analysis of narrative as involving two patterns He says, "(i)t is only at the level of these conformities and departures that analysis will be able to come back to, but now equipped with a single descriptive tool, the plurality of narratives, to their historical, geographical and cultural diversity" (Barthes IMT 81). These conformities and departures appear differently in different narratives and are subject to different interpretations of meaning by the reader/scholar. In online spaces, including those that are convergent and multimodal, plurality comes to the forefront. In our current level of connectivity, anyone can read, view, or otherwise consume a text anywhere in the world if he or she has the given technology or technological access. Intentionality also plays a large role in what is produced by authors and participants. In the case of Barthes, he makes the choice to engage with the narrative structuralists and also critique what Propp and Todorov have done. This sets conversations in motion that can be investigated by scholars of narrative theory and also those in the fields of new media and Rhetoric and Composition. These conversations are significant because narrative forms the basis for how stories and textual messages are conveyed via various media and modes of discourse.

In the relationship between Todorov and Barthes, the narrative structuralist conversation continues to develop surrounding the elements of story and discourse. This distinction is significant because it allows for the consideration of stories as narrative constructs that acknowledge various interpretations and readings and the discourse which is more of a societal implication of the text on a specific audience or group of audiences.

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According to Barthes, Todorov takes the notion of tiered narrative further by allowing for many potential stories and discourses surrounding any given story construct or archetype. The existence of potential conversations is pertinent because narrative theory is more than just a parsing out of pieces or just inspecting how things flow in a linear fashion. This analytical paradigm relates with an increased reflexivity on the part of societies and communities in relation to their uses of and participate in and with the story. Todorov replies to Barthes, "to propose a theory of the structure, and operation of the literary discourse...in such a manner that the existing works of literature appear as" points where the narrative abstract has become a more concrete form ("Structuralism" 71). The allowing for possibility is what Todorov's work brings and also what Barthes keys into with regard to the separation between story, discourse, and narrative tier development, and their respective relationships to plurality. The academic conversation concerning narrative and storytelling relates mostly to how analysis is conducted and how meaning is given to objects that make up the narrative. According to Todorov, structural "analysis seeks no longer to articulate a paraphrase, a rational resume of the concrete work, but to present a spectrum of literary possibilities in such a manner that the existing works of literature appear as particular instance that have been realized" (Todorov "Structural" 70). By realizing and developing a text, an author extends the possibilities and reach of a message. Todorov, in the course of his academic career, goes further and connects to the sociology of the audience when he says, the "very choice of one group of theoretical concepts instead of another presupposes a subjective decision; but if we do not make this choice we achieve nothing at all" ("Structural" 72). This also connects to the sociological and anthropological considerations offered in Chapter 3 surrounding Pierre

Bourdieu's critique of taste and analysis of societal structures. The spectrum of meaning and possibilities again feeds into the notion of plurality and the allowing of multiple interpretations of story content to exist. But, these interpretations must be separated into the work of the story and the conversations about the story in the form of a discourse.

In the case of separation, Barthes remarks, "Tzvetan Todorov, reviving the distinction made by the Russian Formalists; proposes working on two major levels themselves subdivided: *story* (the argument), comprising a logic of actions and a syntax of characters, and *discourse*, comprising the tenses, aspects and modes of the narrative" (IMT 86-7). Dividing these levels helps to showcase how the story itself and the discourse around the story can be consumed, allowed for, and discounted by the readers and/or audience members. They are separate and distinct portions of the narrative cycle, which are strongly influenced by one another and yet, the story is at the heart. There must be a story in order for a discourse to develop.

Stories and narratives are not just found in great novels of epic periods. They are found in the communications of everyday life and require a specific terminology and schema to be developed in order for the reader to make sense of them. Plurality in this case refers to the existence of and allowance for many different interpretations of a text. Barthes notes that stories, tales, and narratives are "(a)ble to be carried by articulated language, spoken or written, fixed or moving images, gestures, and the ordered mixture of all these substances; narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting,...stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news item, conversation" ("Introduction to Structural" *Image, Music, Text* 79).

This type of presence refers to a varied collection of narrative items that come together in order to communicate a series of events to an audience or group of readers. The level at which the message is conveyed and/or related varies based on the reader's interest in participating in the world of the story.

In the move from Barthes and his concerns related to narrative structuralism in the works of Propp and Todorov to Friedberg's work with cinema and interface development, the discussion shifts to focus on a plurality of narrative nuances to multiples of meanings, forms, and time scales. Multiples denote that there can be a morphology, poetics, polysemy, and plurality to a text. But it also notes that there can be many operating at the same time on the cinematic or computer screen. The shift from plurality to multiplicity is most evident when Friedberg discusses the work of Marshall McLuhan. She notes that McLuhan talked about multiplicity of message and medium even before the "birth of the Internet." In reference to his *Medium is the* Message, McLuhan says the, "'method of our time is to use not a single but multiple models for exploration'" (as qtd in Friedberg 210). The notion of exploration is significant to a reader's participation and engagement with the text. Wanting to find out more about something and being curious about it drives interest and pushes people to ask questions and seek answers.

Multiple spaces that are fluid and fragmented allow for increased participation and also make analysis a more difficult proposition. This difficulty comes with the acceptance of multiple media forms as storytelling items. Each type of media and mode allows for its own passage of knowledge and meaning. In the case of a novel, it is read

via the original paper format or on some type of computer-mediated technology (i.e. Kindle, iPad, Nexus 7). Reading the novel involves engagement, interest, and a desire to learn more about a version of reality. The reading is a significant cognitive activity because it activates knowledge centers in the brain and also pushes for the reader to imagine details and scenarios. In this way, the novel is a single print text that can carry with it a multitude of meanings and interpretations. But, when the novel is coupled with a film, website, game, or online fan fiction, the multiple forms and allowances for exploration can become a limitless endeavor. This also allows and/or requires the fan, reader, and/or participant to monitor how much he or she wants to connect to the story and engage with various levels of content.   The self-monitoring is also an effective skill to develop because narratives in this modern age can have an overwhelming number of facets and the reader can suffer from information overload. By making sense of the content and his or her connections, the reader can moderate and plan his or her engagement to coincide with times and places that work for him or her and the story at a macro and micro level.

The term relevant to Friedberg's work, as mentioned in the purpose and introduction sections of this chapter, is multiplicity. Multiplicity is used in her work to refer to and "contrast two forms of time-based representation: the single-frame image...and the multiply framed image" (Friedberg 330). The single framed image is seen in a specific time sequence and is representative of traditional film. The multiply framed image can be seen on the cinematic screen, but plays better in the multiple frames of the computer screen where images can be seen simultaneously and in adjacent or

juxtaposed windows.

Narrative structure works in films and online contexts because these different modalities and continue to be based on traditional storytelling methods. Multiplicity acknowledges the establishment of another form of storytelling and specific allowances and restraints in that method of production. Allowances make narrative room for potential outcomes within the story through the use of a specific technology or storytelling style. Friedberg discusses the relationship and oscillation between technology, narrative, and user as being a bricolage or montage making scenario. She says, "The armchair televisual viewer is a *montagist*, composing a sequenced view from a database of channels and delivery formats, a random set of synchronic alternatives to the single-screen view" (*The* Virtual 192-3). By being able to switch between fractured pieces of storyline and/or narrative structure, this allows the montagist/reader to gain the depth and insight into the story that he or she wants. The connection to gaining insight could be a quest for knowledge and meaning, revelations in relation to information connectivity, and finding hidden bonus elements (i.e. Easter Eggs). These bonus elements are called Easter Eggs by the fan and online communities because they are bonuses available to only those members willing to search for them. Participants could also be driven by the need to build and foster a community based on shared interests in a narrative and its discourse. These different types of connections can be formed in online and offline contexts.

Interface and computer screens have changed the way in which stories are told as they move to computer-mediated contexts. These technologies have allowed closer

physical connections to the frame and point of view of the narrator(s) and/or author(s). Friedberg notes that this is not a specifically new phenomenon. Screens have been used to obscure and also reveal content through the ages. Within her work and critical study of cinema and art, she reaffirms that the "screen is at once a surface and a frame—a reflective plane onto which an image is cast and a frame that limits it's view. The screen is a component piece of architecture...a 'virtual window' that changes... built space adding new apertures that dramatically alter our conception of space and... time" (Friedberg 1). The windows metaphor connects with convergence and multimodality through the building and creating of different viewpoints. The alteration of conceptions also changes how texts are consumed and read in non-traditional spaces. Because of narrative's potentialities, morphologies, and multiplicities, computer-mediated and technologically infused spaces are not only "divided into separate movable inset frames, but each one could run a different application-- one displaying a text program, one filled with pure code, one with a drawing" (Friedberg 226). Layering of windows and frames allows the user to access and gain experience with multiplicities of information. This access allows the participant to make connections with meaning that may not have been apparent in other contexts or with other technologies. Each window can have related content, but that content can vary and provide different nuances to the story. The windows can serve as interactive places that visually represent the story and can appeal to users during their formation of meaning and concepts.

Interactivity blends with the interface because it makes possible audience interaction and fan participation mediated by technology. The interface, in this narrative

instance, can demonstrate a multitude of forms. But, these forms must be structurally, linguistically, aesthetically, and narratively consistent with the constructs, style, and genre of the story if they are to be successful. A reader or participant would find fault with an interface that was devoid of elements that made the story or characters special or interesting for him or her. If the participant was determined enough, he or she could create a game or other fan homage that better represents and is truer to the narrative. Within a technology mediated space, that homage could be seen by everyone in the world or all the participants who were interested.   Again, this example is an ad hoc one that is dependent upon the context of the narrative and its story world.

Moving On

In moving forward, a scholar must reflect on the past with regard to what has come before in order to make a "new" contribution to the field. Narratives have always been a fascinating and escapist notion for me. They allow for a reader to enter his or her own private world where he or she can be anything or anyone. This open ended nature can be explained in terms of morphology, poetics, polysemy, plurality, and multiplicity. Morphology provides a generalized starting point from which to discuss narrative elements and structures. This term and its discourse are helpful in providing a historical context for analyzing how stories are told. The use of the terms morphology, multiplicity, poetics, polysemy, and plurality can be translated into classroom praxis through the consideration of convergence, "coming together," and multimodality, "multiple pieces of communication." Analysis of these terms can show the shared

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correlation of concepts through narrative nuances and theoretical frameworks from Propp, Todorov, Barthes, and Friedberg.

Views surrounding convergence through narrative structures are considered in more detail in the following chapter using the work, *A Discovery of Witches*, by Deborah Harkness as an exemplar. Examples from this novel and its storyworld helps to showcase how new media performs a study on convergence media and transmedia storytelling. It also highlights the social hierarchy and group participation in and with the narrative. Like any society, an online fan culture or participant group has different levels of participation and engagement. "Participation comes at a cost, but when primary producers become initiators rather than sole creators of content, the effects are long reaching and manifest in unexpected multifarious and diverse ways that seem wholly beneficial to producers, players, and audiences" (Dena 54). In order to participate within the narrative universe surrounding Harkness' work, one has to make the investment in order to obtain the books in the series and also must have access to technology to glean other story world information. Technological access and its related questions are important to narrative development, however, economic relationships of technology to users and these narratives will not be fully examined in this piece. Economics will be briefly highlighted when I am discussing Henry Jenkins and Marxist critiques in Chapter 3. This is done in order to present a more balanced discussion of convergence and its relationship to technological and societal development.

Research into narratives from online contexts also broadens the discussion of self-exploration through narrative. As long as the conduct of the characters in the story fits

with the narrative expectations and archetypes of the cannon, the story should work. Being true to the text and exploration also corresponds to Murray's work in *Hamlet on the Holodeck*. She notes that "(m)ultiform narrative attempts to give a simultaneous form to" narrative "possibilities, to allow us to hold in our minds the multiple contradictory alternatives" (Murray 37-8). Analysis of these elements and contradictions is significant because it allows for a widening in the potentials of narrative. Narrative is a historically situated concept that has be analyzed by various theorists over time.

In future chapters, I posit that one type of analysis and reader awareness comes in the notion of kairotic reading (KR). It is a method of rhetorical, historical, and textual analyses, which is influenced by a reader's social and textual relationships. KR is one potential way of engaging with text that allows the participant to develop cognitive skills that can serve them latter in their academic lives and careers. These cognitive skills can include developing critical and meta-level awareness through a reader's reflection on content, semiotic formations, and social relationships and participant discourses. These skills come in relation to the reader seizing the opportune moment for him or herself. Self-knowledge and metacognitive analysis through narrative bleeds into kairotic reading later on because it embraces a kairotic "opportune moment" timescape for the reader to embrace the text. We can only know ourselves and our texts when we engage with the story or not. Kairotic reading will be more fully introduced, explained, discussed, and applied within the context of Chapter 3.

Chapter 3

Generative Elements of Reading Kairotically: Considering Harkness's *A Discovery of Witches* and the Potentials of a Convergent Media Franchise

Purpose and Overview:

Chapter 3 serves as an overview of the world of media convergence. My research focuses on relevant theory from the works of Henry Jenkins, Pierre Bourdieu, James Gee, and Lev Manovich. These theorists and their frameworks add to the terminological and theoretical foundations provided in Chapter 2.   Convergence works with narrative theory because the stories presented in the New Media universe rely on traditional story structures to convey and communicate relevant information to an audience or group of participants.   According to Jenkins, convergence is the "circulation of media content-- across different media systems, competing media economies and national borders-- depends heavily on consumers' active participation" (*Convergence* 3). Participation is an important hallmark when discussing how readers use skills and strategies to make meaning, especially through kairotic reading.

Chapter Introduction

Convergence can enable users to participate on multiple levels within a story world or media franchise. Producers are able to create stories that allow for generative behavior and the potential of engaging with kairos. By reading kairotically, users/participants are allowed to use their own "opportune moments" to move through

content and learn information. When a reader is moving through content, kairotic

reading can be employed by the reader in order to create a text that has the most meaning

for them and provides the information that he or she desires. The ability to read in the

moment can extend the conversations surrounding narrative theory as well as online

storytelling. Media convergence and transmedia storytelling have the potential to allow

for the development of taste and critical awareness through the generative nature of

consumption and production of convergent media elements/texts. These theories coalesce

into an analysis that brings together multiple disciplines under the foundation of narrative

theory in order to discuss how technology changes and does not change the process of

storytelling.

This chapter highlights the process of kairotic reading in relation to narrative

elements and also puts convergence in practice by showing how a print media text can

serve as a base or starting point for transmedia extensions. The structures of transmedia

narrative often parallel printed and text-based narratives. But, transmediated structures

also have points of divergence that come with new technological applications and

embedded narrative touchpoints. These transmediated applications allow for divergences

to occur within the structure of the narrative context and also the social discourse around

the text. Kairotic reading can also aide in the development of franchise related audience

participation. The audience as participant is a huge factor in the existence of any

franchise because without an audience to engage with a story dies. By interacting with

texts at moments that are opportune for them, audience members are more likely to

participate in and with the texts. I know this to be true with my own personal reading

experiences. Kairotic reading, although I did not call it that at the time, occurred when I was engaging with the *Harry Potter* series of novels. For example, I started reading book four, *Goblet of Fire*, but I could not get into it. I had read the first three books in a three week timeframe. But, four, the biggest book at the time, just was not going well. I reluctantly put the book down and went on to other things. Six months later, I picked up the story where I left off and read the book in a week. In this case, I went with my gut and my own level of participation at the time. Seizing the opportune moment for myself was a relieved and revealing experience. One that has impacted my thoughts on textual consumption and reading practices in my students.

Stories allow for connections to be made between concepts, social/textual realities, and participants. These connections are diverse given the breadth and depth of potential participation points provided by convergent and transmedia narratives. In terms of breadth, concepts can run the gamut from characters to scene introductions and so forth. The social and textual realities can be convergent, divergent, or selectively replicated or chosen. In the realm of participation, the audience could potentially be anyone with access to the story from any of its media outlets. In terms of depth, these connecting points can be explored as much or as little as the reader or audience member has the desire to. Convergence-linked and transmediated stories should be considered in terms of convergence, taste, semiotic domains, and modification.   In using the previously mentioned terms in this chapter, I provide another grouping of foundation terms for scholars in the fields of New Media and Rhetoric and Composition to use when discussing these narratives and their processes. The terminology is considered in

subsequent sections. By relating the terms to the context of the Harkness narrative example, I am able to provide a narrative example that is early in the transmedia storytelling process. *A Discovery of Witches* is a relative newcomer to the convergence linked narrative franchise scene. Because it is early in the franchise's transmedia storytelling, there are many places for the story to travel and spaces for fans to fill with their own artwork, fictions, videos, and travel photos. The layers of this content are just beginning to solidify. There are also a great deal of layers and meta-level considerations of fictional characters in non-fictional settings, contexts, and locations. The various textual examples provided in the latter part of the chapter help to highlight these layers and characters in richer detail. The examples also help to highlight the importance of convergence as an addition to the narrative storytelling oeuvre.

To more fully situate convergence and multimodality as equal/juxtaposed, I discuss these concepts in relation to their respective fields of New Media and Rhetoric and Composition. Each field brings a nuance to narrative theory and can also be connected through its foundational terminology. This comparison against narrative theory is significant because it permits these two disciplines to create a common language when discussing what it means to tell a story in a convergent or multimodal manner.

An example of this can come in the form of a story extension. The author, creator, and producer creates a version of the world through his or her text. That text can only cover so much information. Some enterprising fans can choose to take up and write fan fiction based on minor or major characters or settings from the original story. These fanfics can allow for other readers to craft stories or other such textual content that can be

shared with other audience members. These fan texts can be at odds with how the original author or producer structured the primary text. By adding a new element or position to the storyline, a writer can aide in the development of a reader's narrative meaning making, which can result from the process of kairotic reading. Examples of various texts surrounding the story franchise will be considered and will be used as examples to show how "kairotic reading" works in practice and can be used in classroom and self-reflexive praxis. This practical application involves a use of the rhetorical term kairos and the educational term reading. In this case, kairos refers to the opportune moment of reading or use. This time scale can be individualized for the reader when combined with the practices associated with reading. The process of reading references the notion that the content of a text is influenced by a reader's comprehension of it. According to Durkin, reading is the "intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader" (qtd. in Harris and Hodges 205). When used in combination, these terms mean that a reader can come to a text and read it when it is opportune for him or her to do so. A reader can be brought to the primary text through many other potential connections. He or she doesn't have to read the main text first and can go at the pace that is comfortable for him or her. Chapter 3 shows convergence's relationship with narrative and story development in relation to theories from Propp, Todorov, Barthes, and Friedberg. By setting up convergence narrative, I identify common themes that can also be transferred to texts under the "multimodality" frame (considered in chapter 4). In comparing these two terms against one another and in the context of narrative theory, I intend to glean information that can bridge work currently being performed in the fields of New Media and Rhetoric and

Composition. This information can then apply to writing pedagogy and coursework in a reflexive fashion.

In choosing one specific narrative example in relation to convergence, I realize that by making a choice that I am precluding others. My reasoning for how I selected the textual examples relies on my own interests in supernatural and paranormal narratives, especially those involving humans, supernatural beings (vampires, wolves, daemons, and witches). The struggles these characters face are complicated by their powers and positions as supernatural beings and more than human. But, these characters still face human dilemmas and these struggles fascinate me. The works by Harkness involve these supernatural characters and also place them in a realistic modern setting. Vampires, witches, and daemons have their own history and narrative context. For the purposes of this analysis, I will briefly consider how these preternatural elements relate to the story and enhance the narrative, but they are not the only point or even the total overarching goal. These elements still come housed in the narrative dialogue and as such are bound to a developed set of rules/frameworks for narrative content. As mentioned in chapter 2, blended analysis is required when considering how narratives are constructed. Historical, rhetorical, and textual analysis allows for a stronger consideration of convergent narrative methods. This is done through providing terminology including convergence, taste, semiotic domains, and modification.

Convergence

Henry Jenkins provides the locus of the study through his definition of convergence and also is exemplified by his own analysis of transmedia story examples. There are also

counters to what is considered Jenkins' overly enthusiastic application of the phenomenon. These come in the form of economic and political critiques. As a group, these articles question the broad application of Jenkins' convergence to culture without careful consideration of the economics and politics involved in these social contexts (Couldry and Verstrate).

Convergence as foundational term is important to the discussion of narrative in relation to online and New Media considerations. The term's definition sets the stage for research because it names the boundaries and limitations of convergence in relation to storytelling. It creates an archetype from which to measure other "convergent" stories. Jenkins was an early advocate of this type of media usage and provides a strong place to start from. This advocacy is important in establishing an understanding dynamic storytelling and the conveying of a narrative as it moves online, across various audiences, and via new technological implements. Depending on the group, they may have a shared set of beliefs or norms that denoted what Bourdieu calls taste.

Taste

Taste is defined as "the capacity to differentiate and appreciate these practices and products" produced as part of a specific social unit or class (Bourdieu 170). Discernment of content, which fits in a specific convergent narrative space, is essential if a person wants to participate in the story as much or as little as he or she chooses.   Knowledge of the corpus is required in order to be able to discern what storylines can evolve from the

core storyspace. Taste helps to shape a participant's uptake of the narrative, in any

mediation, because it allows a community to develop relationships to the text and to one

another.

The concept of taste enhances the connection to convergence and also to the

narrative terminology surrounding polysemy and poetics. Signs and these meanings can

be appreciated at different levels by the story's audience members. Poetics relates to the

capacity for an audience member to differentiate between their textual experiences.

These experiences can be governed by the rules of that pieces specific genre or context.

Semiotic Domains

In moving further into social considerations of narrative and convergence, Gee

provides another way to consider audience and social participation in relation to narrative

theory, convergent media, and societal groups with his application of "semiotic

domains," defined as

"any set of practices that recruits one or more modalities...to communicate distinctive

types of meaning" (Gee 19). In Gee's work with video games and play, he notes that

semiotic domains allow for layered and kairotically opportune meanings and says that

"(m)eaning is both situation (context) and domain specific. Thus, even in a single

domain, the meaning of a word varies across different situations" (Gee 26). In

communicating a message, semiotic domains help to set boundaries and also create

spaces for audience members to connect over content. They allow for content and

community to come together within a narrative context. This also compares and blends

well with the notions of morphology and poetics as discussed in chapter 2. Moving from the phenomena, the culture, and looking at them in concert is the progression of these terms and also their relevance to building a foundational terminology.   Games can be one secondary extension of the narrative and bring together diverse populations. For example, Gee mentions his own experiences in the world of the game *Pikmin*. Semiotic domains operated on many levels that were external to Gee via the game and also internal to him as thought processes and entertainment. It is important to elaborate on this external and internal dynamic because this can be enhanced by the development of kairotic reading.

Modification

The potential for game modification can also come into play, especially in fan created media outlets. His work surrounds the ability of the text (online, convergent, and multimodal) to be altered and moved around to different forms. According to Manovich:

> With new media, 'malleability' becomes 'variability'; that is, while the analog
> television set allowed the viewer to modify the signal in just a few dimensions
> such a brightness and hue, new media technologies give the user much more
> control. A new media object can be modified in numerous dimensions, and these
> modifications can be expressed numerically." (*The Language* 134)

Modification refers to the ability of an author to alter, add to, or delete from an object or media element in order to tell new stories or switch from one mode to another. Modification can affect and be affected by the technology used to create the narrative, the author's and reader's knowledge of the program used, and a narrative's mobility via a technology. In modifying a narrative element, the user can change codes and numerical

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ordering to allow for the pieces to be moved and ordered differently. The user can also be performing these actions via a device while they are moving through a park or other temporal location. Modification becomes more complex and reflects on the ever changing space/place where a story can occur. It is both an internal developing storyline and also the text on which the author and audience operate and are in play. Modification connects to narrative theory as well as the works of Jenkins, Bourdieu, and Gee through the shared connections of narrative theory and social interactions.

Because I am discussing narrative theory in relation to convergence, semiotic domains, and modification in relation to new media, I must note that Manovich has an issue with the use of the term narrative. He says that "in the world of new media, the word *narrative* is often used as an all-inclusive term, to cover up the fact that we have not yet developed a language to described these new strange objects" (Manovich *The Language* 229). I disagree with Manovich on this point because, in order to move forward, the elements must look at the past to fit with more traditional views and canonical interpretation of texts. By looking back to move forward, I am suggesting that the process of analysis must be flexible and also aware of previous context and meanings. While application of the term narrative should not be heavy-handed, it does add weight to the discussion of technologically mediated stories. The application and usage of the term is done in order to situate my own analysis into the discourse surrounding narrative theory, convergence, and multimodality.

The combination of these theories will extend the uses of convergence in my example media franchise/narrative story world. By using the terms convergence, taste,

semiotic domains, modification and mobility in this chapter, I am providing another grouping of foundation terms for scholars in the fields of New Media and Rhetoric and Composition to use when discussing these narratives and their processes. In moving forward, I need to consider these terms in the context of their theoretical relationships and connections to one another. In the analysis portion, the textual exemplar will come from the popular book series, *The All Souls Trilogy* by Deborah Harkness. There will be an analysis of the primary novel, *A Discovery of Witches*, as well as the media content developed by the author, publisher, and fans. This fan generated interest lead to a great learning experience for me and other fans of the franchise. An application of this to the writing classroom would be ideal for both students and teachers in order to create participants that are aware of the multilayered possibilities for a text.

Constructing Knowledge and Meaning: Narrative Storytelling and Kairotic Reading

Stories are social pathways to convey information. As such they are part of the common fair seen in computer and digitally linked technologies. In online spaces, readers are gleaning information from any number of texts (visual, auditory, written, etc.) Stories have been a mainstay of culture since the beginning and also tie into the previous discussion of narrative theory and structuralism in chapter 2. Narrative storytelling has been established as the process by which meaning is made and conveyed to an audience. It is also a way for specific cultures to pass on traditions and societal norms. The interaction with various levels of story and community has a marked impact on the narrative because these interactions allow for a development of meaning and an

understanding of semiotic structures to be developed. In this way "narration links itself to actions or events considered as pure processes, and by this it puts emphasis on the temporal and dramatic aspects of narrative" (Genette 7), leading into a reader's construction of knowledge and meaning by consuming various narrative elements and products.

In online storytelling, the reader chooses which narrative elements (i.e. websites, fan fiction, blogs, games, etc...) to consume, which in turn allows the reader/user to get involved as much or as little as he or she wants. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and fan engagement enable in order for a multimodal or convergent text to exist. In the case of intrinsic motivation, a participant may wish to engage with a story by learning new information to aid the participant's internal desire form knowledge (Cherry). In the case of extrinsic motivation, a participant may be moved by inner motivations to engage with a text, but that engagement must have an outside reward or payoff (Cherry). For example, in intrinsic motivation, a participant may choose to write fan fiction related to an obscure character because he or she connects with some personal or cultural element the character represents. Extrinsic motivation comes when that story is published on a fan fiction website or as part of a contest. The participant will get feedback from judges and fellow fans, which can introduce the participant to new friends or give feedback that contributes to that narrative discourse.

In a majority of the research I've conducted, courses I've taught, and fan bases I've been a part of, I've learned that reading must come at a contextually and kairotically beneficial time for the person called the: reader, viewer, creator, and/or consumer.

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Otherwise, he or she does not inhabit the story/world/universe conveyed by the narrative. This leads into the discussion of a new term I call "kairotic reading." Kairos can be defined as "the principle of contingency or fitness-to-situation" (Segal 17) or as "'Knowing how' and 'knowing when' are at the heart of kairos, distinguishing techne from rule-governed activities that are less constrained by temporal conditions" (Atwill 59). Techne is defined as "the principles or methods employed in making something and attaining an objective" ("Techne"). Kairos differs from chronological time because order is mutable and dynamic and is not limited to the immediate vicinity of a temporal location. Online spaces and transmediated texts allow for asynchronous communication between individuals and narrative elements. In this context, a user can wait until the opportune or kairotic learning moment to garner and put to use new knowledge/information about a specific character, theme, or content addition. A generalized example of this would be reading a novel and then performing a web search about a piece of content. Searching for deeper meaning changes the reader's experience of text or type of texts engaged with.

Reading, for the purposes of this research, is defined as "intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader" (Durkin qtd. in Harris and Hodges 205). In the context of storytelling within convergence and multimodality, reading practice shifts technological literacy based on the way a "text" is developed and marketed to a group. Depending on the reader and the style of construction generative meaning making and learning can be aided or hampered. This knowledge is of great importance because it can be used to broaden what is meant

by narrative and what is meant by text.

By blending the terms kairotic and reading, I give structure to a new form of text consumption that further expounded upon in the work of Propp, Todorov, Barthes, Friedberg Jekins, Bourdieu, Gee, and Manovich. Kairotic reading uses the foundational terminology of narrative theory in order to extend notions of convergence and social partipation.

I also look to the concept of students' and instructors using contextual and situational knowledge at the most opportune moment for personal and group engagement. Atwill highlights kairos and its relationship to a reader's narrative comprehension by saying "An art deployed at the 'right time,' however, may do more than redefine the limits of specific situations, it may also create alternative situations" (60). Conceptually, the right moment to use knowledge is a hallmark of kairos and the use of rhetoric. But, the concept of alternative situations also bridges the foundational gap between rhetoric, narrative theory, and convergent media. They are another way for convergence to work in transmedia storytelling and narratives. Gaps in these stories or narratives allow for alternative texts to be added to the story's discourse. This addition can lead to the development of applicable strategies or knowledge generation by the user, participant, or reader. As skills develop they become cognitive tools. Holland notes that "(t)he cognitive tools become part of a hybrid that qualifies the combination of external world and brain as a unified cognitive system" (94). Unification of knowledge and kairotic story content also comes within the shared experiences of participant in transmediated stories, where participation can take many forms within a convergence-linked narrative. A

convergence-linked narrative is one in which multiple points of information or a text come together via a reader or group of readers participate in a story world (Jenkins *Convergence* 57). According to Murray, "Viewer digital participation is moving from sequential activities"… "to simultaneous but separate activities"…"to a merged experience" (*Hamlet* 254). This merged experience is also another way in which to kairotically read a story and its related media contents. The potential exists for there to be multiple types and levels of engagement in a participant's narrative experience.

These types of content providing in various extensions can alter how a participant reads the narrative. He or she can choose to order the story world or narrative universe differently from what is presented. According to Dena, "(T)he order of events in the story world can be different from the order they are delivered. Fans of storyworlds have long conducted what I term 'anachrony audits': reordering the discourse into the order events occurred within the storyworld" (49). For example a fan could watch a television series or play a game that is based on written story content, after which, he or she, through intrinsic or extrinsic motivation pick up the books from which the story or game world originated.

Coming Together: Meaning, Jenkins, and Convergence

In chapter 1, I discussed Henry Jenkins and his theory of convergence in brief. Chapter 3 is the place where Jenkins' version of convergence is more fully interrogated and put into conversation with other sociological, educational, and new media scholars. He defines convergence as, "A word that described technological, industrial, cultural, and social changes in the ways media circulates within our culture" (Jenkins *Convergence*

322). Circulation and flow bear relevance to narrative theory because of the dynamic shifts taking place and also the coming together of story layers, audience groupings, and knowledge production within technologically mediated spaces. The example Jenkins uses in *Convergence* that exemplifies this refers to the *Harry Potter* franchise and fan engagement with the narrative's established world. He notes, in reference to a *Harry Potter* fan created textual extension and website, that connectivity and circulation of information changes depending on the level of the fan's/reader's interest. "For many kids, the profile is all they would write—having a self within the fiction was enough to satisfy the needs that brought them to the site. For others, it was the first step toward constructing a more elaborate fantasy about their life at Hogwarts" (Jenkins *Convergence* 181). Again, the level of participation varies depending on the individual interests of the reader involved.

One such modality of convergence, and the movement of stories across multiple layers, is transmedia narrative. "Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience'" (Jenkins "Trans" 944). This process of narrative dispersal creates spaces for fans to choose their levels of participation and interaction in the development of narrative space. Many possibilities for participation and interaction are available to the reader and can include fan created games, blogs for sharing knowledge, and also author/franchise manager created portals for readers to connect to one another and share their thoughts, feelings, and other such information.

Storytelling in a convergent manner is an inherently dynamic and involved enterprise. It is "understood as an ongoing conversation between academic theorists and industry practitioners" (Jenkins "Transmedia" 946). These groups must be aware of one another when it comes to social conditions and the next big trend in technology or narrative development. They also bring together considerations of how to engage fans or participants in these worlds. In the case of Jenkins, he was able to create a transmedia storytelling development course at USC ("Transmedia" 943). Convergence is the process by which transmedia storytelling develops and distributes across communication channels and pathways to various levels of participants. Transmedia storytellers have many ambitions and limited amounts of time to spend on their narratives; this can make the texts rife for fan collaboration. According to Jenkins, the limitless nature of content can allow for the further development of plot points by the participants. These readers "have a strong incentive to continue to elaborate on these story elements, working them over through their speculations, until they take on a life of their own" (Jenkins "Transmedia Storytelling 101" 2).

In some cases, audience members literally have to argue for the right to participate. They are outside observers of the content and only become involved in the fan community or social discourse when absolutely necessary. "Absolutely necessary" can mean anything from sharing a specific knowledge point to providing insider knowledge about a franchise to defending another fan/participant on a blog. The contexts for participation are dependent upon the comfort of the participant and the desire to connect to a group that shares the same understanding or relationship to content.

Contexts can also allow for criticism to surface. This is no different with Jenkins' terminology and lens.

Critiques of Jenkins come largely from the field of Cultural Studies and concern the broad application of the theory to the cultural marketplace. In the case of economics and politics, convergence can allow for nuances to be unveiled and discussed. But, according to Couldry's and Verstrate's articles, Jenkins fails to take these items into a full and balanced consideration. Couldry notes that "by closing his interpretive circle too quickly and too easily, Jenkins ignores key factors of differentiation and stratification within processes of convergence and so risks a radical misreading of contemporary media's implications for wider culture" ("More" 489). By acknowledging that convergence is prone to various hierarchies, Jenkins or other future practitioners of convergence avoid missing the connections to a more globalized culture. Another element to this criticism is the consideration of the multiple layers and politically mediated content within convergent stories. Verstrate mentions that:

> Convergence...is more than simply delivering different formats and functions through one general technology. It also goes hand in hand with divergence not online in the sense that one tool now gets to fulfill different functions...but also in the sense that portable tools with which we can do all these things are multiplying. ("The Politics" 537)

Changes occur dynamically over time and must be allowed for within the realm of the way stories come together and break apart. These caveats are addressed by Jenkins when he notes that he "can't claim to be a neutral observer in any of this. For one thing, I am

not simply a consumer of many of these media products; I am also an active fan"
(*Convergence* 12). He notes that he has a limited perspective, is embedded in this world,
and also uses specific local examples. The lack of neutrality and use of specific examples
within Jenkins' text can limit how convergence is discussed because it cannot be
constantly added to like a transmedia narrative can be.

Lastly, convergence relates to the notion of morphology given in chapter 2. This
connection comes in both of the terms' shared discussion of a sum of parts. In
convergence these parts or story elements come together. In narrative theory,
morphology describes the whole that can be broken down into specific pieces or parts.
Pieces under a dynamic process of growth, change, and removal are subject to the value
and interest an audience places on them. It is subject to the social practices associated
with the formation of social groups, practices, and tastes.

Social Narratives: Balancing Interaction, Bourdieu, and Taste

Humans engage in stories in order to make meaning in their lives. Stories,
whether written, oral, and visual, construct a time, space, and context for meaning to be
communicated to an audience. Those who participate in creating and consuming
transmediated narratives engage in a form of social hierarchy of the world. The reader,
user, or viewer makes the choice to involve him or herself within the confines of a
specific narrative space. According to Bourdieu, "The habitus is both the generative
principle of objectively classifiable judgments and the system of classification…of these
practices" (*Distinction*, 170). The habitus is the narrative user's frame of reference; as
such, it influences his or her judgments and choices. These judgments are rooted in the

sociopolitical. Class, race, and gender are key parameters that shape habitus and manifest

themselves in taste. They are further engaged with the options in choice that a user has

available to them in a given frame. Taste operates within habitus, to allow a person to

make sense of the world and its social organization. Bourdieu notes that:

> Taste, the propensity and capacity to appropriate…a given class of classified, classifying objects or practices, is the generative formula of life-style, a unitary set of distinctive preferences which express the same expressive intention in the specific logic of each of the symbolic sub-spaces, furniture, clothing, language or body hexis. (*Distinction, 172)*

This expression of preferences creates or fosters relationships between users as they

engage with and participate in the multi-layered narrative that convergent texts provide.

In the case of *Twilight*, for example, factions formed around Bella Swann's two main

love interests. One was Edward the vampire and the other was Jacob the werewolf.

Audience members were declaring themselves as "Team Edward" or "Team Jacob" and

forming events, fan-fiction, and apparel products to share their affiliations. These

groupings show the lengths participants are willing to go in order to share in their fantasy

of the story. There is a direct correlation between fan interest through their taste and

engagement with other members that hold the same beliefs or fantasies. Bourdieu works

at the intersections of philosophy, sociology, and anthropology; this unique vantage

point his allows him to analyze the habits of people as they form organizations of

interested parties, and to employ the terms habitus and taste in order explore, in richer

detail, how specific social groups can and do operate. In concert with Jenkins,

Bourdieu's arguments afford analytical tools for examining narratives that fans or

participants may actually enjoy and want to engage with. One application of Bourdieu's theories to a New Media influenced environment and mediated texts comes in the form of Jill Tyler's article, "Media Clubs: Social Class and the Shared Interpretations of Media Texts." In her piece, Tyler describes the interactions of a "media club" as "groups of friends who gather for the purpose of consuming, interpreting, and talking about media messages" (392). These groups are important in their relationship to New Media practices and also their discussion of narrative storytelling. Because Bourdieu's work comes from and appeals to mainly sociological considerations such as group dynamics, choices and socioeconomics, they can be applied to New Media settings where social groups are mediated by technological applications. According to Tyler, "Bourdieu's work offers a useful model for understanding the complex linking of cultural forms to social status as his theory integrates a number of material dynamics into the subjectivity of intimate relationships" (395). Her application of *habitus* and taste to the workings of the group is also significant to scholars of New Media interested in undertaking research on media connected groups because it establishes a set of practices and study scenarios that can garner more discussions of groups and their relationships to mediated texts. Tyler also notes that "(t)he *habitus*, or system of dispositions, constitutes and is constituted by the actors' performances, and a careful observation of the actors' performances reveals that subconscious understandings and interpretations that guide behavior, through a kind of 'practical logic' or something people just 'do' (395). This also helps to enmesh Bourdieu in New Media activities through their social applications to audiences and groups of participants. Groups of people engage with technology and narratives that underpin commonly established group concerns. These group concerns

also aid in the application of sociological theory into the study of interactions with New Media constructions and texts. Unfortunately, there is no one article that shifts Bourdieu's habitus and taste completely to New Media. But, because humans are actively communicating, working together to read, and also to engage with texts, we can apply his theories to their activities. People consume, create, and engage with texts and adapt their interactions to suit the media environment.

Both terms, habitus and taste, relate to kairotic reading in that the user/reader chooses to participate in and therefore must inhabit a specific narrative space and in which a story to develop in a generative way, so as to allow for the development of rules and roles within the social structures established in response to a transmediated narrative. Also, taste, developed through the appropriation of different media and physical content and forms the fan "life-style," which varies from fan to fan and helps to add another layer of richness to the social interaction within and development of the narrative. Social semiotics and anthropology are important points of consideration when discussing convergent narratives and transmediated texts. These points can and do reflect an honest appraisal of how these narratives work in developing communicative practices among audience members and also storytellers.

Taste and, to a lesser extent, habitus relate to the notions of poetics and polysemy within the narrative structuralism of Todorov. Taste connects with polysemy in the realm of multiple meanings that can be generated in relation to the reader's interpretation of that content's message; these interpretations depend heavily on what groups the reader is a member of or the relationship he or she has to that specific message. In order to allow for

a fuller consideration of taste in relation to polysemy, social interactions with many potential meanings must be accounted in the research process. Different social structures change the parameters of what is acceptable in that specific social group or in a specific textual interaction. Poetics and habitus connect through the notion of classification and the creation of a specific set of norms for a genre. These terms allow for reflexivity between convergent narrative, social interactions, and narrative theory. Stories are a socially created system of signs, narrative elements, and knowledge. As such, they provide a window into the specific context of life or lived experience at a specific time. Kairotic reading can vary for participants because they make the choice to inhabit a story when they are ready. This links with further discussions of social organizations and the generation of knowledge via semiotic domains that is discussed within the work of Gee.

Continuing the Connection: Gee and Semiotic Domains

By incorporating convergence and taste, I address the contributions of narrative theory to the social storytelling process. This also aids in the generation of a common foundation and terminology that can address stories in a structural way that also considers the societal implications and impacts of that narrative communication. Gee's frame of reference is as an educational scholar and one who is heavily influenced by videogame, play, and specific versions of social reality. A user can be literate in a discourse or a specific narrative, but that means nothing if that knowledge is not provided in the correct context or situation. Gee notes that "(l)iteracy in any domain is actually not worth much if one knows nothing about the social practices of which they literacy is but a part" (*What* 18). Social practices are inherently linked to literacy and the development or creation of

knowledge within a group of participants. They are also linked to the notion of semiotic domains.

A semiotic domain is defined as "any set of practices that recruits one or more modalities (e.g., oral or written language, images, equations, symbols, sounds, gestures, graphs, artifacts, etc.) to communicate distinctive meanings" (Gee *What* 19). Examples of semiotic domains can include: mechanical engineering, sympathetic vampire fiction, heavy metal music videos, convergent narrative discourses, and narrative structuralist criticism. The listing of domains is endless and dynamic conversation because new domains are being generated and old ones are being left behind or subsumed. This is significant to narrative theory through the concept of plurality (Barthes "From Work to Text" 159). Semiotic domains in their very nature allow for many potential learning outcomes and the existence of various levels of knowledge to a learning environment and related content.

By acknowledging semiotic domains as a foundational term relevant to convergent and narrative theory, research about learning practices can be incorporated into discussions of story discourse and also about fan participation. In playing along, to use a video game reference, participants can develop specific skills that not only complete a mission or other game-related task, but also transfers to real life learning contexts and scenarios. According to Gee, "We always learn *something*. And that something is always connected, in some way, to some semiotic domain or other" (*What* 23). Knowledge generation does not happen without a specific context, classifiable terminology, or a message to share.

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Domains allow individuals to gather in a structured environment in order to learn, critique, and develop content. This content has the power to be modified by participants and also has the mobility to move across many continents and globally connect audiences that may not have been able to share their knowledge or connect to one another. The final term associated with New Media and convergence come in relation to the changeability of narrative elements within and across technological and spatial divides.

Making Meaning and Altering the Narrative: Manovich and Modification

Modification is last term which bears relevance to the discussion of convergence-linked stories and transmediated narratives. This terminology helps to extend the social and technical aspects of narrative development in relation to multi-layered domains and messages, images, signs, and content communicated via these domains. In the context of modification, Lev Manovich notes that:

> New media change our concept of what an image is-- because they turn a viewer into an active user. As a result, an illusionistic image is no longer something a subject simply looks at, comparing it with memories of represented reality to judge its reality effect. The new media image is something the user actively *goes into*, zooming in or clicking on individual parts...*new media turn most images into image-interfaces and image-instruments.* (183)

New Media allow participants conversant in the technology and semiotic domain to modify portions of their reality. For example, a user can create a fan video via YouTube as an homage to a specific television series, movie, or music artist. The user can take bits of music, photos, quotes, and other domain specific content and blend them into a new instantiation of his or her topic. This blending and modification of content can then be uploaded to a space such as YouTube in order for the user to share with others and

thereby contribute to an ongoing narrative conversation. New Media textual instantiations are largely governed largely by their social impact and relatedness to a specific group of participations or creators. If participants cannot see a text or media extension as relating in some way to their habitus or taste, they will not engage with it. In the case of habitus, New Media connects with the notion of frameworks for content and message conveyance. The user has to understand and be a part of the established frame in order to understand what is be referred to, established as part of the canon, or what constitutes a specific range of textual items. Taste becomes enmeshed with New Media through the habitus framework and also through a user's established patterns of behavior and the decisions a user makes based on his or her frame of reference and social location. Habitus and taste also influence a user's understanding of how to modify or make changes to an already established New Media text.

Modification can also occur when a text becomes mobile via technology. Mobility, in this case, can be described as oscillation between place, space, and time within a given context via a given technology (Manovich *The Language* xvi). New technologies allow for perspectives to be altered and presented in a way that respects both the original author's choices and the modifier's alternations. These elements are affected by kairos in relation to the producer of the content. To produce or modify a narrative, one must know the position of the audience or viewers in relation to the specific content or domain of the story. "This focus on the viewer offers an important lesson for new media designers, who often forget that what they are designing is not an object in itself but a viewer's experience in time and space" (Manovich 267). The viewer chooses the

time and space that is appropriate to him or her. But, the producer generated content

must encourage user engagement by appealing to common interests among that social

group.

As technology advances and modernizes, producers and users of the technology

have the power to move and deliver its messages to a broader audience. Manovich notes

that this "(m)odernization is accompanied by a disruption of physical space and matter, a

process that privileges interchangeable and mobile signs over original objects and

relations" (173). This privileging is worthy to note because it can and does allow for

multi-form stories and their related elemental potentialities. Acknowledgement of the

disruption due to modernized and technologically mediated spaces is significant because

it can allow for the development of skills and abilities within the participant and his or

her domains and social groups. Pedagogically, translating this disruption of physical

space and matter can be somewhat difficult. In order to translate the disruption into

classroom practices, educators must address the separation resulting from the use of

technologies, including computers, tablets, and smart phones that allow for connections

to content and also separate the users into their own worlds. There must be an

establishment of foundational behaviors and demonstrations of what it means to

participate in the class and with one another. Like any social organization or classroom,

rules and norms must be explained in order for the work done in the classroom or in

online spaces for the classroom to be engaging and thoughtful. Through New Media,

students are opened up to a wider variety of source texts and narrative universes. While

this can be overwhelming for students, the ability to seek choices and participate in a

given context or with a given content can be quite fruitful. They can also serve as points for teachers to develop students' skills and tap into already established textual consumption behaviors and usage patterns. By critiquing and adding to known behaviors students will build schema and also have social cues that will continue to guide their interactions with media.

Using Kairotic Reading: An Analysis of Harkness

Manovich, Gee, Bourdieu, and Jenkins come together under the auspices of convergence because they all consider how texts are structured and how social units can have an effect on the development of narrative. These theorists and their terms also share a relationship to narrative theory because their conversations and critiques are similar to each other and narrative theory. They can be used by academics and students in order to conduct studies on future narratives that come together via technology. Narrative examples can provide an idealized model for the researcher to draw upon. In this portion of the chapter, I will conduct my analysis of a convergence-linked text, Deborah Harkness's novel series, the *All Souls Trilogy* using kairotic reading. My research specifically focuses on the first novel in the series, *A Discovery of Witches* (*ADOW*), related convergent media extensions, and potentialities for franchise growth.

The novel, *ADOW,* comes from the genre of paranormal romance. *ADOW* can be characterized as *Twilight* meets *Harry Potter* goes to Oxford.   For example, what if Edward Cullen, the main male character of *Twilight*, met Hermione Granger, one of the main female characters of *Harry Potter*, they both became professors at the same institution, and started a romantic relationship? The *ADOW* characters come together in

order to save and change the world. *ADOW* takes the human/vampire teenage romance and turns it into a more mature relationship. The story also blends in the witchcraft angle and imagery of *Harry Potter* in a historically situated and contextually contingent manner.

ADOW is part love story, part artifact hunt, part travel narrative, and part paranormal growth saga. The romance in the story is between the two main characters, scholar vampire, Matthew Clairmont and, scholar and non-practicing witch, Diana Bishop. *ADOW* is the first novel in the *All Souls Trilogy*. The story is told in first person through the eyes and experiences of the main character, Diana Bishop. She is at Oxford conducting research as a Yale historian of alchemy. One day a book, Ashmole 782, comes across her path during her archival research and begins a race to find the ultimate answers about life, truth, and love. Along the way she meets, Oxford Professor of Biochemistry and Neuroscience, the vampire Matthew Clairmont. Her ensuing relationship with Matthew and their combined search for answers about Ashmole 782 will set the world for humans and creatures (witches, vampires, and daemons) on its ear. The tale establishes the narrative world and sets the pace for a book series that is richly developed and that contains a great many gaps for participants to enter or otherwise choose to engage.

The novel is multilayered and shows meta-awareness through character interactions with settings, technological, history, and one another. *ADOW* is rife with multimodal and convergent connections. The novel establishes a relationship to convergence through the coming together of the story's content in the mind of the reader.

As the novel is read, and mentally engaged with by the participant, textual elements that are significant for the reader are connected to and kept close to the reader's conceptualization of the story. The reader looks for the characters he or she connects with as the story progresses. For example, Diana Bishop is the main character of the novel and the story is told largely from her perspective. Forming a connection with her is paramount to a reader's success because she is the way the reader sees much of the story. She may not be a favorite character though or one that most interests the reader. Other secondary and tertiary characters, such as her Aunts Sarah Bishop and Emily Mather, Diana's partner Matthew Clairmont, Matthew's mother Ysabeau, or his son Marcus may prove more worthy of engagement. There are more characters, the novel is full of them, but this brief example allows for some food for thought. The openings found in the stories of the other characters can be exit points for further development from fans. For example, Diana's Aunt Sarah is shown to be a major player in Diana's development and early life. Fans could make the choice to discuss interactions of a younger Sarah and Diana in short fiction pieces, paintings, diary entries, and the like. This is one potential space for fans to enter. It is by no means the only. In fact, many of these departure points come into play when the audience or participants' feel there is room to expand upon and elaborate an underdeveloped portion of the story. For example, fans search for materials referenced in the text such as the brand of wine Diana drinks with Matthew, what books she reads, how she performs her research, or the yoga position she mostly uses. They then develop plans for research, post videos about yoga, write fan fiction, or share their feelings about traveling to places that Diana visits. Engagement in the convergent elements of the story is paramount because, without it, participants would not

care what they read nor engage and build communities around the story. The universe of the story serves as a starting point for the participant to engage in the way that best suits them. This means the participant can just read the story, read the story and search for places listed in the story online, can read the story, find things online, and connect with others via a chat space or blog to discuss the story. Because of the room and variations in reading and activity on the part of the user/participant, kairotic reading can take place and provide further enjoyment through engagement. The following examples that follow key into KR through the reader's ability to choose his or her level of participation.

Multimodality comes into play through the textual extensions provided by the author, publisher, non-fictional locations, and fans. The various texts can be read together or in any way the user wishes. These extensions need not be convergent and can serve as somewhat independent sources of information. They come in the form of written, visual, auditory, tactile, and other such modalities. The extensions discussed in the following examples come either from the text itself and continued online engagement of the fans. The optimal way to consume these extensions is to have read the novelization first. This is a more traditional narrative approach to convergence because the starting text is a printed (paper or electronically available) manuscript. The extensions serve a somewhat subordinate role to the main text. A film version of the story has yet to be made, the novel is the main way for the reader to gain an idea about the narrative elements and also connect with the characters and settings.

Four examples linked to convergence and kairotic reading come in the following narrative textual content and extensions. The first example, which comes from the novel,

concerns Diana's interaction with the mystical text Ashmole 782. The second example, which starts with references from the novel and moves across media extensions, concerns Diana's habitual tea drinking. The third example is the real world setting of Oxford and incorporates real world locations with fictive characters. The fourth and final item is a fan developed extension and website called "Armitage 4 Clairmont." This site is a fan created quest to guide the producers of the film to select actor Richard Armitage for the part of Matthew Clairmont. This is developed by fans for fans in order to share in the book and also make their connection to the text more visible. These textual elements help to further establish the importance of narrative theory and convergence in relation to kairotic reading.

Example 1: Ashmole 782

In the opening chapter of the novel, Diana is performing research in the library. Her research concerns the relationship between the history of science and alchemy. Diana does in depth studies concerning illuminated alchemical texts from a rare book archive at Oxford University. She says, upon touching Ashmole 782:

> A mild shock made me withdraw my finders quickly, but not quickly enough…I stepped away from the library table. Even at a safe distance, the manuscript was challenging me—threatening the walls I'd erected to separate my career as a scholar from my birthright as the last of the Bishop witches…But, —albeit unwillingly—I had called up an alchemical manuscript that I needed for my research and that also seemed to possess an otherworldly power that was impossible to ignore…Slowly I turned the page as if it were a fragile leaf. Words shimmered and moved across its surface…I stifled a cry of surprise. Ashmole 782 was a palimpsest—a manuscript within a manuscript…Holding my breath, I fastened the cover. (Harkness 3-12)

Diana's apprehension to read is a part of her own battle with knowledge and is a perfect representation of kairotic reading. She was not ready to read all the text had to offer and was available to her given her skills as scholar and witch. Her worry and chagrin at the texts messages forces her to send to book back. Finding the book and sending it back to the stacks unlocks a series of events that set the story in motion and also start the reader's own quest for knowledge. The novel is multilayered and shows a meta-awareness in its relationship between Diana and Ashmole 782 and the novel's readers and its content. By meta-awareness, I mean awareness of awareness on the level of Diana's own cognizance of self and the reader's awareness of Diana and his or her own thought processes when reading the story. An example from the novel that aides in the understanding of this multi-layered relationship comes when Diana considers how she solves problems and deconstructs research questions. She says, "Whenever I was stuck with my research, I imagined a white table, gleaming and empty, and the evidence as a jigsaw puzzle that needed to be pieced together. It took the pressure off and felt like a game" (Harkness 115). At a meta-level Diana is commenting on her own thought process, but she is also describing the experiences that the readers are facing as well. They are trying to make sense of the characters, settings, and references in order to follow where the story is leading them. The text is also meta-convergent and serves as a n exemplar of all the movement in the narrative and events coming together around Diana in her journey. Fans also engage with Diana on this point because the narrative comes alive around them while they are reading and otherwise participating in the narrative universe.

The second example starts with references from the novel and moves across

media in order to develop and search for a connecting object. This connecting object is consumable and also increases dialogue between audience members who are exchanging their experiences.

Example 2: Tea Drinking

Throughout the story, the audience learns that Diana is an avid tea drinker. Her favorite tea is mentioned briefly in passing within the novel. Both of the examples come from later in the novel and are separated by eighteen pages. The first shows Matthew rummaging around her apartment and offering to make her tea. He says, "'Do you have a preference?" He gestured at the crowded shelf. "The one in the black bag with the gold label please." Green tea was the most soothing option" (Harkness 212). This example offers the fans information in the form of green tea with a black bag with a gold label. Coupled with the next example, this provides determined fans with the knowledge to complete an internet mediated search for the item. Another tea and fan related example comes when Diana is being welcomed by Matthew's vampire family near Provence, France. The family's housekeeper, Marthe, is fixing Diana lunch. Diana says, "She poured a steaming cup of tea, which I recognized immediately as coming from Mariage Frères in Paris" (Harkness 230). The name of the brand added to the color of the container, variety of tea, and her currently location are added together by fans. The additional information helps with the internet search for the tea.

Their combined knowledge through plurality, convergence, and semiotic domains allows them to conduct a search with precision and skill. This search is then saved and posted on the internet for other fans to find at their leisure; in short the novel is extended

as a result of participation.   The specific name of the tea she drinks is never mentioned

and only a brand is given. But, by working together and sharing their love of the novel

and tea, the participants have discovered that it is Thé des Impressionnistes by Mariage

Frères based on the color of the container, the given brand name, the green variety of the

tea, and the location in France she visits. According to the Mariage Frères website, "Thé

des Impressionistes" comes from "(t)he wild, rocky maritime region of Provence in

southern France…This green tea, scented with mild spices and white flowers is also

dotted with mauve flowers, as a visual echo of the dazzling and powerful fragrance that

fills the mouth" ("The des"). While the search may seem a little overboard, it is

nonetheless important because it shows the willingness and determination of participants

to locate a tea that has limited availability in the United States. It also allows the fans to

share their combined interest and desire to bridge the gap between a fictional story and

the real world.

Example 3: Oxford University Locations

ADOW is primarily set in and around Oxford University; thus a real world setting

is brought into the realm of the fantastic. The reader's connection to location is further

fostered by established itineraries and routes for exploring the university grounds. This

helps to form another bond between fictional franchise and non-fictional location for

readers and tourists interested in engaging with the settings of the book.

Bodleian Library

Diana does a great amount of her research at the start of the novel in the Bodleian

Library, specifically Duke Humfrey's and Selden End areas of the library. She searches the stacks looking for books for her research. She says, "The upper shelves of the section of Duke Humfrey's known as Selden End were reachable by means of a worn set of stairs to a gallery that looked over the reading desks" (Harkness 16). It is one thing to think of the space and imagine it. It is quite another to be able to search for photos of the real place and see the space with desks, age, and all the history. This connection also can extend the media franchise through extended discussions of the historical nature of Duke Humfrey's and its relationship to Oxford University through the years.

All Souls College

Another site within Oxford that is much described in the novel is the place Matthew lives and works on campus. Matthew is a member of All Souls College and as such he is allowed to live on a campus that is relatively secluded. According to Diana, "All Souls College was a masterpiece of late Gothic architecture, resembling the love child of a wedding cake and a cathedral, with its airy spires and delicate stonework" (Harkness 168). It makes one think of the castles of old or at least a powerful building. But, again, in seeing photographs or visiting the actual location one is brought closer to the story and has the experience to share with the characters of the novel and with other fans. As a cyber-tourist, one can also visit the webpages for All Soul's College, the Bodleian Library, or Visiting Oxford ("All," "Bodleian," and "Visiting"). This level of and possibility for interaction also fits in with continued development of layers of meaning within the franchise and also the creation of socially oriented groups of like-minded fans.

These examples come together within kairotic reading because a reader can engage with the story at whichever level he or she chooses. One could just opt to read the story and gain the satisfaction of that medium. Another could read the story and search on the internet for photos of the settings. While a third participant could opt to read the book while drinking Diana's favorite tea and walking around Selden End or All Souls. These interactions allow for many potentialities of experience. These potentialities are influenced by narrative theory and it's providing of a firm terminological foundation from which to study novelized narratives. They are also influenced greatly by convergence and related terminologies and theories that help to build on narrative theory and also extend the social nature of text consumption.

Example 4: Armitage 4 Clairmont

The fourth example is a purely fan driven enterprise and textual extension. "Armitage 4 Clairmont" was developed by a group of concerned fans in order to campaign for Richard Armitage to be cast as Matthew Clairmont in any film or television version of *A Discovery of Witches* ("Armitage"). The site itself is run by four named fans including Shelia Bauer, Valarie Grendell, Angela Hutter, and Jean Siska. On the "About Us" page, they note that:

> Our story begins with a book. Our reasons for coming to the book are as varied as fingerprints. "I read a book review," "A friend made me read it," "My book group picked it," "I live in Oxford," "I love history," "I loved the book cover," "I love witches (I am a witch!)." Some of us are avid readers and read dozens of books every year, others read occasionally and some are audio books only folks. We all realized after reading 'A Discovery of Witches' that we wanted to talk about our observations and reactions with someone! ("Armitage").

Bauer, Grendell, Hutter, and Siska show the bonds that can form when readers share

interest in a text and wish to share in the expoits of characters with one another. They also note that based on their varied reading styles and reasons for engagement there is a shared desire to represent the text as accurately as possible. In this case, the representation of Matthew Clairemont matters the most to this group. They are willing to do whatever it takes (within legal reason) to crusade for their cause. This shows creativity also works with elements of kairotic reading on the part of the fans. Some go into making fan videos on Youtube, playlists on Spotify, and other various media outlets. In that process, these users came together because of their shared love of the Matthew Clairmont character and also the desire to see him represented in an authentic and believable manner. Pictures of Armitage are posted, their rationales for choosing him are found as well, and there is even a section on the site for fan art to draw and otherwise depict the actor as Matthew. For example, they have also posted several videos made from works that Armitage has starred in that shows Matthew-like qualities. These are posted via Youtube under the Armitage4Clairmont moniker. This is one potential expansion and fan driven search for content. There are other individuals pushing for their own specific choices for Matthew and other characters, but "Armitage4Clairmont" is by far the most organized collection of individuals

ADOW and the AST are a developing and dynamic media franchise. They could potentially, gain a status level of *Twilight*, *Harry Potter*, or similar horror/paranormal franchises. Currently, there are texts, music playlists, author websites, Facebook pages, YouTube channels, and the like. All extend the message of the text and allow for social groups to be formed that have a shared interest in the books and their narrative universe.

Analysis of this transmediated narrative with traditional print components serves to establish one potential form and use of connective foundations for metacognitive development. In showing examples of convergence related to a traditional narrative base, I demonstrate the importance of a shared dialogue and terminology with which to discuss, study, analyze, and develop stories. I am also able to connect a new type of analysis, kairotic reading, to already established canons and methods of research.

Connecting to Narrative Foundations: Readers and the Extension of Convergent Stories

Convergence in relation to new media relies on the theory of narrative through its varied usage of morphological elements and pluralities in meaning of those elements. For example depictions of protagonists, villains, and story settings can allow for fan engagement through critique, tourism, or content remixing via technology. Stories must be appealing to an audience or variety of audiences. This appeal comes in many varied forms. Examples of these appeals can include: fan critique of a character's looks, backstory, or embodiment in a specific actor, tourism to locations mentioned in the novel or virtual tourism via in game or in world connections, and content remixing via outlets like YouTube, Facebook, or Memebase. Without participant engagement and the development of semiotic domains, discourses turn static and fans lose interest along with the creators or developers. This can lead to a series becoming shelved or disappearing altogether. The notion of disappearance has been true in famous cases with the examples of *Moonlight*, *Star Trek*, and *The Family Guy*. Each of these television series' have a motivated fan base that shares some of the same taste(s) among them. These television

series did not originally gain an overwhelming following, garner much attention, or they were "ahead of their time." These stories were revived by later generations, modified, and remodulated into new universes and world extensions. They allowed for an engagement with the past and a shift of context and perspective in the storytelling and connection formations of future generations.

Onward to Chapter 4

By considering new media and convergence in relation to narrative theory, it is my hope that historical connections to the frame of storytelling can be observed and used in order to discuss the commonalities seen between narratives involving convergent and multimodal elements. In order to move the development of conversation forward, I juxtapose the convergence-linked narrative of chapter 3 with an analysis of multimodality and storytelling in chapter 4. In both chapters, I offer terms that link back to narrative theory in order to connect to structuralism, morphology, poetics, polysemy, plurality, and multiplicity.

Stories, in general, will have departure points, but it is what makes them unique to their narrative moment and kairotic context. In order to engage with a text through kairotic reading, which is germane to both the studies presented in this chapter and those that will be related in chapter 4, a reader has to come with their own motivations and be able to acknowledge their own cognitive requirements. Reading practice on the part of the audience can take many forms, but by allowing the process to remain flexible and dynamic these forms can change given the time, place, and discourse. Discourses develop in relation to the socially mediated development of groups.

Chapter 4

"Multimodality Moving Forward-Kairotic Reading Enters the Conversation"

Chapter Overview

Chapter 4 builds on kairotic reading (KR) by connecting it to the field of Rhetoric and

Composition through the concepts multimodality and multimodal composition. KR is

reinforced by multimodality through a shared of potential for texts to be read in a variety

of ways and allow for readers to form their own versions of and thoughts concerning

those modalities. Multimodal composing builds on multimodality by providing ways in

which to create and critique textual objects and edits. It adds to the KR thematic thread

by extending already established teaching practice and skill development through

increasing producer awareness of the rhetorical choices made in the creation of media

content. Increasing student/producer awareness of such choices will help them develop

more thoughtful textual practice.

Chapter Introduction

In utilizing kairotic reading (KR) as an effective narrative practice, students can

read various texts from multimodal scenarios at their own pace and when "the opportune

moment" strikes them. They have the ability to perform this kind of reading, however, it

must be further developed by educators through scaffolding proper narrative parsing or

narrative analysis strategies. The scaffolding strategy is related to and supports narrative

theory discussed in previous chapters through the mobility of parts and acknowledges

layered meanings within a text. KR is a structure that can be developed and lead to a

greater understanding of how the reading process in multimodality can be aided by narrative theory. Narrative theory and KR have a comparable theoretical frame as depicted with convergence and transmedia storytelling discussed in Chapter 3. Chapter 3 explains the importance of rhetorical and narrative skill development through the discussion of kairotic reading and its expansion through use of the terms convergence, taste, semiotic domains, modification, and mobility. By comparing how kairotic reading functions within the fields of New Media and Rhetoric and Composition, connections can be made between the textual offerings within both fields. Also, narrative theory aids in the development of linkages between the terms convergence and multimodality in order to expand New Media and Composition theory.

Chapter 4 shows kairotic reading as a transferable framework for reading that can be employed in and with the notion of multimodality. Reading in the moment should be a default practice for audience members and comes with specific terminology to provide context to scholars and practitioners of Rhetoric and Composition. Chapter 4 also considers the importance and the potential influence of narrative theory on multimodal composition practices and students' consumption and critical thinking as they generate texts.

In order to provide context to and extend kairotic reading, the terms: multimodality, reflective practitioners, and multimodal composition are provided. These terms come from the works of Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen, Cynthia Selfe and Pamela Takayoshi, Sonya Borton and Brian Huot, Iswari Pandey, and Stuart Selber. The first work that provides insight into the term multimodality comes from Kress and Van Leeuwen. Their research concerns literacy skill development and new media. In

Multimodal Discourse, the authors discuss how texts can be mediated and broadened in a vast number of modalities, including written, visual, and audio or any combination thereof (Kress and Van Leeuwen 3). Kress and Van Leeuwen elaborate on multimodality's dynamic diversity and many-leveled nature by noting "common semiotic principles operate in and across different modes, and in which it is therefore quite possible for music to encode action, or images to encode emotion" (*Multimodal Discourse* 2). These common principles can also allow for the development of a more fully featured awareness on the part of the reader/user when he or she consumes a multimodal text. If readers are made aware of how these textual elements enhance readability and meaning making, they will be able to be more critical of their cognitive practices and form skills that can be used with different types of narratives and messages.

Kress's individual research also discusses multimodality in relation to narrative theory and reader experience. He notes that these textual types "change, through their affordances, the potentials for representational and communicational action by their users; this is the notion of 'interactivity' which figures so prominently in discussions of the new media" (*Literacy* 5). Interactivity extends kairotic reading by acknowledging and examining how texts work together in order to frame meaning. The reader interacts with and considers the message sent by a specific narrative structure through one or more media channels. This interaction between reader and multiple layers of textual structures and messages allows for a fuller participation by the reader and also can help the reader contribute new knowledge to his or her specific participant group.

The next term and lens significant to expanding the reach of kairotic reading comes from Stuart Selber's *Multiliteracies for A Digital Age*. In relation to literacy

development and New Media practices, Selber discusses the need to educate students to be "reflective practitioners[1]" when they enter the workforce (159). Reflective practitioners are those who choose to engage with a multimodal text through challenging their own assumptions and meaning making on a metacognitive level. This means that practitioners are constantly assessing how the message of the text or texts is influenced by their own readings, values, and professional knowledge. KR is extended by the concept of reflective practitioners to also include self-aware reflection as they consume and produce texts. By thinking in a rhetorical fashion and incorporating multimodality, practitioners can reflect in on a text's message and create a response to it. This cognitive processing can be desirable in the workplace where practitioners are creating many texts in order to share a business's message or goals through training videos, webpages, photographs, and/ or newspaper articles. The literacy skills developed in school are transferable to a globalized workplace where the mode and medium of a message is crucial.

The final term and context can be found in the edited collection *Multimodal Composition*, in particular the articles provided by Takayoshi and Selfe, Borton and Huot, and Pandey, help in the discussion of how multimodality in the composition classroom and composing process can aid student success and build on already established rhetorical principles concerning crafting an argument. In their introduction, Takayoshi and Selfe note the educational importance of the "preparation of literate

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[1] Selber borrows from Donald Schon's *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action,* New York: Random, 1990. Usage of the "reflective practitioner" concept also helps to contextualize pedagogical behaviors surrounding multimodality, KR, and convergence.

graduates—intelligent citizens who can both *create meaning in texts* and *interpret meaning from texts* within a dynamic and increasingly technological world" (*Multimodal* 8). Because the field of Rhetoric and Composition is responsible for teaching the predominant load of writing and composition classes and also bears a large amount of the responsibility to create literate citizens, kairotic reading and narrative theory should also be seen as extending or aiding this mission. Multimodal composing relates to kairotic reading through the shared concern with audience awareness and understanding of content and message. Thoughtful multimodal composing allows for an even further reflexivity on the part of the writer/reader because he or she consumes texts and messages regularly and is also tasked with creating and communicating messages of his or her own. Takayoshi and Selfe, Borton and Huot, and Pandey serve as a representation of the collective contributions provided in the *Multimodal Composition* collection. The book offers a strong grouping of teaching resources that can aide practitioners of composition in introducing and incorporating multimodal material in their courses. That notion will be discussed in further detail and example assignments will be shown in Chapter 5.

The terms multimodality, reflective practitioners, and multimodal composing help to provide a context for kairotic reading within composition and writing pedagogy. Taken together, these concepts allow for further growth in the discussions surrounding the development of messages via different modalities and mediums. They also bear relevance to skills our students come into our writing and composing classrooms. The aforementioned theories and previous chapters come together in order to build a common base for students and scholars to draw from that pulls from historically situated narrative theory. Rhetoric also blends in with narrative because

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audience must be considered in order for a story to flourish. An example analysis of a

multimodal text using kairotic reading is offered in order to show commonalities and

differences that appear in works considered convergent or works that are considered

multimodal.

Defining and Interacting with Multimodality: How Multimodality Aides KR

When considering how a text meets the needs of an audience and conveys a

message, students, scholars, and practitioners of Rhetoric and Composition look to the

notion of multimodality. Multimodality can be defined as the ability and construction of

a text to be of many modes including: oral, written, and visual. These modes and their

usage by a text's producers allow for the creation of layers meaning and can

inspire/confound the reader on his or her path of consumption. Kress and Van Leeuwen

discuss the need for layers of meaning to be present in a text or collection of texts in

order for multimodality to work. They include discourse, design, production, and

distribution (*Multimodal Discourse* 4-6). These features highlight the ever-increasing

need for the modes to be dynamic and receptive to what is occurring as a story moves in

oral, written, visual, and audio methods. The reader has the potential to use technology

to create/consume a story through all these methods. According Kress and Van

Leeuwen, "Digital technology, however, has now made it possible for one person to

manage all these modes, and to implement the multimodal production single handedly"

(*Multimodal Discourse* 17). Single handed management of these modes of production

and consumption have the potential for great power for the author, as well as for reader, as he or she moves through the narrative cycle or story's many layers.

But, this power comes with a significant responsibility for not only the reader, but also for the communities associated with the narrative and for the educators providing instruction and skills to students. Just because readers have access to and knowledge of these technologies, does not mean they will use them "correctly" or in beneficial ways. There "are the two key questions of many of the debates: the potential of the new technology (rather than what is actually done with it, which, is usually much less exciting), and its impact, its effect on society and on individuals" (Kress and Van Leuween *Multimodal Discourse* 92). These questions have shaped and are continuing to shape the narrative cycle, story development, and interactions between readers and texts. This is no different when narrative theory and story elements are applied to multimodality and compositions associated with it.

Narrative comes from an oral storytelling tradition that has moved to pictographic, print, and online contexts through time. Because narratives began with oral storytelling, it is no wonder that characteristics and elements are prone to being revised and adapted as language develops. According to Kress and Van Leuween, "The structures of narrative develop from the sequential nature of speech; but the often enormously complex structures of actual narratives--whether of interpolations, flash-backs, repetitions, are ways of producing artefacts of a quasi-spatial kind" (*Multimodal Discourse* 126). Quasi-spatial artefacts are significant to the development of a narrative-based theory connecting New Media and Rhetoric and Composition because they relate to the multilayered and meta-narrative texts that are developed via technology and that

are based on pre-existing story traditions. In his independent research, Kress notes that "The genre of the *narrative* is the culturally most potent formal expression of this. Human engagement with the world through speech or writing cannot escape that logic; it orders and shapes that human engagement with the world" (*Literacy* 2). Telling stories to a group of other interested individuals enhances both human connection and participation in and with narrative. Again, the speech-to-text connection is significant because human brains look for commonalities in building reference points for future events and further symbols and stories. Embedded in this discussion of multimodality and narrative is the notion of kairos.   Kairos requires the reader to make decisions based on what is the most beneficial to a given space, place, and rhetorical context. Kress mentions that '(t)he change in media from book and page to screen, the change from the traditional print-based media to the new information and communication technologies, will intensify these effects" (*Literacy* 5). Readers are engaging with texts in a more holistic and informed way that benefits their desires for story and human connection.

Kress's use of narrative theory also places further consideration upon how traditional elements that have a history are held to and altered by consumers engaging in the process of kairotic reading. These effects relate largely to the shift in modes and cognizance of the potential for pluralities and multiplicities in meaning that these modes allow. The influence of multimodality on narrative practice and praxis increases the complexity of a reader's interactions with a story and narrative scene. Participation within a narrative universe is of utmost importance and the skills developed can lead to stronger readers and producers. If the students learn about the rules or theories of narrative and multimodality, they can learn how to use them and also break with tradition

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when writing pieces that use the original story's world in order to extend the textual

connections.

Considering Participants: KR and Reflective Practitioners

The notion of multimodality and its related conceptual frame work connects to the

reader through his or her narrative consumptive and generative practices. Movement

from a textual focus to a human-centric focus comes from the addition of Stuart Selber's

work *Multiliteracies for the Digital Age*, which is related to literacy development and

computer and technological skills. Through this work he also expresses interest in

developing students who are well informed and also cognitively aware of how they

construct and consume messages. The creation of informed and aware students is

significant to the usage and expansion of kairotic reading because it increases educator

and student awareness about practitioner responsibility and content knowledge. Both

educators and students play a major role in the development of skills and practitioners

that are self-aware and able to produce the messages and communications required of

them. With training and education, these students can become "reflective practitioners."

According to Selber:

> Reflective practitioners understand that professional performance cannot be
> improved unless taken-for-granted assumptions are examined and challenged.
> This involves perspectives and processes that encourage practitioners to articulate
> their professional knowledge at a conscious level and to subject their actions to
> critical assessment. (*Multiliteracies* 159)

Critical skill development is a crucial point when adding kairotic reading into the

classroom conversation. By concentrating on developing and scaffolding critical

cognitive skills in students, educators are able and have the room to create spaces and

assignments that provide opportunities for further consideration of kairos, rhetoric, and contextual meaning. Through employing the process(es) associated with kairotic reading, teachers are able to generate assignments that allow students to choose texts for analysis that they are interested in and then critique those texts' effectiveness, rhetorical strategies, and narrative content. These notions would be built into the course proceeding the students' engagement with the text(s) of their choice. This is done in order to make the students familiar and comfortable with kairos, ethos, pathos, logos, convergence, multimodality, and other terms related to this type of inquiry and knowledge development.   By introducing those terms and using them over the course of a semester, an instructor can set the stage for many attempts at engagement with how storytelling and message sharing can be and is done by various types of texts.

Admittedly, it can be difficult to pick apart a text one enjoys, but it must be done in order for students to choose a topic that they have a vested interest in learning about and researching in more detail. Of the many potential usages in the classroom, Selber notes "One step frequently recommended is that students should become *producers* and not just *users* of computer-based environments, people who can contribute in unique ways to the design of literacy technologies" (Selber *Multiliteracies* 140). Students can become producers in a way benefitted by kairotic reading, through the melding of narrative and content assessment with the production of a text related to the narrative the students have chosen to critique. For example, students are introduced to the concept of KR and then tasked with looking at a multimodal or convergent text of their choice. After this critique, they would be then asked to produce a text extension that fits with the narrative's storyline and also adds their personal spin on their relationship to the text. A

text extension is a student or fan produced piece that helps to extend the original narrative in some way. Students could generate playlists of songs that characters might listen to, write diary entries about specific events in the narrative, or they could take a character they feel is under used or developed and write a story about them or from his or her perspective. These extensions could come in the form of fan fiction about their favorite character, a video montage, a painting/drawing/webpage/collage of locations and places mentioned in the text, or a music video mash-up that fits with the genre of the story or a character's interests.

In developing students that are actively engaged in critique and creation of media content, educators can push the conversation to more thoughtful and reflective places where critiques of messages and mediums can influence business-related decisions students make when they enter the working world. Rhetoric and Composition classrooms are perfect crucibles for students to generate and critique narrative messages because these courses require students to engage with the humanistic art and act of producing communication and responding to those communications. Writing and composition courses are exceedingly important as they are relatively low-stakes microcosms where students can be encouraged to try new experiences, examine ways of discussing texts, try things that are potentially outside of their comfort zones, or use interfaces that are not familiar with, all of which is very exciting. Trying new things can also add to their practitioner knowledge base when they enter industry or another work-life context.

As a result of their coursework, students will have interacted with various interfaces in the critique, analysis, and production of their textual extensions. They have engaged with their topics across many interfaces and other points of technologically

mediated contact. Knowledge of connections at the interface level is significant and

relevant to students participating in the highly technologized and globalized workspace.

In working as readers and producers, these reflective practitioners engage with multiple

layers of contact around the world and across cultures. With knowledge of rhetoric and

kairotic reading, these practitioners are able to utilize knowledge gleaned from personal

interactions in order to develop communicative messages. These messages work again as

points of contact within the narrative space. In discussing the interface as point of

contact, Selber notes that:

> This definition is a sensible one for humanists because it transcends the design of
> functional screen elements into psychological and emotional considerations and
> because, unlike numerous other definitions, it includes social and political
> dimensions in that it defines human action as an essential element or condition of
> interfaces. (*Multiliteracies* 141)

Interfaces are significant to the convergent and multimodal processes because much of
the

narrative takes place via a type of interface, whether it be a book, computer screen, or a

gaming system. These modalities have nuances and elements that stem from narrative

texts and help convey messages to new or different audiences, but they also require

specific technical skill and knowledge to apply them effectively. Again, these skills and

knowledges are useful and important for practitioners to have in order to employ the most

effective rhetoric related to the communication of a message. Being cognizant of one's

meaning making and use of communication is significant at a rhetorical level because

self-reflexivity should be incorporated into the generative design and consumption

process.

By allowing for different thought processes, multimodal texts create opportunities for KR and skills within consumers and users. According to Selber, "The mental component attempts to overcome the linearity of print by allowing users to write their own versions of texts by making navigational choices in the act of reading" (169). These choices are individual to each reader and his or her given reading context. Readers make their own choices based on knowledge, experiences, and pre-developed schema. The connections that a reader makes with the text are personal. But, these connections can be and are influenced by others' readings of the text or texts and the responses those other readers share. In developing kairotic and rhetorical skills, practitioners can respond both to texts and to the responses of other practitioners. With reflective skill development, the conceptual framework is established for further discussion and conversation about a narrative's component parts. Practitioners gain knowledge not only of content and narrative elements, but also of social practices involved with that narrative creation and engagement.

Kairotic reading is further solidified within the Rhetoric and Composition conversation when considering how textual components can be rearranged and formed into a varied number of potential texts. "Writing by rearrangement allows users to create endless versions of texts in ways that are meaningful to them and their current tasks and in ways that are not generally encouraged by traditional, linear texts whose organizations have been solely defined by authors" (Selber 170). Reflective practitioners can rearrange the multimodal texts they read in order to build new knowledge, meanings, or connections for themselves and others. The nature of multimodal narratives allow them to be shared across cultures and continents. Because an audience can be located all over

the world, technological mediation and kairotic reading aid in the development of terms used for discussion of the narrative in question and can open up the potential for new content or new interactions to take place. The social role of participation and engagement adds to the need for a comprehension of how to construct and compose multimodal texts. The practice of composing has been impacted by the readers' own knowledge and by the knowledge of the teachers they work with. Teachers note the importance of modal knowledge and the willingness to try new things as significant to new developments in the composition classroom.

Connecting to Composition: Multimodal Composing and Education Work with KR

Developing connections among textual narrative instantiations is an important part of the learning process and benefits from the association with kairotic reading and the composition classroom. The classroom is the place where students are taught to engage with texts at a critical level and question their assumptions about narrative structures, style, rhetoric, authorial voice(s), participation, ideologies, and biases (personal and societal). This connects with KR, multimodality, and reflective practitioners through a shared consideration of how a text, specifically a narrative, communicates and interacts with readers. Interactions with texts are important and often taken for granted as they are very commonplace communications and methods of message transfer.

Multimodal composition as a process also compounds and complicates the interactions between reader and text, reader and other readers, as well as between texts. All of these relationships and exchanges encourage a composing and consuming

paradigm that is influenced greatly by knowledge of and comfort not only with texts and readers, but also with a whole range of potential media outlets. The process of multimodal composing is multi-layered and has many nuances to explore. To fully engage with the nuances requires that students develop the full range of literacy skills with which students perform the work required of them in the composition classroom. Multimodal composing is defined as:

> Using multiple modalities to compose and convey meaning. The goals associated with multimodal composition assignments include the following: helping students understand the power and affordances of different modalities—and to combine modalities in effective and appropriate ways—multiplying the modalities students can use to communicate effectively with different audiences, and helping students employ modalities to make meaningful change in their own lives and the lives of others. ("Multimodal" 195)

This conceptualization of the composition process is significant because it considers how modalities can be used and explained in the classroom in order to engage with students and their composing practices. Goals and learning objectives related to the usage of multimodal composing also continue to build on kairotic reading and narrative theory through the establishment of skills and the transfer of those skills to the daily lives of students in classroom and workplace settings. The skills contribute to a rhetorically sound understanding of the messages people are reading and producing. According to Takayoshi and Selfe:

> In short, whether instructors teach written composition solely or multimodal composition, their job remains essentially the same: to teach students effective, rhetorically based strategies for taking advantage of *all available means* of communicating effectively and productively, to multiple audiences, for different purposes, and using a range of genres. (9)

As stories come together and converge around singular points, in this case the mind and actions of the reader, they have the potential to influence conversations about how people

participate and communicate. These points also move with other points to work in concert to convey information to broader audiences made up of single readers who may be interested in the same, different, or closely related narrative elements.

The connections related to participation within narratives and narrative elements continue to influence rhetorical and textual decisions that producers are making and readers are responding to. Narrative storytelling elements can be used in the composition classroom in order to discuss how rhetoric can have an effect on communication. These elements can be introduced as part of the course's overarching themes. That way a teacher can serve a meta-level role as both a consumer of transmediated and multimodal texts and also one who informs others about critiquing and forming opinions on the rhetorical methods used. According to Borton and Huot, contributors to *Multimodal Composing*, "(r)hetorically based understandings of composition should *drive* and *inform* teachers' approach to assessment in multimodal composition classrooms" (99). A strong base in traditional rhetoric and narrative theory provides a strong foundation from which to assess how communications take place via various technologies. These underpinnings are beneficial to both students and educators because they are interacting in the shared space of the classroom. Through this interaction, all parties can bring their thoughts and rhetorical and kairotic assessment to pieces shared and created in the class. Through working and participating as a group, composition classes serve a socially informed and contextually influenced role. According to Pandey,

> We write in order to connect with others, to respond to them. Multimodal compositions are also socially situated efforts. In fact, one of the primary goals for teaching multimodal composition is to help students become more than passive consumers of the sound and image bits saturating today's media driven world. (79)

Active engagement with the textual elements and various modes of multimodal composition turns students into more informed practitioners who can gauge the effectiveness of a message. These students can also take the knowledge they acquire in the classroom to inform others and provide sound practice to textual engagement and generation.

Practices and engagements with written and other forms of communications provide tools and traits with which to consider and create socially influenced. As the process of storytelling evolves in order to engage with new technological needs and desires, composition and writing educators are on the front lines of introducing rhetorical motivations, narrative theories, and kairotic reading to the masses of students flooding their classrooms. Creating and producing a more socially and rhetorically aware student body moves this discussion to places where instructors and scholars come together. In order to meet the changes of the narrative and technological mediations, a conversation must happen among practitioners influenced by traditional narrative theory who extend into the fields of Rhetoric, Composition, and New Media. Multimodality and Convergence must be seen as equal players in the game that is online storytelling. Scholarly voices must come together in order to shift and respond to the ever changing communication paradigm.

All Things Equal: Using Narrative Theory to Connect Convergence and Multimodality

Narrative theory, as I have envisioned in the weaving together of Propp, Todorov, Barthes, and Friedberg, comes together and compares well respectively to Jenkins,

Bourdieu, Gee, and Manovich in Chapter 3 and to Kress, Kress and Van Leeuwen, Selber, and Selfe in Chapter 4. Each chapter provides four theorists and terms from which to build a common foundation and start a conversation. In taking the primary theorists and their terms from each chapter: Propp and morphology, Jenkins and convergence, and Kress and Van Leewen and multimodality, and juxtaposing them against one another, audience members can see their commonalities and differences.

In the case of morphology connecting to convergence, one can see that the terms coalesce into the shared notion that they are components that can be taken apart and remade into new meanings/stories. The parts of a narrative come together in order to present a message to a specific reader and converge around his or her own ideas. When morphology connects to multimodality, it exemplifies their shared consideration of pieces of story or narrative that are movable and come in many different structures. These structures can include novels, television shows, movies, games, and other such extensions. For example, a novel can be read for a specific content or connection. A reader can then choose to find out more information and connect with other fans via the author's website. The connections can then foster more discussion and comparison of convergence and multimodality. Convergence in this comparison considers texts, but more importantly considers human and personal relationships with a text. The reader serves as the nexus where the media come together. This differs slightly from multimodality, which places more of its emphasis on the modes of communication. Multimodality is more concerned with how texts are received than how the individual reader receives them. These terms can work in concert to engage learners and academics

in a more fully developed conversation about the rhetoric surrounding convergence and multimodality in relation to narratives.

Other terms presented in earlier chapters foster a rich discussion concerning traditional narrative structures. The terms can be compared and used to extend the process of kairotic reading. These include: polysemy, poetics, plurality, multiplicity, taste, semiotic domains, modification, reflective practitioners, and multimodal composing. Taken as a group, the terms relate to the production of texts, meanings, and human interactions with the textual pieces involved in the art of storytelling. Polysemy, poetics, plurality, and multiplicity come from narrative theory and structuralism. They add traditional foundations of narrative related terms that can influence how a text is read by a user. Taste, semiotic domains, and modification, more grounded in the New Media movement, are more closely related to social influences and participation with groups of individuals. Reflective practitioners and multimodal composing are more closely associated with Rhetoric and Composition scholarship. These terms speak to the dual nature of the composition process and its focus on textual pieces and on the practitioners creating and reading these elements. Again, a foundation in narrative theory is essential to the conversations surrounding convergence and multimodality as they play into storytelling. Narrative theory provides starting points and terms because these terms have shared aspects that can aid in the production and consumption of narrative messages.

From the Bones: Using Narrative Analysis to Explore a Multimodal Text

One multilayered artifact that allows for consideration of multimodality and connects to the previous notions of convergence, kairos, and taste is the television series *Bones* and its related multimodal products. These come in the form of eight seasons of the television shows starring the main character Dr. Temperance Brennan, as well as multiple books by Kathy Reichs on which the series is based, web pages and a fan-created graphic novel. To illustrate the method of analysis I am advocating, I will consider Chapter 1 from Reichs' first book *Déjà Dead* in relation to season one episode 1 "Pilot" of the television series. The analysis of these items will reveal comparisons and departures between the book and video representations of the main character Temperance Brennan. These will show how multimodal items can allow for cognitive development through kairotic reading as presented in Chapter 3 in relation to the concept of convergence. The following examples are also offered in order to compare a new convergent narrative in the work of *A Discovery of Witches*, which has just recently garnered a great deal of attention and has a freedom of movement, to an already established multimodal narrative in the form of *Bones* and Temperance Brennan.

Kathy Reichs' Temperance Brennan franchise is rife with narrative examples that showcase textual interaction and also are aided by the development of kairotic reading and other media literacy skills. The narrative begins in Reich's book series and is transformed into a very successful television show with a companion website. Pieces from this narrative arc come from Reichs' novel *Déjà Dead*, the Fox television series *Bones* season 1 episode 1 "Pilot," and the show's official website *Bones* on Fox. These materials allow for many potential entrance points into the story world of the narrative. The texts also can come at a kairotic time because the reader can power read the novels.

The reader can also watch the series in chunks, as broadcast, or can "binge watch." The opportune moment may strike the reader after hearing about the series from a friend, watching an episode in syndication, or reading one of Reichs' novels. *Bones* also has many fan connections and textual additions to the storyline. One such addition to the franchise is "The Bones in the Booth" graphic novel this extension will be discussed in more detail later on in the chapter.

The first narrative example comes from Kathy Reichs' novel *Déjà Dead* and helps to discuss how a print text can start the multimodal conversation and help to generate further multimodal compositions and narrative extensions. These compositions are related in some way to the original canonical text. In *Déjà Dead*, the audience is introduced to Dr. Temperance Brennan. The novel is told from Temperance's point of view and the audience is able to witness her inner dialogue and her impressions of people, places, and things. Much of her inner and exterior dialogue sounds like real-lived experience, which comes from the author and her position as a forensic anthropologist. This book originally came out in 1997, which is well before the television series and establishes the set up for the next novels in the series. The books also add to the television show because they engage with higher level forensic terminology and more extensions of imagination and visualization of characters, settings, and interactive contexts than does the television series.

Dr. Brennan's tone is very forthright and frank. As she goes through her work process, she notes that:

> I added the police report number, the morgue number, and the Laboratorie de Médecine Légale, or LML number and experienced by usual wave of anger at the arrogant indifference of the system. Violent death allows no privacy. It plunders

one's dignity as surely as it has taken one's life. The body is handled, scrutinized, and photographed, with a new series of digits allocated at each step. The victim becomes part of the evidence, an exhibit, on display for police, pathologists, forensic specialists, lawyers, and, eventually, jurors. Number it. Photograph it. Take samples. Tag the toe. While I am an active participant, I can never accept the impersonality of the system. It is like looting on the most personal level. (Reichs 21)

Her language is quite technical and also shows her emotional connections to the victims and frustration with the system. In terms of narrative analysis, Brennan is providing her own narrative morphology, her modus operandi via her words and reactions, and is also sharing Reichs' position on the information and her own experience with the system. The quote also speaks of active participation in the system and provides a potential place to change the system from inside. This relates back to developing semiotic domains and reflective practitioners who can be self-aware and rhetorically critical of the texts, systems, and societies they live and work in.

The television show changed how people consume/read the narrative. Initially, Reichs' textual version of Brennan was first and for a while the only way to meet this character. Now, they may see the show before they come to the novels. This is backward from traditional narrative channels where the print medium of the book is the primary text. The shifting primacy of the narrative texts is what KR, in practice and in real-life, can help readers and viewers with. In understanding where they are coming from on a self-reflexive level, readers can use these schema/skills to see where others are also coming from. They can then use multimodality to respond to the text as reflective practitioners who are good multimodal composing. These elements fit together in order to further the goal of making well informed and educated individuals.

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The second example comes from Fox's television series *Bones*. In the episode "Pilot", the audience is introduced to the major characters that drive the narrative. The main character, Dr. Temperance Brennan, is shown to be a plucky young woman who has just arrived in Washington D.C. after excavating and identifying bodies from a Guatemalan mass grave ("Pilot"). We are quickly introduced to television show Temperance, fondly given the name "Bones" by FBI Agent Seely Booth, as she's being interrogated about bringing back human remains. Dr. Brennan is also shown to be a well-established writer that writes fictional accounts using her forensic anthropology training, like Reichs, the author of the book series, with her book *Bred in the Bone*. The discussion of her book is of a multimodal and intertextual nature and provides a nod to Reichs as voice, author, and also the textual genesis of the television show.

The episode begins quickly with Bones already working on the case. A body has been found at Arlington National Cemetery and it's time to get to work and start the forensic process. The body, a young woman it turns out, has been identified by Brennan and the search for her killer drives the rest of the episode. Technology is employed in order to recreate the victim's last appearance through skull reconstruction and holographic renderings. This use of technology and science adds to reader interest and also engages the forensic anthropology without being as jargon laced as the book. Brennan solves the case and brings closure to families. This also bespeaks the human connections involved with storytelling and engaging with an audience. The detective element of the show keeps the audience engaged and also builds on other series of the detective genre.

Bones, the television show, as a text primarily depicts Brennan's outward

appearance to a 3rd person audience, without the internal dialogue or commentary that

characterizes the book. The readers of the novels will see parallels in the character's

intelligence and content knowledge. But the television show diverges significantly from

the novels and connects differently to the Reichs/Brennan/Bones universe through

primary location and surrounding settings are what separates the show from the book

settings of Montreal. The television show references to being in Washington D.C.,

including visual cues of buildings, monuments, and spatial locations. These different

locations can increase interest and fan involvement because they cover two distinctly

different cities in two countries, affording more points and experiences to connect with,

which can drive more narrative development. Opening of spaces provides for growth in

the storylines and additional participation points for audience members. The novels and

the show are allowed to be themselves through individual touch points that grow in ways

that are in keeping with individual narrative arcs.

Another divergence between the series and the novels is that throughout the show,

Brennan is told to "share part of herself with others" ("Pilot"). This sharing is at odds

with her private and reserved nature as depicted in the books, and with the scientific logic

and disconnected nature with which she deals with human remains. When watching the

television episode, the audience can see how Brennan reacts to situations by keying into

the character's tone of voice, physical interactions, and relationships with other people.

The more personal and third party example juxtaposes nicely against the book Brennan

and allows for more development of the characters and settings involved in all textual

extensions. The developments are interesting and significant to the formation of the

relationship between the reader and his or her own kairotic reading. The content of the show helps to express how KR can be carried out on an established narrative cycle that has a massive and highly engaged following.

The third example comes from Fox's webpage for *Bones*. On this page the reader can delve into further research and discussions, and can connect with other fans who are at various levels of engagement with the series. The site provides clips and full videos of current episodes, photographs, and links to other social media pages including Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, Google+, and Twitter (*Bones*). These can be considered under the same umbrella of textual extension as secondary level companion pieces. Readers interact with these pages in order to build their own knowledge about the series and share their insights with others.

For example, after speaking with friends about good episodic television, I learned about the television show Bones. I went online and search for the show, navigating to the Fox.com website and portal. On the site I was able to read the synopsis of the show, look at current photos, watch video clips, and watch episodes from the current season (*Bones*). In this way, I could make the choice to engage with kairotic reading through reading/watching information. If I am still interested, I can connect with others on the Facebook page and share my thoughts about the actors, characters, or directors. Or I can join Pinterest and to create boards about any element of the show I wish. I could even create a board that points to connections between the books and the shows or maps out where specific events take place in the television show or in the novels. These textual engagements can be liked and critiqued by other fans of the show, and thereby serve as conversation starters among interested readers.

By making the choice to connect as deeply or as minimally as he or she chooses, the reader can immerse him or herself into the narrative at a kairotically opportune rhetorical moment. Web extensions such as Fox.com's *Bones* website provide a more detailed connection to the narrative's content in order to place the concepts of reader interest in easily digestible pieces as a consequence of the site's existence. Through grouping the information into chunks that can be read at the reader's own pace, these texts and their varied natures allow for many types of meaning making, social interaction, and potential narrative connections. The texts' varied nature bespeaks the significance of reader comprehension of how multimodality plays into the process of narrative storytelling. Again, storytelling at any level is all about conveying a message to a group of interested parties. Kress, in reference to media pages and textual extensions, notes that:

> the author(s) of this page clearly have in mind that visitors will come to this page from quite different cultural and social spaces, in differing ways, and with differing interests, not necessarily known to or knowable by the maker(s) of the page. There is no pregiven, no clearly discernible reading path. (9)

Because the path is not clearly laid out, the reader can make the choice to interact with textual extension(s) of his or her choice. Various activities and actions can potentially occur across a spectrum that ranges from complete immersion and extreme obsession with the text to light and passing interest in the content and narrative elements. The range of participation again varies based on the person involved in the message making transaction and internal communications. Again, points of departure among fans develop and different texts are generated to fill spaces created in acknowledgement of these divergences.

The final example of textual extension and participation of fans in the *Bones* franchise comes the graphic novel "The Bones in the Booth." This text was originally started by the blogger JP Productions as part of a blog extension of the *Bones* television show ("The Bones"). There are 21 volumes in the collection that span the years of 2010-2011 and seasons 3 and 4 of the show ("The Bones"). These novelizations depict images of the actors from the show with thought bubbles above their heads. Each graphic novelization is given a snarky and somewhat humorous take on the more serious elements of the episode of the television show. The site's last date of active engagement by fans is from 2011. Prior to this time, the site shows fans participating in various levels of design and content expression choices. There was also more active engagement from JP as well. It appears as though that the audience lost interest in this textual extension and the producer finally gave up. This is one of the potential pitfalls of generating text that is a departure from the original canonical pieces. Because people are so attached to the original stories, they may not have the time or interest in seeking out another text to consume.

These examples serve to show an established multimodal narrative that first appeared in book format and then was remediated into a television series. The modalities allow for differing types of expressions of thoughts, places, feelings, and characters. The story has multi-layered positions that include rich printed novels, a well shot television show, and the related online content. The books and television show switch primacy depending on when the fan came into the series. The website would be a secondary text no matter the case because it provides a launching pad for information concerning the show and its narrative content. It would not exist if the show was unpopular and the

participants didn't care about the characters, settings, and spaces. In relation to academic

and non-academic engagement with narratives, Brown notes that the:

> multimedia and digital texts students experience regularly outside of academic
> settings communicate information via multiple channels or modes including
> sounds, images, and video streaming as well as conventional print. These hybrid,
> multimodal texts require the use of additional literacies to decipher their meaning.
> (222)

In deciphering meaning(s), students/practitioners develop literacies, along with kairotic

reading, in order to engage with and develop skills and behaviors that allow them to more

actively engage with the process of meaning communication via any type of mode,

media, and technology. Brown's quote expresses the shared concept of increased skill

development in students in order for them to meet the demands living and working in

transmediated multimodal spaces. Increased skill development also connects to Selfe's

notions of multimodal composing and also Gee's discussions of online spaces and

videogames, as discussed in Chapter 3. Enlivening and developing narrative, convergent,

and multimodal skills in our students and in our subject matter becomes exceedingly

important to the conversations surrounding how a knowledge of multimodal composing

can impact student writing and communication generating activities. The terms and

scholarly theories have the potential to enrich conversations between scholars in the

fields of New Media and Rhetoric and Composition.

**United in Communicating: Terms, Connections, and Divergences within the
Conversation**

Kairotic reading as praxis allows texts that are convergence-linked New Media

endeavors to connect with multimodal Rhetoric and Composition creations. These

connections and potential connections are described detail in order to create a common

basis for understanding modern, technologically driven storytelling and narrative

production. Exploration of connections between fields comes in consideration of the

terms morphology, convergence, and multimodality. Taken together, these terms tell

pieces of a story to a living and human audience. The audience members can benefit

from learning narrative skills from technologically linked places including those in

convergent franchises and multimodal compositions. In order to build a conversation on

common terminology, narrative theory in the form of morphology and structuralism is

offered as one potential connecting point.

Convergence and multimodality are comparable terms in that they allow for

textual creation and consumption that is cognizant of rhetorical impact on the individual

creating the work and the audience consuming it. These notions fit with already

established theory from the fields associated with convergence and convergent narrative

and multimodality and multimodal composing. There is a great overlap in the discussion

about reader engagement in and participation with these texts that should be active rather

than passive. In its various iterations, narrative storytelling allows for differing versions

of potential realities that require not only an audience who is passively reading and

consuming text, but also an audience who can interact and actively interrogate why

messages are conveyed in a specific manner and also what limitations are placed on those

types of mediums and modes. In reference to engaging actively with meaning and

communicative objects, Bezemer and Kress acknowledge that:

> Representation responds to social factors via diverse cultural and semiotic
> resources… this raises the question of what the medium of the book has been, is,

and is likely to become in its interrelation with the rapidly changing
'screen'…[that]applies to all media and to all modes. (174)

Narrative texts have always been influenced by interconnections among stories, artifacts, and

community engagement. How readers take time and complete the tasks associated with learning

or digesting new information depends largely on how prepared they are for reading or engaging

with the text.

Because kairotic reading is driven by the needs or desires of the reader, the

knowledge of the story or series that the reader possesses can color how he or she

engages with the narrative and genre conventions of the story. The reader may have

limited knowledge and therefore read or watch at a surface level. As he or she becomes

more interested in or connected to the narrative, further engagement can come in the way

of reading textual extensions, participation in fan sites, or playing of related videogames.

These connections foster more social interaction with those who are versed in the

narrative's content and story arc.

For example, some audience members choose to back a specific character or

collection of events. An example of this fan choice from *Bones* comes in the form of

Team Brennan or Team Angela. As mentioned before, Brennan is the main character of

Bones. Angela is Brennan's best friend and also a forensic artist. She is the least

science-based of the cast members and therefore connects to the more emotional aspects

of the stories. Readers make the choice to connect to characters for a variety of reasons;

perhaps, because they feel kinship with them or have an interest in how the character

thinks, looks, or acts. Different readers form different levels of connections and

relationships and that is why training the reader to seize the moment through the act of

kairotic reading is so important to the reading and learning process. Texts nod to one

another in different ways that allow for a further multilayered experience, and points for

types of understanding, because they can acknowledge difference and thus extend the

story in ways that only some of the audience members are interested and engaged with.

In this way, they form bonds of intertextuality.

Intertextual connections are important to consider in relation to narrative elements

and

traditions as they have a significant impact on the consumptive and productive practices

of the audience. "Consciously chosen intertextual connections work in tandem with the

implicit ones that individuals make when they interpret text relative to conventions,

genres, social codes and practices, styles, voices, and other texts previously experienced

and internalized" (Brown "What" 234). Producers of these texts must acknowledge how

companion pieces of a narrative fit together in order to communicate needed information

to the audience. As consumers with self-reflexive practice, practitioners can enjoy their

own fandoms and also connect to other narrative linkages and humanistic story

connections (albeit mediated technologically). These connections form the basis for how

most of the world can and will engage with narrative content. These globalized

connections can also impact pedagogy as they gain in strength and relevance to the real-

world work environment.

Pedagogy is impacted by multimodality, reflective practice, and multimodal

composing through the teaching of these practices in the composition classroom. Again

these terms have their own storied pasts and theoretical influences, but they continue to

be significant factors in the generation of a useful and impactful pedagogy. In regard to multimodality and classroom practice, Kress notes that "it is the text which needs to be understood, whether you are an English teacher, a linguist/academic, or, increasingly, a teacher of any subject in the school" (94). Through the incorporation of multiple modes, the primacy is still placed on understanding the text (which has historically been a printed or book-like medium). As modes shift and alter due to technological developments and school learning requirements, the concept of the text and its possible formulations also change. Changes in textual understanding can be addressed by educational environments that employ and discuss how multimodal composing and convergence-linked storytelling work to convey information to an audience. These engagements with the texts also can foster work that extends beyond the texts and into the world in order to influence narrative practices and also the productions of new narratives and the critique of already existing ones.

With respect to reflective practitioners, Selber mentions that "most writing teachers want their students to learn how to learn; reason rhetorically…collaborate productively; locate and assess information; and communicate information clearly and persuasively to different audiences" (200). Engaging with metacognitive practices and thinking about how students learn is a significant practice that instructors and teachers of writing can develop into more self-reflexive pedagogy. Educators have a vested interest in pedagogy that is well-rounded and helps students develop skills that will serve them well throughout their college careers and in their daily lives. These lives are often fraught with limited time to do an immense number of tasks. Through skill development and the use of kairotic reading strategies, students can learn to do more with less time,

effort, or context. One such way for practitioners to gain knowledge is through the experience of multimodal composing on a regular basis during their college careers and coursework.

Multimodal composing is a benchmark of Rhetoric and Composition pedagogy and still continues to influence classroom structures in such courses. Multimodality continues to be expressed in the classroom because students are engaging in transmediated and multimodal narrives on an increasing level. According to Takayoshi and Selfe, "*opportunities to think and compose multimodally can help us develop an increasingly complex and accurate understanding of writing, composition, instruction, and text*" (6). One consideration of the composition process is as a constellation of learning with specific terminology. This process is a two way discourse of learning. On one hand, students are coming to class to gain skills that will help them in future endeavors or (at the very least) help them figure out what to do to pass the class. In any case, the students are getting exposure to skills that could and do prove beneficial to them. On the other hand, the instructor gains experience working with new technologies and new formations of classical and traditional narrative elements. Through the incorporation of various literacy practices, educators are aware of the need for well-rounded and informed individuals who can contribute to society and participate in the workforce.

By teaching students to question how messages are shared and what strikes them on a personal level, instructors are offering and demonstrating strong literacy practices that increase comfort and functionality in socially connected and mediated worlds. Pedagogy again looks at how these skills can be taught to a body of students and

developed in these students over time. Brown notes that a "multiliteracy pedagogy, in part, provides explicit instruction, as well as a common language, for learning about linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spatial, and multimodal ways for communicating and constructing meaning (e.g. designs)" ("What" 226). The above elements are significant to the discussion of narrative storytelling as it moves across time and technological constructs. Movement is an important element to consider because texts can move by word of mouth and are always available via online especially mobile technology. The internet has the power to keep texts available even if they are removed by their original producers or owners.

As much as these terms come together, there is also a divergence between how they consider narrative structuring and respond to it. These terms diverge in the following manner: convergence considers technology and producers in detail while multimodality is a more academically considerate theory, because it has an established theoretical structure and a strong basis in the rhetorical tradition. Convergence is gaining theoretical considerations, but it is still in flux as storytelling technologies change over time. The established theoretical background and strong participant voices provided by Rhetoric and Composition add to the dominance of multimodality in classroom practices and scholarly articles. The two terms can come together if each field using it's respective term sees value in their shared modalities and scholarly missions. They share a common concern for how people communicate messages and create meanings from texts. Moreover, they allow for a continued discussion of shared narrative concerns that are becoming more and more connected to one another through message communication and modes of discourse as students enter the composition classroom.

Pedagogy and educational praxis also have a strong role to play in Chapter 5. Classroom examples engage with the academic conversation and provide pedagogical considerations for instructors interested in bridging convergence and multimodality. According to Carmen Luke, "people draw on diverse sources of information, means of communication, and (virtual) community engagements, which suggests that learning and information exchange and production occur in socially interactive communities of learners" (398). Social interactivity and participation in this manner are significant to both classrooms and workplaces because they can facilitate engagement between and across cultures and other social groupings of individuals. The social aspect also connects back to the importance of human connection amongst audience members when they are reading or listening to a story. Gathering together in groups, what we might call social convergence, also serves a societal role in that old participants teach new participants how to behave and engage with one another in the particular context; people who have specific interests or vested knowledge of the story in order to share it with others. The shared experience is still what continues to drive readers and audience members to participate in new narrative instantiations.

By incorporating the work of Gunther Kress, Kress and Van Leeuwen, Cynthia Selfe and Pamela Takayoshi, Sonya Borton and Brian Huot, Ishwari Pandey, and Stuart Selber on multimodality with previous convergence and new media theory, I have contended in this chapter that the space for a common dialogue exists and has the potential to change the face of composition practice. My examples of the narratives/narrative elements in relation to the work of Kathy Reichs in the novel *Déjà Dead,* the *Bones* television show, and related Internet artifacts. Textual artifacts and

story extensions were shown to build a stronger narrative universe because they start with traditional narrative and rhetorical arguments, and build on them to create spaces for further critique or exploration. These theoretical frames and terms build upon already existing and established narrative theory. Narrative morphology can allow for all of these story pieces to make sense individually and together and develop meaning in part and/or in whole for the reader. The pieces of the narrative universe chosen by the reader help to create a text that is more personalized and also more meaningful and engaging.

Chapter 5

Convergence' Goes to School: Transmedia Storytelling in the Composition Classroom

Chapter Overview

Chapter 5 discusses how narrative theory can bring together New Media and Rhetoric and Composition. This coming together of fields involves a deep/thoughtful consideration of what each group means by their terms in relation to storytelling and managing message(s) in a narrative related way or context. Management influenced by this can greatly impact courses where writing and narrative production and consumption play large and interconnected roles. By allowing for student-based textual connections and self-critical skill development, composition courses benefit from the inclusion of convergent and kairotic practices. Students and instructors are able to grow and acknowledge differences in interpretation. The last portion of the chapter concerns assignments that have been effective in the classroom and a practitioner text that offers applications and knowledge for students.

Chapter Introduction

Chapter 5 reiterates the importance of connecting the notions of convergence to multimodality through narrative theory. Narrative theory is used in order to build a strong historically and theoretically based bridging point between storytelling and message communication. Many terms are used to form connections. By discussing relevant terms and comparing their meanings, this dissertation has established many shared and interconnected themes surrounding message communication. In Chapter 2,

the terms morphology, polysemy, poetics, plurality, and multiplicity were discussed in relation to narrative and storytelling. These terms come from the fields of structuralism, semiotics, cinema and share many conceptualizations of form and iterations of information, apply structural rules to the narrative generation process, and acknowledge the potential for variations in meaning to be made by the audience. A strong point of the discussion of this grouping of terminology is how to classify narrative components and meanings.

In Chapter 3, the terms discussed in great detail include convergence, taste, semiotic domains, and modification. Coming from the disciplines of New Media and Sociology, these terms have a shared sense of community formation and a coming together of various texts and peoples. Convergence allows the reader to witness how story elements come together and combines with taste to form a specific domain for people to share with one another, and thereby build a camaraderie among people who appreciate the story or story elements in a specific way. Taste also connects to semiotic domains and modification through the terms' similar considerations of the body of participants or audience members. Semiotic domains work with the social structures developed through shared and non-shared tastes in order to bring together like-minded individuals who can understand terms and contexts others might not. Modification connects to the rest of the terms through the knowledge generation process. I in order to develop taste structures and semiotic domains in order to modify storylines and contribute to the narrative canon, the reader has to understand how points come together.

In Chapter 4, the terms considered at length include multimodality, reflective practitioners, and multimodal composing. The field of Rhetoric and Composition

influences these terms' shared sense of power over textual communications and multiple

formats and mediums, namely in how these modes and pieces are developed by producers

around rules and expectations of the genre(s). Multimodality fits with narrative theory to

discuss the many possible means of storytelling or conveying a message. In turn,

nowledge of the many modes and ways to convey messages and meanings is a hallmark

of the well informed reflective practitioner, who routinely engages in many levels of

multimodal composing in his or her school, work, and private life. These various

versions of a practitioner's reality come together to create a specific knowledge base that

the individual can then bring to bear on the domains or worlds he or she inhabits.

The chapter also provides a few example assignments that blend convergent

media with current multimodal composition practices. These assignments can be

modified to meet the needs of diverse classes, and can prove to be thought-provoking

endeavors. Chapter 5 also offers some final thoughts and helps to wrap up the theoretical

discussions offered in previous chapters. When students in composition courses consume

and construct multimodal narratives, they arguably learn to deal with information

overload and to make metacognitive decisions about why and how a specific story

appeals to them.

My research works to create a common dialogue among the groups surrounding

New Media and Rhetoric and Composition. This chapter also helps to fill a gap in

terminology among these varied scholars and practitioners. This dialogue is important

because it helps to bring together technological innovations with communicative

practices through narrative storytelling. In order to construct a firm foundation for the

conversation, we must reconsider and discuss the historical nature of telling stories and

the new ventures made as new technology enters and exits.

Developing a Foundation: Starting with Terminology

By considering how these terms connect to one another through the bridge of narrative theory and terminology, readers and educational practitioners are able to more actively engage with both fields and are introduced to the historical relevance of storytelling. Narrative theory has a history, but also participates in current and future work with computer and digital technologies. Most readers have certain expectations based on the way stories have been told. This notion is quite significant as it pertains to balancing narrative terms in a way that productively shows connections to both fields. In figure 5.1, a terminology diagram is offered to show how to form connections between meanings and provide a constellation of context to draw from.

New Media	Narrative Theory	Rhetoric and Composition
Convergence	Morphology	Multimodality
Taste (Sociology Applied to New Media)	Polysemy and Poetics	Reflective Practitioners
Semiotic Domains	Plurality	Reflective Practitioners/ Multimodal Composing/ Rhetorical Situation
Modification	Multiplicity	Multimodal Composing

Figure 5.1 --Connecting Terms Diagram

Understandings between terms come from their base definitions and meanings. Figure 5.1 allows for a visual representation of how the terms connect to one another. The terms

in the first grouping are convergence, morphology, and multimodality. They bespeak the many-layered nature of representation and engagement through storytelling. This is true of convergence's coming together, morphology's breaking down into pieces, and multimodality's consideration of multiple message pathways. The terms in columns two and three also provide a further context for the development of an interdisciplinary vision of the process of narrative generation and storytelling. The terms all work together to provide names for the ways stories are being experienced as part of transmedial and technological processes. Stories constructed in New Media and those made in Rhetoric and Composition have overlaps and both fields can learn from one another in terms of story generation and development. These fields can also gain pedagogical practices that prove to be fruitful classroom exploits.

Terminology has been a large factor within this project. Knowing what to call something can boost a reader's confidence and comfort level when discussing narrative and other textual interactions. The terms offered throughout the previous chapters are an amalgamation of technologically related, socially related, and personally related topics, which help to inform conversations surrounding storytelling and narrative generation. Technology comes into play with the development and consistent use of convergent media and many modes of communication. Audience members have to work with technology in order to engage with the story. This was true of reading and understanding the first alphabetic texts and continues to be true with web interfaces used to communicate and learn from the story.

Social considerations take the form of actions between readers in order to engage with others interested in the same narrative space. These could be fan clubs, blogs, or

game empires. Multilayered instantiations of storytelling aid in the connections of related groups into one large body or society. "Participation is the engine that drives fandom, and fandom drives a story's success" (Phillips 112). Users must want to engage both with the text and with one another in order for the story to succeed and gain further developments. Without participation, the story dies. It can be resurrected, but will not be the same as the original narrative space. Examples of this can include popular culture phenomena such as: *Bones*. Characters from the television show and novels bring different levels of participants to the fore. Readers of the books and watchers of the television show are going to know different representations of characters and settings. This could prove confusing or cause much contradiction among fans as to who is the truer Dr. Temperance Brennan or which is the better setting Montreal or Washington D.C. There is also room for different layers and generations of fans to connect to one another and chart their own courses for the narrative.

Personally related connections are also significant to the development of transmedia stories. In these stories, readers construct the reality they want to engage with based on what has been set down as part of that narrative's canon. Fan fiction can supplement the areas where the storyline is lacking or hasn't been a major sticking-point to the main author or franchise developer. Fans can create content for other interested parties. They can take time with a tertiary character in order to flesh out a scenario or provide backstory to an area of the narrative that has not been fully explored by the author. This leads to the discussion of engagement in and amongst your audience members. According to Phillips, transmedia storytelling, which can include convergence and multimodality, has a specific type of engagement pyramid. She notes that "20

percent of your audience is responsible for 80 percent of your activity. The specific numbers will vary depending on your project, of course, but the principle is sound: most of your participation will come from a small segment of your audience" (184). Because of this gap in participation, the developer and audience members must focus on the level at which all wish to participate or engage with the story.

Bearing all these influences in mind, an understanding of multiple layers of meanings and structures allows the reader and producer to engage with thoughtfully produced texts and other such extensions. Such narrative extensions in this manner need an effective skill set with which to process the varied and large amounts of content. All of this comes down to the point where students must be trained in the skills that will serve them when they encounter multilayered messages with different literacies and modalities required. The terms provided in figure 5.1 aid in the development of this conversation about meaning as it relates to message production. On this journey, we move toward a specific conception of meta-level awareness/criticality and an opportune moment of time. This awareness is served well by considering theoretical foundations that have come before. In this case, it is the work of The New London Group and centers conceptually around multiliteracies.

Multiliteracies Come into Focus: How KR Works in Skill Generation

Kairotic Reading parallels previously established calls for skill and literacy development. The New London Group has offered much in the way of criticism and paths for new considerations of literacy and skill development in the form of

multiliteracies and pedagogical considerations of choice, technological usage, and

language development as it pertains to modern students. According to the New London

Group, in reference to the needs of students and their working lives, a concept of

multiliteracies provides:

> a metalanguage that describes meaning in various realms. These include the textual and the visual, as well as the multimodal relations between the different meaning making processes that are now so critical in media texts and the texts of electronic multimedia. ("A Pedagogy" 24)

The concept of multilayered awareness that pertains to student self-knowledge and

audience knowledge that permeates the discourse surrounding narrative theory, kairotic

reading, convergent storytelling, and multimodal composing practice are skills that need

to be developed. Students need to be encouraged to think in new ways. These new ways

can include multi-faceted engagement and persona building on the part of individual

audience members. Through online storytelling, "One and the same person can be

different kinds of people at different times and places. Different kinds of people connect

through the intermeshed discourses that constitute order of discourse" (New London

Group 21). This means that audience members can connect to one another and form

multilayered relationships and have meta-level discussions about the narrative they are

partaking in and that narrative's potential influence on real life.

In a related vein, Selber and Gee consider how content knowledge and literacy

inform their work involving a reader's changing context and location. Context and

location can inform how a student or reflective practitioner communicates and forms

narrative or message structures. Selber notes, in regard to the development of student

skills through pedagogy, that:

if teachers fail to adopt a postcritical stance, thus leaving technology design and education to those outside of the field. It is entirely probable that students will have a much more difficult time understanding computers in critical, contextual, and historical ways; that technology designs and, informed by pedagogical and cultural values not our own, will define and redefine literacy practices in way that are less desirable; and the computer literacy initiatives will simply serve to perpetuate rater an alleviate existing social iniquities. (13)

The adoption of such a stance can be quite difficult, if one is not prepared for the potential difficulties of acquiring technical knowledge and also applying it to pedagogy. This is a space for conversation among scholars and teachers in order to develop tools that will aid classroom sessions and teachers' students' development. Another potential problem comes in trying to justify the usage of popular culture and narrative theory as themes in composition courses. Administrators and university governing bodies will question their relevance to student outcomes, so the viability of such skill development must be showcased via assessment protocols. This is outside of the purview of this dissertation, but is still a significant concern for any teacher wanting to use technology and narrative in the classroom.

Gee also connects to the theme of skill development and educator engagement, but goes further to discuss expected outcomes for students. He notes that "We see rather, a movement towards people who can work collaboratively in teams to produce results and add value through distributed knowledge and understanding" (Gee "New People" 50). This combines well with his notions of literacy skill development and usage of new technologies as they relate to the development of semiotic domains and discourses. Connections abound through the acquisition of technologically, socially, and personally related topics. The transformation from school to the working world is of significance to educators.

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As the conversation continues, it moves toward a more pedagogically related outcome. Relationships to pedagogy are important connections to consider because scholars have the power to influence students and the world through the teaching of usable skills. These skills come in the form of narrative, multimodality, and convergence. Talking about teaching practice also fits with the shared views of The New London Group, Selber, and Gee because they also advocate for student literacy development that comes with technological considerations. Considerations of literacy development and message development run through this and other chapters.

Practical Pedagogy: Weaving Multimodality and Convergence into Course Planning

Pedagogy is a strong focus in this chapter and throughout my research not only because of my background in education, with a secondary education teaching degree, but also because overall, I enjoy shaping classroom practice into something that aides students' skill development. In the case of multimodality, pedagogy has been influenced by the work of composition practitioners who are interested it in building spaces for students to write, create, and develop arguments via different modalities. In the case of convergence, teaching methods and styles are often influenced by the social nature of the connections to media and also the reader's own self-assessment of the texts. New Media prides itself on understanding how texts come together around a reader and also how the reader connects with other readers to find information, skills, and community. Understanding various textual and audience connections aids pedagogy as well because it helps students to use their prior base knowledge from interacting with online spaces and

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textual situations and move that into the classroom and workspace in order to work collaboratively with other individuals.

Another overarching connection comes with the term multimodal composing. Pedagogical considerations involving multimodal compositions typically look like the work of Selfe, Selber, Gee, and other educationally and compositionally framed scholars. These scholars typically discuss how to incorporate different modes in much the same way as traditional modes such as written and oral work. But, it is also up to the instructor/educator to gain knowledge of these technological domains in order to interact with students who may be more proficient with technology then he or she is. Literacy development in this case is multilayered and reciprocal. It is multilayered because literacies can form at different levels of knowledge and with varying degrees of technological skill in order to bridge a gap in understanding and help move the class forward. Literacy in this sense is also reciprocal because the teacher can learn concepts from the students who are more proficient at the technology and the teacher can provide guidance to the students when applying their natural or previously learned skills to the course and transferring their new founds skills to other educational goals.

The New London Group also discusses literacy development and connects back to the social interactions of and with the text by learners through their mention of diversity and difference. They note that "When learners juxtapose different languages, discourses, styles, and approaches, they gain substantively in metacognitive and metalinguistic abilities and in their ability to reflect critically on complex systems and their interactions" (New London "A Pedagogy" 15). This juxtaposition of content and contextual differences allows for many potentials of meaning making among audience members and

via various strata of fans acting as producers of content. Again, these interactions among groups can be points of discussion and also places for students and practitioners to consider how the texts and contexts work together to form a fully realized narrative arc.

Cope and Kalantzis suggest four types of pedagogical themes for classroom use. These themes include: "Situated Practice, Over Instruction, Critical Framing, and Transformed Practice" (239). They note further that:

> In the worlds of public life, work and formal learning knowledge is made through immersion in 'hands-on' experience (Situated Practice); coupled with explicit concepts and theories which explain underlying processes (Overt Instruction); through locating knowledge in its relevant context and reflection on this purposes (Critical Framing); and through transferring knowledge gained in one context to another context, which will be inevitably similar and different in certain respects (Transformed Practice). (Cope and Kalantzis 240-41)

These types of instructional practice add to the discussion of pedagogical concerns and methods of providing opportunities for students to develop specific literacy skills. In the case of kairoitic reading, an opportune moment comes during the beginning of writing class course work. This is done through instructor scaffolding of a variable reading process. Ideally, this should be done during the first few weeks of class and then the students would be required to try it for themselves as part of their homework practice. As mentioned previously, kairotic reading is the practice of seizing the opportune moment for reading/examining/consuming/reflecting on the textual extension of some narrative by the reader. Readability relates to the ways in which the features of a specific genre encourages one to consider or read a text.

By seizing this combination of moment and genre, the reader is able to acknowledge the best time for him or her to engage with a text that is attractive because of the narrative's genre, terminology, or other such content. The other main focus is the

connection with others that an understanding of kairotic reading can bring about.

Messages are conveyed to an audience that has some knowledge of the conventions of

storytelling. Even though audiences may be at different levels of comprehension and

scattered all over the world, they can still connect to a well-written and engaging story.

The influence of narrative tradition and theory to various forms of storytelling help to

provide foundational elements that can connect audiences.   To that end, "Story is the

through line; no matter what…you're human, and you understand a good story" (Phillips

116). This engagement can be multiplied across other readers and audiences. It is a

beneficial practice because it can be adopted by educational, personal, and commercial

settings in relation to message and brand development. Scaffolding and skill

development should be carried out by teachers in writing classrooms because it would be

of great significance to the students and also future pedagogical developments.

  Educators bear the brunt of responsibility to engage with new technologies and

message conveyance. "Unless educators take a lead in developing appropriate

pedagogies for these new electronic media and forms of communication, corporate

experts will be the ones to determine how people will learn, what they learn, and what

constitutes literacy" (Luke " 71). Those in the classrooms must be the ones developing

these literacies and pedagogies because they are actively involved in the work of the

classroom and have a stronger connection to students they see on a regular basis.

  The generation and development of meaning in the classroom is also important to

the pedagogical process employed by teachers. To that end, instructors help students to

consider how they generate meaning and develop connections to texts and contexts. "We

always actively create 'context'. We make the world around us mean certain things"

(Gee "New People" 64). Context is always shifting and dynamic as it pertains to social interactions and domains. By using the concept of kairos-- time as dependent upon the audience and situation-- students, practitioners, and teachers focus on the inherent nature of rhetoric and on the reading of genre specific content. By acknowledging this dynamic nature in their classrooms, teachers can build pedagogical situations, scenarios, and assignments into their classrooms in order to develop students thought processes and skills. Through providing different genres and textual types to compare and the classroom space and time for exposure, pedagogues are incorporating some elements of New Media and traditional narrative theory.

Another outlet that also offers pedagogical consideration of incorporating convergence and transmedia narrative in the classroom comes from an imbedded practitioner and producer. Through Henry Jenkins' article "Transmedia Storytelling and Entertainment: An annotated syllabus," he discusses the personal, pedagogical, and practitioner related concepts and all the workings that go into a course that teaches students how to build transmedia franchising and multimodal narratives. In large and well explained doses, Jenkins discusses how he has taught a course related to what he preaches in terms of convergence based media franchises. Moreover, he has power because he is one of the big names in the field and has practiced the pedagogy he has recommended. How can some of the seemingly grandiose ideas that Jenkins offers be adapted for use in a less well-endowed or well-informed classroom?

The takeaways from Jenkins come in three forms. The first is Jenkins' notion of convergence-related practices in the classroom. As a practitioner's guide to pedagogy, he notes that:

First, by definition, teaching about transmedia requires us to move away from medium-specific models for structuring the curriculum in favour of a comparative media perspective, providing a context for helping students to think across media platforms and to understand how they are interacting with each other in ever more complex ways. (Jenkins "Transmedia Storytelling and Entertainment" 943).

The context of complex entertainment is structured in a quite systematic way, so that students move from 'Foundations' to 'Narrative Structures' to 'Audience Matters' (Jenkins "Transmedia Storytelling and Entertainment" 949). Building a base for discussion is a huge requirement because it establishes how the field or interest into the subject began. It also provides historical markers for students and teachers to go by in structuring a creative argument. For instructors, this serves as one potential way to structure a class or at least a place to start the conversation with their peers and students about the adoption of transmedia storytelling elements.

The second takeaway is associated with New Media franchising and industry engagement. Because of his position within the field of New Media and convergence, Jenkins is able to gather professionals who are building transmedia narratives in Los Angeles. He acknowledges this privileged position by saying:

The course in its current incarnations might only be taught at the University of Southern California or some other school that is located close to the heart of the media industry. I was able to take advantage of key thinkers and creators who lived in the Los Angeles area as guest speakers, but also to tap into people from elsewhere who had reason to be passing through Hollywood as part of their work. (Jenkins "Transmedia Storytelling and Entertainment" 945).

Elements of Jenkins' priviledged context notwithstanding his pedagogical vision can be borrowed and used through the inclusion of online interviews, TED talks, and other related content from transmedia, multimodal, and other narrative developers. Jenkins notes that his own blog is quite full of content for this purpose ("Transmedia Storytelling

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and Entertainment" 945). While it might partially be a form of self-promotion, these sources and materials can and do provide fruitful connections for students to make and teachers to use in their classrooms.

The third and final piece comes from the actual syllabus material. This is a collection of resources that other teachers in fields related to narrative storytelling can mine in order to provide structure and also put their own stamp on convergence and transmedia related entertainment in their courses. Throughout the syllabus, Jenkins provides extensive examples and links to content. These pieces are quite helpful for instructors at various levels of engagement with this type of storytelling and narrative structuring. Jenkins' pedagogy and discussion of classroom practice also give way to further personal examples related to my own pedagogical practices. These practices have been largely informed by my own extensive classroom experience and my willingness to try new things, as discussed in the following section.

For Future Use: Example Assignments to Use in the Classroom

Contributing to the discussion and providing assignments that can be adapted by others is also part of my pedagogy. Teaching students how and why to communicate effectively to various groups is part of rhetorically and socially responsible practices. These practices can take the form of literacy skill development offered by narrative theory, kairotic reading, convergence, and multimodality. Engaging with the concepts in the classroom is of great importance because teachers have the opportunity to help students share their voices. Self-critique is an important rhetorical and personal lesson to learn. How students see their interactions with the world is important, because they will

be developing messages from which others will make meaning. Mismanagement of consumer knowledge can lead to a message missing its target audience or enraging them. When fans become angry with a producer, they can swear off any new developing content and thereby help to kill a franchise through inactivity. Producers must be cognizant of who their fans/readers/audiences are, what they care about within the narrative framework, and what they expect from storytellers.

Starting to create assignments in a new space is always difficult, but this section includes three examples in a sequence that are classroom tested and a fourth example that could be used as a text base. The continued evaluation of these assignments by the students and the instructor is significant to the further development of kairotic and narrative reading practices in students. Students perform the following assignments in order to explore their own histories with storytelling and participating with various kinds of texts. The three assignments and the textual element are used in order to show the possibilities for the types of assignments that can work with narrative, convergence, and multimodality for students to develop skills that are related to kairotic reading. My objective varies with each of the assignments. For Assignment #1, the objective is for the students to define a list of terms that will be used as a part of the class and also to create a foundational understanding of how these terms are interrelated. This objective is met to the extent that students are engaging with the terminology they will use to explore their connections to stories and participating in various ways with textual references. The work of providing definitions that relate to their personal understandings is one way to begin the discussion of variation along a theme and also to consider the various ways that connections to texts and ideas are formed. For Assignment #2, the objective is to have

students use the terms they have previously learned in order to discuss a higher level practitioner text. They are also asked to reflect on how they would share the content with someone else, which is significant to the social nature of information and learning. In Assignment #3, students are asked to use a *Heromachine* interface to develop a character that represents attributes of him or herself that can engage in a fictitious world. Assignment 3a shows a variation that relates to the textual universe of *A Discovery of Witches* and forces students to engage with the four character archetypes found in the novel. The four types of characters include: witches, daemons, vampires, and humans. Variation 3b relates to the story world of *Bones* and Temperance Brennan. In this variation, students are tasked with identifying themselves as a "squint" (show terminology for a science/forensics minded person), FBI, outside observer, or villain. These character variations are important to the understanding of and connection with *Bones* the television as dominant textual resource. These following assignments show variations on reading and participation related activities that help to enrich students' connections to and understandings of specific narrative universes.

Assignment #1

The first assignment can be started as part of a class discussion early in the semester. It is structured around terms that are significant to the course and also sparks further discussion among students. The list of terms is a subjective choice and should match the course's content. An example of this is presented in figure 5.2. The following piece is an in class writing and discussing activity that students start with when considering kairotic reading, narrative theory, convergence, and multimodality.

Assignment #1 is a great starting point for the discussion of terminology and also

the students own role in making meaning and selecting information. It shows one way of

constructing research based questions and student composed definitions. An alternative

version of the assignment could be constructed on a Canvas or Blackboard like

technology and built on as part of the students' participation grades. Terms could be

posted and then different students could be assigned to define them and then discuss the

definitions. The list of terms would also be provided before the full class discussion.

In Class Practice: Defining Some Terms and Providing Clear Connections

As part of our in class activities with rhetoric, composing and writing please consider the following terms:

- Narrative
- Story
- Morphology
- Convergence
- Multimodality
- Taste
- Semiotic Domains
- Modification
- Reflective Practitioners
- Transmedia

Describe and define these terms in the way that is the most helpful for you and your learning style. You can use text, images, collages, etc. It should be a representation that works for you and that you can remember. We will also be discussing your definitions as a class.

Figure 5.2—In Class Practice Assignment

Assignment #2

The second assignment concerns students' engagement with a scholarly textual

element. The textual element is a short cutting from an academic article. In the article,

the interface and political actions are discussed. By connecting to the terms discussed in

the previous assignment and using those to critique a text that shows a relationship to the

topics, students are able to practice critical engagement and also model practices that will

aid them in future course conversations. They may also lead to further knowledge

building if a discussion board is created for the class to ask questions about content to one another. The example for this assignment is shown in figure 5.3.

Assignment #2 is a homework assignment involving a reading and a response. Assignments like this could be done twice a week and accepted as paper copies or via a course management software.   The article that I used as an example here is Cynthia and Richard Selfe's article "The Politics of the Interface: Power and Its Exercise in Electronic Contact Zones." This article has a multilayered richness that is good for instructors and students to engage with, but it can be tough for first year students to comprehend. When I taught this assignment, I provided them with the cutting in the example in figure 5.3. Reading the example can prompt an increase in meta-critical discussions of what it means to engage with an interface. The teacher and students can share examples of hard-to-use interfaces from their own lives. Sharing and reflecting on personal examples also adds to the low level stress placed on the students who want to "get the right answer." Instead, they can engage with one another about how these examples strike them or make rhetorical sense. They can laugh, cry, or become angry and then discuss why they feel the way they do. This engagement again adds to the meta-criticality of the classroom context. Students come into contact with a myriad number of interfaces as they conduct work, school, and other social practices that are part of their daily lives. This exercise gives them a change to evaluate their own and others' experiences with interfaces.

Interfaces are an often taken-for-granted computer technology. By discussing them in relation to kairotic reading, morphology, and other narrative modalities, students and teachers are presented with further skill development and critical awareness building. Skill development comes in the form of teaching students how to read a story with

different types of media tie-ins. For example, if the main narrative is in book format,

instruction in how to parse a story for content and character details would prove helpful.

Similarly, a textually dense printed piece and an oral or visual source such as a comic

book or a song can be read for information, but require different types of literacy skills in

order to glean each individual meaning. According to Selber, "Although interfaces have

been reconfigured in dramatic ways, one implication for users is that they readily

encounter the lingo—and territory—of several different industries and the numerous

perspectives that inform them" (*Multiliteracies* 57). Through various encounters with

different media products in a classroom setting, students are able to build schema and

develop skills related to message consumption and knowledge construction. Students can

also begin to see how different media connect to a central theme or message within the

text. What a character says, looks like, or listens to can be helpful in fleshing out the

details of the story. Different members of the audience are going to connect to different

pieces in different ways. By providing opportunities for students to question and view

these differences, educators can build their own world or context that is safe for critical

conversations.

Developing critical awareness is another way for the students to read their

audience and meet the needs of the readers with their messages. Conveying meaning that

fits with the logic of the consumer or reader and the medium is important because the

narrative producer doesn't want the story's intended message to go over the heads of the

audience members. This is not to say that the audience has to be spoonfed the material.

The franchise or story produce can engage the reader in a variety of complex ways, but

these methods need not alienate the audience. Because the audience members are at

various levels of attachment and engagement with the narrative, examples might resonate with some participants more than others. But, because of the social nature of audience participation, readers can help one another to understand where the narrative is going and what a specific textual example or certain narrative elements mean. This sharing of knowledge can be part of the polysemic nature of signs and also conceptualizations of how and why the example connects to the narrative.

Figure 5.3 provides a small excerpt from the Selfe's article and is presented as reading response homework activity. The questions are used to scaffold the responses from the students and provide ways for them to connect the article excerpt to what they are learning in class.

Homework: Reading and Response

Please read the following excerpt from the article:

Selfe, Cynthia and Richard Selfe. "The Politics of the Interface: Power and Its Exercise in Electronic Contact
Zones." *College Composition and Communication* 45.4 (1994): 480-504. Web. 7 Jun. 2012.

"Built into computer interfaces are also a series of semiotic messages that support this alignment along the axes of class, race, and gender. The white pointer hand, for example, ubiquitous in the Macintosh primary interface, is one such gesture, as are the menu items of the Appleshare server tray and hand, calculator, the moving van (for the font DA mover), the suitcase, and the desk calendar. Others images-those included in the HyperCard interface commercial clip art collections, and in the Apple systems documentation include a preponderance of white people and icons of middle-and upper-class white culture and professional, office- oriented computer use. These images signal-to users of color, to users who come from a non-English language background, to users from low socio-economic backgrounds-that entering the virtual worlds of interfaces also means, at least in part and at some level, entering a world constituted around the lives and values of white, male, middle- and upper-class professionals. Users of color, users from non-English language background, users from a low socio-economic class who view this map of reality, submit-if only partially and momentarily-to an interested version of reality represented in terms of both language and image…Given the characteristics of the interface as a linguistic contact zone, our uses of computers in English classrooms certainly seem capable of supporting what Henry Giroux calls "imperialist master narratives" (57) of colonial dominance, even as they make the promise of technological liberation and progress. Students who want to use computers are continually confronted with these grand narratives which foreground a value on middle-class, corporate culture; capitalism and the commodification of information; Standard English; and rationalistic ways of representing knowledge. These values simultaneously do violence to and encourage the rejection of the languages of different races and the values of non-dominant cultural and gender groups. When students from these groups enter the linguistic borderlands of the interface, in other words, they often learn that

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they must abandon their own culture or gender and acknowledge the domi-nance of other groups…We need to teach students and ourselves to recognize computer interfaces as non-innocent physical borders (between the regular world and the virtual world), cultural borders (between the haves and the have-nots), and linguistic borders. These borders, we need to recognize as cultural formations "historically constructed and socially organized within rules and regulations that limit and enable particular identities, individual capacities, and social forms" (Giroux 30). We also need to teach students and ourselves useful strategies of crossing-and demystifying-these borders. It is important to understand that we continually re-map and re-negotiate borders in our lives."

Please respond to the following questions and relate your ideas to the terms and texts we are discussing in class. Your response should be at least ½ typed double spaced and cannot exceed 2 pages. It should be thoughtful and convey all the points you wish to make.

Questions:

1. What do Selfe and Selfe mean by gender, race, and class in reference to interface development? Please provide an example of this.

2. We've spoken at great length in class about narratives, communities, and knowing the audience. How does this connect to the key points in the article excerpt? What sticks out the most?

3. How could this article influence your own creation or usage of interfaces? Please explain.

4. What is the most significant piece of information for you from the excerpt? How would you describe it/explain it to another person? What medium would work best?

Figure 5.3—Reading and Homework Assignment

Assignment #3

The third assignment provided is a three/four week project sequence and is shown in figure 5.4. This sequence allows students to make informed choices and also discuss how these choices connect to their lives/mindsets, levels of creativity/etc. Taken together, these assignments begin the work of developing a foundation from which to start navigating these narrative tales and discourses surrounding them. Variations A and B help to highlight the changes that can be introduced in order to connect students to interfaces and specific narrative universes. Assignment #3 is provided in 3 versions. The first is a base assignment that I have developed for a college-level freshmen writing course. The variations A and B represent more ways in which participants, in the form of

students, can be made to engage with narrative concepts in convergent and multimodal ways. By asking the students to use their knowledge of a specific narrative universe, they are able to participate in the ways required of convergent narrative. This also adds to the students understanding of character development as it pertains to the specific narrative being discussed. The student can take away skills and interactions that will serve them when reading and participating in and with other texts.

Assignment #3 helps to connect notions of narrative theory with convergent and multimodal storytelling and character building. The assignment revolves around the interface(s) for the Heromachine character generator(s) provided by Universal Gamers Online (UGO). It also contends with traditional narrative elements of the hero/heroine of a story arc. Needing a hero is something that most students who grew up in a technologically mediated and globalized world can understand. A hero or heroine could potentially be any person, but more often than not is imbued with special powers or characteristics that aid in narrative morphological development. As a large portion of the assignment, students are asked to engage with a Heromachine interface. The students were not required to gain any special knowledge or technological equipment to engage with or use the Heromachine items. Basic knowledge of a keyboard and character development are a given with the group of students that are regularly in my composition courses.

In choosing these interfaces, I endeavored to provide students with a low risk, engaging, and inexpensive activity. It was low risk in that it allowed for play and freedom of choice within a non-threatening environment. Non-threatening here refers to the classroom as workspace to share ideas, not to the nature of the character or the type of

superpower(s) he or she possesses. Connecting with the interface of their chosen version of Heromachine allows the students a choice of cost-free structures. However, they also quickly consider the limitations that the interface's default choices impose.

For example, students are tasked developing characters that represent something that is significant or relevant to them. As they develop their characters, they are note what positive and negative functions/attributes are. This is significant to the discussion of interfaces in relation to politics, message construction, and story building. Politics are presented to students via the kinds of representations or skins offered to the students. More pro-Western or American symbols are offered. Gender norms are also established in the male characters having large muscles and the female characters have large chests. These reflect the political miasma that is associated with an interface that is developed by humans for humans. Message construction plays into that because students are tasked with finding who the audience of this piece is. Storybuilding comes into play when students are asked to create a backstory for their characters to participate and also allow the audience to connect with similar narrative attributes. Getting students to read an article that connects to things they use on a regular basis and respond to it are important parts of the critical skill development process and also the shared learning experience of the class.

The following assignment (Figure 5.4) is one that I have used in my classroom; has proven effective at pushing the students to self-critique and to weigh in on the effectiveness of the tools and modes they are using. In the classroom conversation surrounding this project cycle, different literacy skills are dispensed, discussed, developed, and reflected upon throughout the process of hero creation. Admittedly, the

assignment is tied to popular culture and a bit tongue-in- cheek when it comes to why

heroes or heroines are the subject of research I push a fantastical hero rather than a real

living person. The choices the students make are easier for them when they do not have

to be grounded in full reality. Additional details that are somewhat fantastical allow

students to explore their own interests and also allows the activity to be considered in a

creative and enjoyable yet low-stakes way.

Project: Critiquing and Using an Interface-- I Need a Hero (250 Points)
The project's focus is on the process of how to critique a software interface and develop a character
using said software. You will also critique your personal perspective concerning design choices you
make in developing your character. Are they a hero, an anti-hero, a mythical being, or a zombie just
trying to deal? The choice is up to you.

When critiquing the Heromachine interface of your choice (please remember that you are allowed to
use/develop a character in Heromachine 1.1, 2.5, 3, Zombie, Warrior, and regular human. No Pinup
version allowed), you will need to consider the following questions:

- What does the interface look/feel like? Give an example of what you have to do to make a
  choice/work with a specific element.

- Does the interface disappear and allow you to accomplish what you want to do/create an
  enjoyable character?

- How steep is the learning curve of the interface? Do you need to spend a lot of time learning
  the software? Does it take a lot of time to get things done?

- Are you allowed to make many choices? Does the interface allow for full character
  development/creation in a manner that suits your ideas?

- What are the shortfalls/benefits of this interface? In your opinion, what could use more/further
  improvement? How would you make improvements?

The assignments are designed to fit with the overarching goals of the course-related critical thinking
skills development under the evaluation and coherence of evidence. You will produce a design
plan/prospectus, draft and final versions of an assessment of interface character creation software, draft
and final versions of character development Analysis, and a reflective self-assessment. Another goal is
to have fun with developing a character that you enjoy.

If you wish to compare two versions of Heromachine, and then discuss the positives and negatives of
each. Please discuss this with me.

This Project is Made up of the Following Assignments and Their Point Break Down:

Design Plan and Prospectus (30 Points) 2-3 Pages
Please create a design plan that follows the hand out you were given during the beginning of the

semester. Think about which version of Heromachine you would like to critique and possibly what type of character you would like to develop. Also, you will be developing work that is oral, written, and visual. Please remember to highlight those elements.

Also, don't forget to include a 5-7 sentence prospectus proposal that briefly describes what you think you will do in this project. This helps you to work through your ideas and is a way of textual storyboarding.

Assessment of Interface Character Creation Software (25 points draft; 50 points final) 2 pages draft; 3-4 pages final.

For this portion of this cycle, you will choose a version of Heromachine and investigate the quality of character development that this interface provides. What does it allow you to do? Does it fit with the definitions of interface we considered in class? What role does it play? Also, consider the questions listed in the second paragraph of the hand out. The draft version should be 2 pages in length. The final should be polished in to 3-4 pages. Please use examples and discuss the interface as you use it.

Character Development Self-Assessment (25 points draft; 50 for final) 2 pages draft; 3-4 pages final

This assessment is for you to discuss the choices you made in generating your character. Names are very important. Please give your character one. Think about why you gave the character certain attributes. For example, does he have orange hair, purple skin, and is telekinetic? or does she have black hair, café au lait skin, green eyes, and can control the weather? Please remember to have fun with this aspect of design. You need to discuss this in a bit of detail and provide your point of view and perspective on this character.

Also consider the world he/she/it would inhabit. What role does this character serve in that space? What does that world/universe/city/game space look like? Think of the character as a persona, alternate perspective, or a mask if you like. Are they anything like you?

If the interface did not allow you to add an important feature to your character, make note of this as well. What would you have added if given the opportunity?

5-7 Minute Presentation with Visuals and Outline (50 points)

For this portion of the project, you will develop a 5-7 minute presentation discussing and introducing the class to your character. Please provide the following:

- An image/picture of your character.
- An outline for the instructor to follow.
- A little bit of back story about your character.
- A context for your character to exist and a name that it goes by.
- Any problems you ran into while developing/generating your ideas.

You can choose to use either PowerPoint or Prezi for this. Please have visuals and remember to cite them either on the slide/page they appear on or provide a reference list at the end of your presentation.

Self-Reflective Project Assessment Essay (20 points) 1-2 pages

At the end of the project, you are required to write a 1-2 page Reflective Self-Assessment Essay. Consider the following questions when generating your response:

1. What did I learn about interfaces by critiquing Heromachine? What changes would I make to

the program?

2. How does my character relate to the concept of interface and communication?
3. What is one thing that went well during the project?
4. Is there anything that I would change? If yes, explain what you would have done differently.

Due Dates:
11/12 Design Plan/ Prospectus Due.
11/14 Draft Software Assessment Due for Discussion.
11/28 Draft Character Assessment Due.
11/30 Final Software Assessment Due.
12/3-7 Presentations
12/10 Final Character Assessments Due.
12/12 Final Reflections

Figure 5.4—I Need a Hero Assignment Sequence

The following assignment variations pertain to the previously discussed

convergent and multimodal narratives. The first variation (A) in Figure 5.5 considers

how a student would create a character for the *A Discovery of Witches* franchise. The

changes made to the assignment largely revolve around the student's choice to make a

heroic or villainous character that is of a specific species, which is relevant to the

narrative universe. The species classification can open up differences in how their

character sees the world of Diana and Matthew and also how this character chooses to

interact in that world. This variation has not been classroom tested, but can be the focus

of either a class on interface development, current modern fiction, or speculative fiction.

Variation A---Assignment #3
Project: Discovering and Establishing Your Connection (250 Points)
The project's focus is on the process of how to critique a software interface and develop a character using said software. You will also critique your personal perspective concerning design choices you make in developing your character. How is your character situated in the world or narrative universe of *A Discovery of Witches*? Are you a witch, daemon, vampire, or human? Have you decided to be a hero/heroine or a villain? How does your choice of affiliation change your perspective on the story?

When critiquing the Heromachine interface of your choice (please remember that you are allowed to use/develop a character in Heromachine 1.1, 2.5, 3, Warrior, and regular human. No Pinup or Zombie version allowed), you will need to consider the following questions:

- What does the interface look/feel like? Give an example of what you have to do to make a

choice/work with a specific element. Is it clunky?

- Does the interface disappear and allow you to accomplish what you want to do/create an enjoyable character? In what way?

- How steep is the learning curve of the interface? Do you need to spend a lot of time learning the software? Does it take a lot of time to get things done?

- Are you allowed to make many choices? Does the interface allow for full character development/creation in a manner that suits your ideas?

- What are the shortfalls/benefits of this interface? In your opinion, what could use more/further improvement? How would you make improvements?

The assignments are designed to fit with the overarching goals of the course-related critical thinking skills development under the evaluation and coherence of evidence. You will produce a design plan/prospectus, draft and final versions of an assessment of interface character creation software, draft and final versions of character development Analysis, and a reflective self-assessment. Another goal is to have fun with developing a character that you enjoy.

If you wish to compare two versions of Heromachine, and then discuss the positives and negatives of each. Please discuss this with me.

This Project is Made up of the Following Assignments and Their Point Break Down:

Design Plan and Prospectus (30 Points) 2-3 Pages
Please create a design plan that follows the hand out you were given during the beginning of the semester. Think about which version of Heromachine you would like to critique and possibly what type of character you would like to develop. Also, you will be developing work that is oral, written, and visual. Please remember to highlight those elements.

Also, don't forget to include a 5-7 sentence prospectus proposal that briefly describes what you think you will do in this project. This helps you to work through your ideas and is a way of textual storyboarding. Also consider what elements of *ADOW* influence your character development and representational choices.

Assessment of Interface Character Creation Software (25 points draft; 50 points final) 2 pages
draft; 3-4 pages final.
For this portion of this cycle, you will choose a version of Heromachine and investigate the quality of character development that this interface provides. What does it allow you to do? Does it fit with the definitions of interface we considered in class? What role does it play? Also, consider the questions listed in the second paragraph of the hand out. The draft version should be 2 pages in length. The final should be polished in to 3-4 pages. Please use examples and discuss the interface as you use it.

Character Development Self-Assessment (25 points draft; 50 for final) 2 pages draft; 3-4 pages final
This assessment is for you to discuss the choices you made in generating your character. Names are very important. Please give your character one. Think about why you gave the character certain attributes. For example, does he have dark hair, pale skin, and drinks blood? Or does she have reddish-blonde hair, light freckled skin, green eyes, and can control orbs of fire? Or is she a middle aged witch from the 17th century with long dark hair? Please remember to have fun with this aspect of design. You

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need to discuss this in a bit of detail and provide your point of view and perspective on this character. Also consider what species of character this is, such as vampire, witch, daemon, or human. How does this choice affect your relationship to the base narrative?

Also consider the world he/she/it would inhabit. What role does this character serve in that space? What does that world/universe/city/game space look like? Think of the character as a persona, alternate perspective, or a mask if you like. Are they anything like you? Are they your darker doppelganger? Would they help Diana search for the manuscript or would they try to prevent her relationship with Matthew?

If the interface did not allow you to add an important feature to your character, make note of this as well. What would you have added if given the opportunity?

5-7 Minute Presentation with Visuals and Outline (50 points)
For this portion of the project, you will develop a 5-7 minute presentation discussing and introducing the class to your character. Please provide the following:

- An image/picture of your character.
- An outline for the instructor to follow.
- A little bit of back story about your character.
- A species classification.
- A mention if this character is heroic or villainous.
- A context for your character to exist and a name that it goes by.
- Any problems you ran into while developing/generating your ideas.

You can choose to use either PowerPoint or Prezi for this. Please have visuals and remember to cite them either on the slide/page they appear on or provide a reference list at the end of your presentation.

Self-Reflective Project Assessment Essay (20 points) 1-2 pages
At the end of the project, you are required to write a 1-2 page Reflective Self-Assessment Essay. Consider the following questions when generating your response:
1. What did I learn about interfaces by critiquing Heromachine? What changes would I make to the program?
2. How does my character relate to the concept of interface and communication?
3. In your opinion, does the character play well in the given story universe?
4. What is one thing that went well during the project?
5. Is there anything that I would change? If yes, explain what you would have done differently.

Due Dates:
11/12 Design Plan/ Prospectus Due.
11/14 Draft Software Assessment Due for Discussion.
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11/30 Final Software Assessment Due.
12/3-7 Presentations
12/10 Final Character Assessments Due.
12/12 Final Reflections

Figure 5.5—Assignment #3 Variation A—Discovering and Establishing Your Connection

The second variation (B) in Figure 5.6 relates heavily to the Chapter 4 textual

example of *Bones*. This version of the assignment still allows for the representation of

and engagement with the show. Students can develop a persona that allows them to

enrich their understanding of narrative and become more significantly enmeshed with

settings, characters, and time scale of the show. This engagement comes across when

students are asked to select characters that relate to the scientist, FBI, Outsider, or Villain

factions of the show. The students are asked to rhetorically question and kairotically read

the texts in order to see how their interaction with the show is influenced by their point of

view, participation, and understanding of the show and novels' content. The changes in

this version of the assignment attempt to address connections that students can form with

the various textual instantiations of this story. In order to engage with these characters,

students must consider how this narrative functions and how it is represented in

specifically the television series version.

Variation B---Assignment #3

Project: Building From The Bones (250 Points)
The project's focus is on the process of how to critique a software interface and develop a character
using said software. You will also critique your personal perspective concerning design choices you
make in developing your character. How is your character situated in the world or narrative universe of
Bones? Are you a "squint" (Jeffersonian scientist/forensic expert), FBI agent, outsider, or villain? Have
you decided to be a hero/heroine or a villain? Are they conflicted about the job they have to perform?
How does your choice of archetype change your perspective on the show?

When critiquing the Heromachine interface of your choice (please remember that you are allowed to
use/develop a character in Heromachine 1.1, 2.5, 3,and regular human. No Pinup, Warrior, or Zombie
version allowed), you will need to consider the following questions:

- What does the interface look/feel like? Give an example of what you have to do to make a
  choice/work with a specific element. Is it clunky?

- Does the interface disappear and allow you to accomplish what you want to do/create an
  enjoyable character? In what way?

- How steep is the learning curve of the interface? Do you need to spend a lot of time learning the software? Does it take a lot of time to get things done?

- Are you allowed to make many choices? Does the interface allow for full character development/creation in a manner that suits your ideas?

- What are the shortfalls/benefits of this interface? In your opinion, what could use more/further improvement? How would you make improvements?

The assignments are designed to fit with the overarching goals of the course-related critical thinking skills development under the evaluation and coherence of evidence. You will produce a design plan/prospectus, draft and final versions of an assessment of interface character creation software, draft and final versions of character development Analysis, and a reflective self-assessment. Another goal is to have fun with developing a character that you enjoy.

If you wish to compare two versions of Heromachine, and then discuss the positives and negatives of each. Please discuss this with me.

This Project is Made up of the Following Assignments and Their Point Break Down:

Design Plan and Prospectus (30 Points) 2-3 Pages
Please create a design plan that follows the hand out you were given during the beginning of the semester. Think about which version of Heromachine you would like to critique and possibly what type of character you would like to develop. Also, you will be developing work that is oral, written, and visual. Please remember to highlight those elements.

Also, don't forget to include a 5-7 sentence prospectus proposal that briefly describes what you think you will do in this project. This helps you to work through your ideas and is a way of textual storyboarding. Also consider what elements of *Bones* influence your character development and representational choices. Does your character always wear suits with bright socks? Are they trained in a martial art?

Assessment of Interface Character Creation Software (25 points draft; 50 points final) 2 pages
draft; 3-4 pages final.
For this portion of this cycle, you will choose a version of Heromachine and investigate the quality of character development that this interface provides. What does it allow you to do? Does it fit with the definitions of interface we considered in class? What role does it play? Also, consider the questions listed in the second paragraph of the hand out. The draft version should be 2 pages in length. The final should be polished in to 3-4 pages. Please use examples and discuss the interface as you use it.

Character Development Self-Assessment (25 points draft; 50 for final) 2 pages draft; 3-4 pages final
This assessment is for you to discuss the choices you made in generating your character. Names are very important. Please give your character one. Think about why you gave the character certain attributes. For example, does he have dark hair, pale skin, a collection of suits and Army Ranger experience? Or does she have an uncanny knowledge of death and the body and a trouble connecting to living people? Please remember to have fun with this aspect of design. You need to discuss this in a bit of detail and provide your point of view and perspective on this character. Their perspective on the situations shifts depending on how they align themselves with other major characters like Booth, Brennan, Angela, Cam…etc. How does this choice affect your relationship to the base narrative?

Also consider the world he/she/it would inhabit. What role does this character serve in that space? What does that world/universe/city/game space look like? Think of the character as a persona, alternate perspective, or a mask if you like. Are they anything like you? Are they your darker doppelganger? Would they help Diana search for the manuscript or would they try to prevent her relationship with Matthew?

If the interface did not allow you to add an important feature to your character, make note of this as well. What would you have added if given the opportunity?

5-7 Minute Presentation with Visuals and Outline (50 points)
For this portion of the project, you will develop a 5-7 minute presentation discussing and introducing the class to your character. Please provide the following:

- An image/picture of your character.
- An outline for the instructor to follow.
- A little bit of back story about your character.
- A species classification.
- A mention if this character is heroic or villainous.
- A context for your character to exist and a name that it goes by.
- Any problems you ran into while developing/generating your ideas.

You can choose to use either PowerPoint or Prezi for this. Please have visuals and remember to cite them either on the slide/page they appear on or provide a reference list at the end of your presentation.

Self-Reflective Project Assessment Essay (20 points) 1-2 pages
At the end of the project, you are required to write a 1-2 page Reflective Self-Assessment Essay. Consider the following questions when generating your response:

6. What did I learn about interfaces by critiquing Heromachine? What changes would I make to the program?
7. How does my character relate to the concept of interface and communication?
8. In your opinion, does the character play well in the given story universe?
9. What is one thing that went well during the project?
10. Is there anything that I would change? If yes, explain what you would have done differently.

Due Dates:
11/12 Design Plan/ Prospectus Due.
11/14 Draft Software Assessment Due for Discussion.
11/28 Draft Character Assessment Due.
11/30 Final Software Assessment Due.
12/3-7 Presentations
12/10 Final Character Assessments Due.
12/12 Final Reflections

Figure 5.6—Assignment #3 Variation B--- Building from the Bones

Assignment #4 or a Pedagogical Connection

One last pedagogical connection comes in the form of a book used to provide students with real world examples and practitioners usages of narrative knowledge in the formation of audience interaction through in story challenges. Phillips provides personal experiences, textual references, and extensive interviews with practitioners involved in transmedia and multimodal storytelling. The example is a helpful cutting to give to a class in photocopy via a course delivery system.

Assignment #4 is final pedagogical extension combines what the students have been learning with a base text of a practitioner's guide to story building. In her work, *A Creator's Guide to Transmedia Storytelling*, Andrea Phillips provides practical insight into the development of media franchises through discussions of planning, audience consideration, practitioner interviews, and historical considerations of storytelling and narrative practice. An example of the book's practitioner related contact comes from Phillips' interview with Dr. Christy Dena. She asks Dena, "How did you get into transmedia?" Dena responds by saying:

> The creative challenge this project posed, and the fact that I could bring together two loves (the illuminated book and digital technology) were catnip to me. I searched high and low for a poetics of this strangely attractive way of writing and found nothing. It was then I decided that this was what I wanted to do. (Dena as qtd. in Phillips 144-45)

This example shows not only critical thinking about this type of story development, but also shows the personal connection to the process and creation of stories that Dena shares. Personal engagement is significant because it shows the multilayered number of connections that are shared by readers with their texts, narratives, and other such examples.

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By incorporating a text such as this into composition pedagogy, an instructor is able to provide the designer's view of narrative creation and storytelling. The students need not read the whole book, but there are a few interesting places where designing a transmedia narrative and writing a composition line up and make connections. In chapter 15 "Challenging The Audience To Act", from her work *A Creator's Guide To Transmedia Storytelling*, Phillips provides deep connections to established practitioners and also rhetorically based strategies, although she does not call them that. Her words also offer further connections to the audience as well because discusses ways in which to allow for active participation of the audience members in working out parts of the storyline. For example, she provides the following questions for practitioners to ask themselves when creating a challenge. She asks:

- "What's the objective, and what's the reward?"

- "Are my challenges meant for a single player at a time, or are they collaborative?"

- "How hard is this challenge to solve or do?"

- "Is my challenge actually possible?"

- "How is the challenge relevant to the story?" (Phillips 139-40).

These questions are a perfect example of a practitioner demonstrating rhetorically and critically sound decisions pertaining to the generation of a text. The questions can work well with already established methods or questions from the writing course and help to push students to consider audiences and textual representations in a different or more non-traditional ways. Meta-level engagement can occur when the students are discussing

how to capture audiences and/or provide challenges for them to work with.

Challenging the audience to respond bears relevance to the conversation surrounding narratives by acknowledging the need for a connection to the reader that makes him or her want to engage. This need for engagement is quite relevant to the discussion of pedagogy and class framing due to the students' development of texts and academic contexts for writing and sharing information with diverse audiences. Again, by actively working with new technologies and familiar story structures, students, educators, and scholars are able to shift their contexts and positions on message development in order to make solid contributions to historical and modern canons. These contributions have the power to change the future of the way knowledge and messages are communicated across media and audiences. Practitioner experience that is communicated in such a personally reflexive way can be helpful for students to see and can aid in increased engagement. The conveying of this experience shows them where they are and where they can endeavor to go.

These extensions are significant to the conversations surrounding narratives because they allow for further considerations and instantiations of social behaviors, hierarchies, and engagements with material in more developed ways. More developed ways can be conversations between fans or participants, discussions of who gets to post what type of content, and critiques of content provided by the main story creators and the content developed by fans. Social norms can influence much in the way of relating to and working with a narratives underlying topics and meanings.   At what point a participant's comments matter to the wider fan base depends upon the norms negotiated by the users among themselves and with those controlling the media outlets. For

example, an FAQ section could denote the rules for participation in a blog, game, or fanfic writing scenario. This section outlines acceptable content and behavior. It can also be used as a base for fans to create their own rules and protocols. These rules can also govern how a practitioner reacts to working with others that have a vested interest in the outcome of the narrative. Reflexivity of practitioners is also governed by social norms and previously developed skills. Students' potential future responses to a multimodal and convergent text are influenced by their openness to seeing how audiences engage with textual elements.

The assignments and pedagogical considerations are one way to engage with the conversation about storytelling and narratives that runs throughout this dissertation. The assignments run the gamut from small in class activities to major or time-intensive documents. Through researching their connections to modern and historical narrative traditions, students are able to critique the narrative extensions and interfaces that they use. Critical practice is also able to address the real world and the dis of storytelling practice and audience consideration. Balancing producer needs and constraints with audiences' desires can be tricky. But, by acknowledging that there may be differences between audience and producer, potential gaps can be addressed and/or worked out in a way that is beneficial to both groups.

Epilogue

Wrapping it Up: Moving Forward and Pushing Boundaries

In order to move on from this conversation, I have reflected on the interconnected nature of narrative theory, convergence, and multimodality. These connections foster a discussion that has historical merit and also works with new genres and narratives that connect communities to one another. Diverse connections among texts, meanings, and readers are substantial contributions to social interaction within the process of narrative development and storytelling. Differences in opinions can and do arise. But, what must be valued in these connections and conversations is a person's right to engage in the manner he or she chooses. Engagements with a text can be impacted by lifestyle, type of narrative, or interest in content. This interest can also be socially motivated by the level of audience member participation or by any of a number of other factors. What matters here is that the audience wants to connect to the story, be it actively or passively.

At their core, narratives are based on a rich tradition that bespeaks the inherent nature of social connectivity and personal interaction. Audiences are meant to engage with the storyteller(s) and each other in order to make sense of what is being communicated. Messages can run the gamut from social conversations, news updates, and up and coming narrative extensions. Narratives allow for the use of established norms and traditional elements while meeting the new challenges associated with different audience expectations and technological skill levels. Readers can run the gamut from lower level practitioners (those only interested in reading canonical texts and potentially looking things up online) to mid-level audience members (those interested in

more than the canonical texts who value bridging or connecting via social media or perhaps blogging about a character) to high level users (those who are running fan sites, writing fiction extensions, making artwork about the characters, and going to conventions dressed as their favorite characters). The level of connectivity among multilayered texts and the various kinds of participants can be quite dynamic. Connectedness in this fashion allows for more world and relationship building. Building worlds can give readers or audience members with different relationships to content, spaces for growth and also places to learn more about the narratives and themselves. Readers with different skill sets and narrative interests can come together as a team in order to develop new textual pieces and experiences.

Differences in technological and content knowledge can foster further cooperation and development in social interactions. Many extensions can be developed to increase a reader's interest or engagement with a story. One fan can make a webpage and another can research the mythology of the show as a whole or of a specific character, while others, can write fan fiction involving their favorite characters. Relating the message or theme is a significant portion of the appeal. Who reads and narrates the story can be almost as significant as the main character's thoughts on specific situations, or location shifts within the narrative. There has to be a suspension of belief in order for the audience to connect with the narrative. If the audience can't go with it, the story will founder due to lack of attention or money making. There are many great scholars that do take up that mantle. Please see Chapter 3's discussion of economics in relation to Jenkins.

Working with groups to make sense of the content around them is at the heart of

this discussion. As types of narrative elements and audience engagement shift, theories can be used in order to develop skills that allow students to compete and connect with one another in the globalized workplace and lived experience spheres. Interaction with these terms in easily realized situations and classroom scenarios allows the students to build on previous knowledge and also develop schema that makes learning a life-long process. This process is a dynamic one that can benefit the students as they become practitioners engaged in new and varied domains. This place of condensation and coming together is important because we all need to process the messages we've just read, watched, played with, or listened to.

Educational Implications: A Call for Further Research and Testing

In order for narrative to thrive and engage with strong tradition, we need to do further research concerning student engagement with narrative mediated via technology, audience as a kairotically influenced social group, and practitioner engagement with narrative and knowledge transfer to the work place. My work suggests these research pathways through the consideration of narrative theory, convergence-linked storytelling, and multimodal narratives. The fields of New Media and Rhetoric and Composition can share in the bulk of future research through interdisciplinary analysis and conversations concerning narrative and it's applicability to computer-based and digital technology. Future pedagogical elements can also be influenced by this research, through the consideration of student as audience member and reflective practitioner. Creating open spaces for students to engage cognitively is a significant point because as an educator I

can provide places for students to develop skills that enhance their daily lives. Skill development can also aid students in future endeavors surrounding message creation and consumption.

Scholars can meet the call for research in the vein of convergent narrative by providing literacy requirements, teaching/pedagogical insights, and/ or instructional methods for assessing and developing these works in various educational settings. . This call is echoed in the work of Henry Jenkins et al. in, their influential MacArthur Foundation White Paper, "Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century." Within the piece, the authors provide twelve New Media Literacies that are associated with specific skills involving technology and the usage/application of knowledge. These skills include: play, performance, simulation, appropriation, multitasking, distributed cognition, collective intelligence, judgment, transmedia navigation, networking, and negotiation (Jenkins xiv). In a classroom setting, students can develop these skills through activities that take into account these needed behaviors in order to develop 21st Century literacies in order to compete in the world and the workplace. In establishing and naming these skills for further pedagogical work, the authors encourage and promote metacritical engagement on the part of teachers and their students. According to Jenkins:

> Educators must work together to ensure that all young Americans have access to the skills and experiences needed to become full participants, can are articulate their understanding of how media shapes perceptions, and are socialized into the margining ethical standards that should shape their practices as media makers and participants in online communities. (xiii)

These New Media Literacies serve to underpin the report and also provide a scaffold on which to build relevant pedagogies and methods. They also build upon a great deal of the

New Media and education work that has been previously discussed throughout the

dissertation. Teachers bear the brunt when it comes to engaging students via academic

and non-academic discourses because they are working with students in order to develop

those students' into citizens actively engaged in their world. This piece also provides a

more in depth discussion of how to incorporate literacy practices and new technologies.

It provides a strong background reading in the New Media and transmedia literacy

movement. Jenkins presents this discussion in far more detail that I can in a brief point in

an epilogue.

Another study, "The Media Literacy of Children and Young People" by

Buckingham considers the effect of New Media on social development among groups of

youngsters in the United Kingdom. The authors provide three specific terms and related

skill sets that are extensions of the conversation surrounding New Media and

participation. These terms include access, understand, and create (Buckingham 13 and

24). They further add to the skills previously prevented in relation to New Media

literacy. This extension again highlights the importance of developing students and

children that are critically aware and able to discuss various media in worthwhile terms.

According to Buckingham:

> children are bound to develop a degree of competence in handling the media as a
> result of three factors: their overall level of cognitive, emotional and social
> development; their experience of the world in general; and their specific
> experience of the media. (6)

Again, this serves as a strong background reading into early practices in New Media

assessment and skills based research. It straddles the line between the Jenkins et al.

piece's largely research and education driven viewpoint and further research into student

and program assessment. It provides more raw statistical information and potential ideas

to grow the research. The data and ideas also blend well with other tools for increased

usage of convergent and multimodal research.

Another set of tools or theories for this research come from assignment and

student assessment. Literat, in her article "Measuring New Media Literacies: Towards

the Development of a Comprehensive Assessment Tool," notes that there is great

potential for the application of Jenkins et al.'s New Media Literacies. According to the

article:

> Considering the novel skills that are required for a full participation in today's
> communication environment, the concept of media literacy becomes an
> increasingly valuable asset, and important prerequisite to both critical media
> consumption and responsible media production. (Literat 15)

Throughout the piece, Literat used Jenkins et al.'s 12 literacies in order to scale a survey

to discover how students do or do not meet goals for media literacy. The structure of the

article also provides a detailed example of the study conducted and also one potential

way of writing a questionnaire to garner information. This article is more in the

assessment side of education and pedagogical implications. But, it also has a few

limitations. These limitations include sample size of the study, media literacies

tested/discussed, and also reliability of the test being conducted. As a result, the authors

and I concur that more research needs to be done on New Media Literacies and

Multimodal Assessment.

Another article also relating to the challenges of New Media skill assessments

comes from the work of Gloria Jacobs. In her article, "Designing Assessments: A

Multiliteracies Approach," she notes that "it is not enough to provide opportunities for

youths to engage in multiliteracies; assessment of multiliteracies must also be meaningfully integrated into instruction" (Jacobs 623). The meaningful integration is a sticking point, because employing multimodality and convergence-linked narrative without thought or skills development, it is meaningless. Connections and intentional integrations must be made between relevant content and skills. This idea harkens back to the narrative theory and historical contexts provided earlier in the dissertation. There has to be an intent on the part of an instructor to work with New Media literacies and bridge the gap in knowledge between students and other historical narrative forms.

By fostering skills and developing students who can use technology and also produce media, educators build upon several fields' desire to create critically aware and media savvy students. "Although coming from different disciplinary traditions, the literature generally agrees that tools are needed for assessing multiliteracies and youths' understanding and creation of multimodal texts" (Jacobs 623). This article uses literacy frameworks from multiliteracies and Rhetoric and Composition theorists. It does a good job of graphically representing how the theories and concepts would add to assessment. But, more is needed on how to actually conduct, test, or utilize these pieces for assessment. It is an article of education condensation that adds to the conversation about assessment, but significantly more needs to be done.

Lastly, Colin Charlton notes that "(w)e need to own the complexity of multimodal compositions without risking assessment and pedagogical lock-in" (29). This tension or need for balanced assessment of ever changing composition styles and technologies comes through in his article, "The Weight of Curious Space: Rhetorical Events, Hackerspace, and Emergent Multimodal Assessment." This article provides class

situated examples that allow for specific types of assessment of multimodal and potentially convergent works. The author discusses and foregrounds his own classroom in order to explain how assignment assessment is conducted. According to Charlton:

> Two examples of multimodal peer assessment can help me show the tension I'm taking about between control and potential. I'll call the first one *Insert Comment*. In this example, one student creates or uploads a document so that one or more peers can comment on it and change it in variety of ways….I'll call the second example *Table Talk*. Here, I ask students to compose a text on their whiteboard desktop, and they have a certain window of time at the beginning of class to surf tables, leave comments, and make at least one connection between table ideas. (31)

Again, these examples provide one way of performing an assessment in courses with multimodal and convergent texts. It is not an endorsement of these as best or worst practices, but offer the narrative of a teacher with an established career and track record in composition and multimodal text production. This research is still ongoing and is also slightly impeded by the desire to not create a dominant model of assessment. Charleton's tone and style bespeak his desire to leave assessment dynamic and varied depending on the students' and also the texts that they produce.

The work being conducted in New Media education and assessment is very thought-provoking and also indicative of a field with continued room for growth and development. Taken together in the larger picture, these articles help to frame the processes established within this dissertation and also show where growth is taking place. It is not a stagnant enterprise, but a dynamic process that is still and continuously undergoing change. Assessment is a topic that all colleges think about and departments work through. It will continue to be a needful and relevant part of the practice of pedagogy, no matter what type of texts are read or produced.

Potential Pitfalls: The Problems of Close Consideration

A few potential problems surrounding this dissertation project include the specific popular culture media that have been used as examples and the nature of multimodal composition practices and technology. In being an admitted and avid fan of *ADOW* and *Bones,* I am inherently aware that my love of certain characters can color the examples I present throughout the piece. In sharing these pieces and narrative series, I am presenting specific narrative universes that have their own laundry list of characters and also their rabid fan bases. I present certain main characters and those that I have a strong connection with. There are many potential paths to take through these pieces, mine best served my study and also my participatory bend. Time will tell how fans and developers shape these stories and their ability to be transmediated, shared, and enjoyed.

Because many of the examples are based on popular media and story franchises, I endeavored to balance the popular themed texts with traditional and established theories from narrative, structuralism, New Media, and Rhetoric and Composition among others. These pitfalls are not full make it or break it moments, but that is the nature of speaking about pieces and topics that one cares about. In using narrative theory, convergence, and multimodality as guiding points in my research, I established a solid trajectory that gave the backing of many fields that are all interested in the production of stories. I also wanted to further connections to historical theories and also broaden those theories with new paths and technologies.

My intent was also limited in the way I discussed the financial implications of convergent and multimodal franchises. These constraints are better and more fully

discussed by the scholars mentioned in chapter 3 and also are continued sticking points in the debate about the pervasiveness of media franchise development. Because I chose to focus more closely on narrative theory and terminology, other topics that are of interest and relevance to the discussion fell out. There are many openings for research into and classroom usage of convergence and multimodality. They are two areas that can come together in fruitful ways that aid our students in critical skill development.

As with any research that takes a great deal of time, I am always tweaking and also lamenting over what to say and what to hold back for now. In taking the position as a fan and a scholar, I hope to offer a new and historically relevant path to message and narrative construction. Also, pedagogical development has been of keen interest to me, because teaching is the thing I love to do. This is evidenced in the assignments created for chapter 5. By incorporating "new-fangled" technologies and media skill development I am contributing to a conversation that is dynamic and continually in flow.   This is not the end of research, but the beginning of a career, that I hope will last a lifetime.

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