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Intra-action Among Young Adult Literature, Fans, and Fanfiction

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Intra-action Among Young Adult Literature, Fans, and Fanfiction

A Dissertation Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Michelle Brooke Bianchi-Pennington

May 2019

Dedication

To all the teachers in my life who made and held space for me. This belongs to you.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Despite a growing body of research in New Literacies, the balance between providing strong New Literacies instruction while maintaining required traditional literacies instruction has been difficult for teachers. Incorporating ever-changing technologies can feel superficial, emphasizing a technology tool rather than the "ethos" of New Literacies. Despite efforts to increase the use of technology in the classroom, students still feel a disconnect between in-school and out-of-school literacies as in-school literacies, even with technology, do not capture the ethos of out-of-school experiences.

To bridge this gap, this study takes a New Materialist approach to studying fanfiction, a phenomenon that incorporates both new and traditional literacies. This lens provides a way of accounting for multiple factors that create the ethos of a New Literacies experience, allowing for more effective transfer into the classroom. Using interviews with fanfiction writers as well as analyzing their fanfiction, I describe the intra-action among the fanfiction space, the source book (*Throne of Glass*), and the adolescent writer.

Findings include the ways in which adolescents intra-act with fanfiction because of unique access, educational opportunities, self-expression, immersion in the story, social interaction, and pleasure. Findings also include the ways in which the *Throne of Glass* series intra-acted with the adolescents including personal connections with characters, the author, and other fans as well as engagement with elements of the story. Finally, findings showed that the *Throne of Glass* series intra-acted with the fanfiction space through multiple characters, a large fandom, a genre that includes a vast, ongoing, and intriguing world, an intricate and dramatic plot, and specific style.

Discussion includes the ways in which the findings exemplified elements of both traditional and New Literacies as well as the ways in which these findings can be used to more effectively plan for New Literacies activities in the classroom. Findings suggest that teachers may wish to create literacy activities with multiple entry points including selecting texts with multiple, diverse characters that are part of contemporary cultural conversations or fandoms, incorporating choice in texts and product formats, and making assignments collaborative including instruction on how to engage a fanfiction audience.

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Chapter One: Introduction

In December of 2017 I was in the library of the high school where I teach English with one of my classes. We were working on podcasts illustrating students' various perspectives on a choice novel. I was attempting to build a digital-literacies infused opportunity for my students. They engaged in reading a traditional novel, but they collaborated on a media project (the podcast) that would be shared to an authentic audience, made available to the public on iTunes. While they were working, several students had a CNN livestream on their phones, waiting to hear how the FCC would vote regarding net neutrality. When the vote was cast repealing internet protections, my students and I commiserated. However, after a trying year, I had little in the way of hope or comfort to give them. I had recently "unplugged" myself from the constant stream of anxiety known as my newsfeed, my ability to rebound from story after story, comment after comment of bad news having worn down. My students, however, were more resilient and began searching through Tumblr (circumventing the school's block on that site) to find gifs and memes expressing their thoughts on the issue among other political viewpoints. They made me laugh, despite the depth of all of our despair at that moment, with their wit and understanding of both complex political issues and the intricate language of Tumblr culture. And despite the podcast task I had laid out for them, my students more readily engaged with another complex text, a government meeting, and communicated about it in forms other than that I had planned for them.

I have experienced many moments like this throughout my teaching career, and it is these moments I return to when I hear colleagues and popular media critics complain about the short attention spans, lack of communication skills, and general "dumbing down" of the next generation because of technology (Bauerlein, 2008; Carr, 2014). It is true my students exhibited

some of these habits my colleagues and other critics allude to. They were distracted, engaging in some ineffective multitasking, and communicating in images and slang rather than fully-formed sentences. However, these same students were among my most high-achieving, capable of crafting college-level essays at the age of fifteen.

Beyond that, what they were doing here required more than an advanced academic understanding of government and the history of the internet. Their ways of communicating their emotions about this with me required an ability to play with those thoughts by translating them into completely different media, relying on a shared cultural understanding that was not bound in a physical region, but rather cyberspace. My students were doing more than just using a platform, or, as some colleagues might say, being used by it.

While my students will engage in activities I give them, I am always interested in the complex literacy practices they choose for themselves. My interests in the ways my students communicate online – how that fuels their academic performance, and how educators, including myself, have failed to tap into these literacy practices – have fueled my research interests.

The Writing Process

Throughout this research process, like my students, I found the medium laid out before me insufficient to communicate my thoughts. My students needed to express their ideas about net neutrality through remixed images and text, finding that traditional modes of communication did not do justice to the scattered connections they made between their emotions and their culture. I, too, found communicating my ideas about this research difficult in the limited, linear format of a traditional dissertation. In reading several dissertations as models, this format simply did not have the functionality that I needed to express the intricate map of connections in my mind. My thoughts held dozens of ideas about this project at the same time, and deciding which

element to describe first or how to describe one element without fully describing another was impossible for me to decipher.

A route to a fully-formed dissertation took root in my mind when I discovered what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) call a rhizome - a whole, not segmented or linear, but with "lines of flight" that could be read in any order following any winding path through the ideas. This format led me to the idea of a website with hyperlinks allowing for not a single, linear reading, but rather allowing for an infinite number of readings in which one could delve into various topics at exactly the moment it was needed, offered a more organic way to connect the ideas of this research. As discussed in the following chapters, both the theoretical framework for this study (New Materialism) as well as the topic (New Literacies) call for new ways to approach information that resist linearity and formal structure in order to produce a more accurate, authentic, and complex portrait of communicated ideas. For this reason, the website version of this dissertation (found at goo.gl/6vsSbk) is a more accurate representation of the ideas of this study.

Once I created the website, creating a traditional dissertation became easier in that I could think of it as representing one possible route through the information rather than a definitive one. In reading this one route, know that each concept in this study is artificially isolated by the format of a sectioned dissertation and may not fully come together until an entire chapter or more is digested. The format of a linear paper outlines ideas as what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) called a tracing, following one line until it comes together as a whole, rather than a map, depicting the entirety of the concept with room for filling in more detail. All of the ideas are so interconnected that beginning with one will necessarily leave gaps in understanding until another

is also explained. Once all the ideas come together as a whole, a more accurate representation will be created.

New Literacies

At the center of both my need for a non-linear medium and my students' need for alternate expression is New Literacies. The term new literacies has been used to refer to many practices. Leu, Kinzer, Corio, Castek, and Henry (2013) proposed a dual-level model of New Literacies research, stating that New Literacies (majuscule) refers to the theory as a whole while individuals may research several different new literacies (miniscule) that contribute to our understanding of New Literacies. For this study, I will use their distinction. Several researchers have proposed different major characteristics that define New Literacies. Outlined below, New Literacies:

- involve new and changing technologies

- are unbounded and valued for wide dispersion

- are dynamic and deictic

- are multimodal

- involve new, complex interactions with text

- are collaborative and participatory

- are specialized, personalized, and authentic

New Literacies involves new and changing technologies (Draper & Wimmer, 2015; Leu et al., 2013). While we know that New Literacies are not solely about the "technical stuff" and more about the "ethos stuff" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006), it is certain that the ethos of New Literacies has come about both alongside and because of new technologies (Knobel & Lankshear, 2014; Leu et al., 2015; Sang & Park, 2017). Whether in the form of internet fora,

websites, social media, apps, podcasts, or new graphics tools, technology has both transformed the way people communicate and adapted to the ways in which people demand new communication. This has changed the way we create and interpret meaning in dramatic ways, eliciting New Literacies studies.

New Literacies are unbounded and valued for wide dispersion (Coiro & Moore, 2012; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; Simsek & Simsek, 2013). Instead of being confined in space with a physical form, in number with limited copies, or in time with no more updates after printing, New Literacies can be accessed nearly anywhere, anytime, by any number of people. This is not just a change in convenience but a change in ways of thinking about value. With printed books, information was valued for scarcity. Experts are valued because they are a small, elite group. With the internet, familiarity is more valued. The more people who see a piece of information or a product, the more valuable it is. Lankshear and Knobel (2006) summarized this by saying, in New Literacies, the value is placed on dispersion rather than scarcity.

New Literacies are dynamic and deictic, constantly changing depending on context (Coiro & Moore, 2012; Draper & Wimmer, 2015; Leu et al., 2013). As the dual-level theory of New Literacies (Leu et al., 2013) suggests, the various new literacies change rapidly, and new forms of communication are being invented every day. Different contexts for communication arise, and shifting from one context to another can shift meanings. While traditional literacies could be reliably consistent from year to year, digital texts may shift from day to day, whether it be an updated blog, edited Facebook status, or a deleted Tweet. No single text in a New Literacies context necessarily remains static.

New Literacies are multimodal (Karchmer-Klein & Shinas, 2012; Leu et al., 2013; Simsek & Simsek, 2013). As Karchmer-Klein and Shinas (2012) explain, as opposed to sending

text off to be published, now, "we control image placement, sound, color, and font, directly affecting our readers' comprehension" (p. 290). All of these factors contribute to meaning within New Literacies, not just print. Additionally, New Literacies require "transmedia navigation," what Simsek and Simsek (2013) defined as "the ability to follow the flow of stories and information across multiple modalities" (p.130). New Literacies require not only reading more than just text, but also synthesizing across different media.

New Literacies involves new, complex interactions with text (Coiro & Moore, 2012; New London Group, 1996; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; Simsek & Simsek, 2013). Because new technologies offer multimodal, unbounded, and dynamic content, readers have to create their own way of absorbing information. This may involve curating the right content in a vast amount of information (Simsek & Simsek, 2013) or "designing" a route through information (New London Group, 1996). The New London Group (1996) called reading a designing, productive activity, saying, "listening and reading is itself a production (a Designing) of texts (though texts-for-themselves, not texts-for-others) based on their own interests and life experiences. And their listening and reading in turn transforms the resources they have received in the form of Available Designs into The Redesigned" (p.76). This shows reading as an active, creative experience, especially in the world of New Literacies. The complexities of New Literacies means there are multiple approaches to each text or set of texts, requiring an individualized, active choice in approaches rather than one, linear method.

New Literacies are collaborative and participatory (Coiro & Moore, 2012; Kellinger, 2012; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; Leu et al., 2013; Sang & Park, 2017; Simsek & Simsek, 2013). New technology "makes possible global discourse communities," and "authentic audiences co-construct texts by dialoguing with original authors, expand texts by dialoguing with

other consumers, and co-construct texts by collaborating with others" (Kellinger, 2012,p.526).

New Literacies are always connected in a way that allows readers to interact with creators and

each other and allows writers immediate access to collaboration in producing texts or eliciting

audience feedback.

New Literacies are specialized, personalized, and authentic (Knobel & Lankshear, 2014;

Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; Sang & Park, 2017; Simsek & Simsek, 2013). Lankshear and

Knobel (2006) describe how New Literacies involve "efficacious learning… doing something

that genuinely puts the learner on the right track toward becoming a competent participant in 'the

real thing'" (p.196). Because of the vast number of sources and topics available in the new

media landscape and because of the participatory nature of New Literacies, individuals can find

communities that matter to them and learn through practice and work with experts. Simsek and

Simsek (2013) outline several of these qualities of New Literacies:

> Play: The capacity to experiment with one's surroundings as a form of problem-solving;
>
> Performance: The ability to adopt alternative identities for the purpose of improvisation
>
> and discovery; Simulation: The ability to interpret and construct dynamic models of real-
>
> world processes; … Collective intelligence: The ability to pool knowledge and compare
>
> notes with others toward a common goal; … Negotiation: The ability to travel across
>
> diverse communities, discerning and respecting multiple perspectives, and grasping and
>
> following alternative norms. (p.129)

These characteristics of New Literacies demonstrate how these spaces allow for "cognitive

apprenticeship" forming learning communities collaboratively engaged in literacy (Lave &

Wenger, 1991).

While research in individual new literacies continues to expand, the definition of New Literacies solidifies in key qualities but also leaves room for shifts in literacy practices. The key qualities of New Literacies listed above display a synthesis of current research and a mix of what prominent researchers define as New Literacies.

Statement of the Problem

New Literacies are an integral part of civic participation in modern society (Draper & Wimmer, 2015; New London Group, 1996). The New London Group (1996) spoke to how cultural changes created a shift in literacy practices saying, "whereas the old Fordist organization depended upon clear, precise, and formal systems of command, such as written memos and the supervisor's orders, effective teamwork depends to a much greater extent on informal, oral, and interpersonal discourse. This informality also translated into hybrid and interpersonally sensitive informal written forms, such as electronic mail" (p.66). In this way, New Literacies encompasses more than just communication mediated by technology. Rather, New Literacies is a new "ethos" of communication (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). Understanding this type of communication is central to navigating the modern world. This is evidenced by many teachers' organizations, including the National Council of Teachers of English's ELATE Commission (2018) releasing statements on navigating New Literacies. The ELATE Commission articulated beliefs about integrating technology into the English classroom including outlining not only how teachers can accomplish technology integration but also beliefs about its importance:

There are multiple ways people communicate in a variety of social contexts. What's more, the way people communicate increasingly necessitates networked, technological mediation. To that end, relying exclusively on traditional definitions of literacy

> unnecessarily limits the ways students can communicate and the ways educators can
>
> imagine curriculum and pedagogy. (n.p.)

In this way and through these sources we see the importance of fully understanding New Literacies and ensuring the same level of understanding for adolescents.

While adolescents engage in these types of literacy practices at home, research shows they need more. For some students, school is the main point of access to technology and the new types of communication it affords as access at home is limited (Rueda, 2013). Beyond this, even students with access can benefit from direct instruction, as home use of technology such as for social purposes "are not those that might further academic goals or serve to reduce academic inequities" (Rueda, 2013, p.1255). Beyond this, even school access to technology can fail to take into account New Literacies. The ELATE Commission (2018) recognized this in their position statement "Beliefs for Integrating Technology into the English Language Arts Classroom":

> Some technologies that enable systems like "credit recovery courses" and remedial
>
> literacy software — which are frequently used more heavily in "struggling" schools that
>
> serve students who are poor and/or of color — can often reduce pedagogy to the mere
>
> coverage of shallow content and completion of basic assessments, rather than providing
>
> robust innovation for students to creatively represent their learning. (n.p.)

Rueda (2013) notes a similar inequity, stating how the rich New Literacies experiences that could be beneficial for students are less often offered to underachieving students (p.1256). As a way to assist teachers in instructing in New Literacies in authentic ways, the New London Group (1996) calls for a "metalanguage" that should be used to instruct in the process of acquiring the structure of different types of literacies so that students can learn to navigate any literacy

situation (p.77). This can help students be successful when engaging the multiple literacies they encounter at home, in the world, and even traditional literacies still needed for school. Decades later, this type of multiliteracies approach is still called for in the ELATE Commission's (2018) position paper:

English and literacy researchers should:

- study literacies as more than general reading and writing abilities and move toward an understanding of teaching and learning within expanded frames of literacies and literacy practices (e.g., new literacies, multiliteracies, and socially situated literacies).

- question how technologies shape and mediate literacy practices in different scenes and spaces for activating user agency and making change. This portion of the position paper recognizes the ineffective use of technology that often occurs I classrooms, masking the failure to promote and educate adolescents in New Literacies. (n.p.)

For years, educators and researchers have called for incorporating a broad understanding of New Literacies into literacy education.

Despite these calls, evidence suggests that schools are not incorporating new literacies into the classroom. Many researchers remark on the stark contrast between students' at-home literacy practices and school literacy practices (Black, 2007; Black, 2008; Black, 2009c; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lammers & Marsh, 2015; Thomas, 2006). Bialostok (2014) stated that "American classrooms remain book-centric. Multiple literacies represent a fundamental paradigm shift in the ways we understand and enact literacy and learning, but most teachers continue to respond to literacy instruction in ways that inadequately address the complexities of twenty-first century literacy needs" (p.501). Research shows that teachers are either unknowledgeable about technology (Kalonde & Mousa, 2016), feel constrained by top-down

mandates (Kalonde & Mousa, 2016), or only use technology to disseminate information rather than have students create with it (Rueda, 2013).

Beyond this, teacher positionality and attitudes may be a factor in teachers' willingness to engage in new literacy practices (Lubke, 2013). In fact, many teachers may see technology as harmful to student literacy. In the wake of technology use such as texting, teachers and other adults often report negative literacy expectations of students (Carringtone, 2005; Wray, 2015). Research shows that valuing student literacy practices can lead to better educational outcomes (Hull & Rose, 1990; Lee, 2001). However, technology use has created deficit-model views for many teachers, making it unlikely for them to incorporate technology-based communication in their classrooms, and the dichotomy between home and school literacies make many students feel that the two are unconnected and one or the other is irrelevant (Black, 2007; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Thomas, 2006).

Teachers need a bridge between traditional and New Literacies and insight into student literacy practices in order to value them and bring them into the classroom space. Many attempts at connecting with "digital natives" (Prensky, 2001) are as misguided as term itself (Kirschner & De Bruyckere, 2017), falling short by making use of the technology tools but not the "ethos" of New Literacy practices that are truly essential (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). To do this right, teachers need to know more than just what tools students are using online. They need to understand the complex ways adolescents intra-act (Barad, 2003) with certain tools, platforms, media, and each other as well as what fuels this engagement. While research into student literacies may have focused on adolescent motivation (Beach & Ward, 2013; Cantrell et al., 2017; Maldonado, 2012; Scheffel, 2016), digital tools and spaces (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006), or, to a lesser extent, the types of texts with which students engage (Adams & Bushman, 2006;

Ivey & Johnston, 2013; Wilhelm & Smith, 2014), the complexities of interactions among these and other elements must be understood in order to be of use in the classroom.

Study Purpose and Key Concepts

The purpose of this study is to deepen the understanding of adolescent, at-home, new and digital literacy practices in order to help bridge the gap between 21st-century, New Literacies needs and the 21st-century classroom. In order to accomplish this, I focus in on one new literacy practice that shows promise as a bridge between traditional and New Literacies, online fanfiction (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). However, instead of taking an essentialist stance in analyzing what about fanfiction practices are instructionally valuable or engaging and encouraging teachers to transplant these features into their classroom out of context, I instead take a New Materialist approach, focusing on three main aspects of online fanfiction – 1) the original text, 2) the adolescent reader/writer, and 3) the online fanfiction platform – and how these elements both interact with each other and change each other to create a new whole, the unique literacy practice of the online fanfiction community. In the following sections, I unpack some of the prominent elements of the study.

Fanfiction. Fanfiction, also spelled fan fiction, refers to amateur creative works based on existing media. Fanfiction authors use established characters, plots, and fictitious worlds to create their own stories or extend existing stories (Derecho, 2006). Often based on books, movies, or television shows, fanfiction can also stem from video games, music, YouTube channels, or any other type of public entertainment. While fanfiction has been around long before the internet, spread through fanzines, the world-wide web has allowed for the creation of large online fanfiction communities (Jenkins, 1992). Some of the largest fanfiction sites such as Fanfiction.net, Wattpad, and Archive of Our Own contain millions of stories, authors, and

readers publishing, reading, and reviewing these works. Demographic information on authors is difficult to gather as many of these sites do not open their records to research nor do authors always leave identifying information. However, fan-generated research indicates that while fanfiction is composed by people of all ages, a majority of authors are teens (Sendlor, 2011).

Fanfiction is one new literacy practice primed for bridging the gap between traditional and New Literacies. Researchers use the world of online fanfiction communities as a prime example of many of the qualities of New Literacies (Knobel & Lankshear, 2014; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006), and many fanfiction studies draw on New Literacies for a framework for their research (e.g., Black, 2005; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lammers, 2016; Lammers & Marsh, 2015). Online fanfiction communities are a single new literacy that exhibits many of the overall qualities of New Literacies while still engaging in the traditional books, stories, and texted-based writing valued in the traditional classroom.

Obviously, online fanfiction communities require new technologies in order for readers and writers to access and interact in an unbounded, ever-updating world of stories. Additionally, fanfiction spaces are multimodal and require new designs for reading and creating (Black, 2006, 2007; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Roozen, 2009; Thomas, 2006). Fanfiction allows for multimodal and remixed literacy practices, exemplifying these key elements of New Literacies.

Also, online fanfiction communities are social, participatory, and spaces of "efficacious learning" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). In this space, authors do not solely write what they know, but rather the community becomes a teaching space where feedback, models, and explicit instruction help individuals develop their skills (Korobkova & Black, 2014).

Beyond these New Literacies practices evident in online fanfiction spaces, many traditional literacy practices take place there as well. Lankshear and Knobel (2006) outlined how

fanfiction communities exemplify traditional skills such as proofreading, literary criticism, and narrative writing. Fanfiction readers and writers often seek out or write stories based on traditional print novels and engage in traditional narrative writing and reviewing practices. The ways in which adolescents often engage with traditional print books and write traditional prose while participating in online communities of review and interaction with authentic audiences make this activity a fertile ground for literacy and literature teachers.

New materialism. While studies of the literacy practices of participants in online fanfiction communities have been done, researchers are left with questions on the ability to bring these types of out-of-school literacies into the classroom. Students, teachers, and researchers express doubts about the ability to bridge out-of-school and in-school literacy practices as decontextualizing these practices could be appropriative or remove some of the context that creates the authentic and social elements of New Literacies (Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lubke, 2013; McWilliams, Hickey, Hines, Conner, & Bishop, 2011; Thomas, 2006). For example, asking students to use Instagram, a photo sharing social media site, to document a research process may antagonize students rather than interest them, making it seem like the teacher is trying to invade their world rather than incorporate their interests. Additionally, if documenting this process is not something typical to Instagram, the interaction from others on the site may dwindle, removing some of the elements that make Instagram an example of New Literacies. It seems that what we learn about the rich literacy practices of online fanfiction or other New Literacies cannot be easily decontextualized and used in new spaces, and a call for more research in this area is clear. The ELATE Commission (2018) from NCTE clarifies this call:

English and literacy researchers should:

- consider how existing paradigms such as New Literacy Studies, New Literacies, and the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies can help to understand how students themselves experience technology, as well as how to use technology to enhance student learning.

- develop research agendas that examine best practices in K-12 classrooms where teachers leverage the power of literacies and technologies to help foster student voice and activism. (n.p.)

With this call, a new materialist lens may lend fresh insight into "how students themselves experience technology" and how "teachers leverage the power of literacies and technologies" (ELATE Commission on Digital Literacy in Teacher Education, 2018, n.p.). In fact, New Literacies and New Materialism share many connections. Just as New Literacies are dynamic and deictic, in New Materialism each material under study cannot be studied in isolation because each material constantly changes when coming into contact with other materials. This is called intra-action (Barad, 2003). While a New Literacies text evolves and depends on context, the subject of a New Materialism study is ever evolving with its context. Just as New Literacies are multimodal, in New Materialism any and, as much as possible, every type of material should be included in a study, including sounds, smells, physical objects, and humans. Each material changes and is changed by the others and cannot be separated from the whole. Just as New Literacies involves ways of reading and interacting with texts by designing new, non-linear routes through them, New Materialism involves new, non-linear ways of approaching research that view the research subject as a rhizome that can be approached and followed in any direction, through any "line of flight" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). While New Literacies texts involve a collaboration among multiple people to create the text, New

Materialism's involves multiple materials "entangle" to create a "newness" in a similar way. Materials "congeal" or participate to create a collaborative new phenomenon or "newness." Table 1 condenses these similarities between New Literacies and New Materialism.

Overall, New Materialism works toward making no distinction between subject and context. No subject has essential, fixed qualities, but rather "people, animals, objects, nature, discourses and so on proceed together in relation to and with one another" (Smythe et al., 2017, p.20). In this way, nothing can be studied without attention to all contextual factors that contribute to its being. Because New Literacies are so dependent on context (Leu et al., 2013), a New Materialist framework that seeks to study the way the subject is created through the contextual factors with which it intra-acts is best suited to form a clear picture of the literacy practice. This assists in the goal of ensuring that New Literacies practices are not decontextualized to insert into the classroom, but rather that the most authentic versions of the practice can be taught.

For fanfiction in particular, a New Materialist lens directs that we cannot study online fanfiction, discover its essential nature, and recreate it. Rather, online fanfiction is always becoming, as are its participants and source material. Through a New Materialist lens, analyzing the intra-actions among participant, fanfiction, and source material gives a more contextualized understanding of the literacy practice to create a more accurate picture and, therefore, a better chance of incorporating it into the classroom in an authentic way, not robbing it of the contextual elements that make-up the New Literacies practice.

Table 1. Connections between New Literacies and New Materialism Characteristics

New Literacies Characteristic	New Materialism Characteristic
Dynamic and Deictic	Intra-active
Multimodal	Multiple Materials
New, Complex Interactions with Text	Rhizomatic with "Lines of Flight"
Collaborative and Participatory	Entangling to Create a Newness

Research Question and Study Context

Forging an understanding of a literacy practice that blends traditional and New Literacies through a New Materialist lens will help form a clearer picture of the practice in context. Understanding the complexities of intra-actions that become the literacy practice will help educators make use of this practice with more fidelity, not merely transplant a decontextualized practice into their classroom expecting similar results. With this frame comes the central research question of the study: how do adolescent, print book, and online fanfiction space entangle to create the newness of a hybrid traditional-New Literacies practice?

In this study I examine the intra-actions among fanfiction writers/readers, a fanfiction space, and a young-adult source text through interviewing fanfiction writers about their experiences with fanfiction and the particular series they write about as well as examining their fanfiction about the series. The fanfiction space is the subsection of the site fanfiction.net devoted to stories, communities, and forums on the *Throne of Glass* series, chosen for its high number of fanfiction pieces. This series is an ongoing young adult fantasy series featuring a female protagonist, and has the highest number of fanfiction pieces written about it of any young-adult text that does not also have a graphic novel or film version. This study examines how this particular series connects with these adolescents in ways that entangle to create the literacy experience of reading and writing fanfiction about young-adult literature. More on each of these materials and contexts can be found in chapter three.

Definition of Terms

- *Assemblage* (Barad, 2003) – a group of materials that intra-act.
- *Becoming* (Barad, 2003) – New Materialist researchers use this term to describe how all materials are always in the process of change through intra-action with

other materials. Rather than "being" a material, materials are always becoming what they are, always in flux.

- *Congeal* (Barad, 2003) – New Materialist researchers use this term to describe how materials come together to create a new phenomenon.

- *Entanglement* (Barad, 2003)– A group of materials intra-acting.

- *Fanfiction* – amateur creative works based on existing media.

- *Intra-action* (Barad, 2003) – the ways in which different materials work together and change each other to become something new individually and together.

- *Line of flight* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) – offshoot of a rhizome, the topic under study, representing how concepts and materials are connected and intra-act. It is a path of connection in which materials intra-act with each other.

- *Materials* (Barad, 2003)– any substantial item. This can be an object, text, or human.

- *New Literacies* (Leu et al., 2013)– literacies that involve new and changing technologies, are unbounded and valued for wide dispersion, are dynamic and deictic, are multimodal, involve new, complex interactions with text, are collaborative and participatory, are specialized, personalized, and authentic.

- *New Materialism* (Smythe et al., 2017) – an ontology emphasizing intra-actions of materials and de-centering the human in research studies.

- *Newness* (Barad, 2003) -the new phenomenon that is created when a group of materials intra-act.

- *Traditional Literacy* – isolated reading and writing of print materials.

- *Young Adult Literature* – literature marketed towards and often featuring adolescents.

Fanfiction terms.

- *Alternate Universe (AU)* – A fanfiction story using characters from an original work of fiction but is set in a different world than that of the original fiction. This can sometimes be a different time period, a different place, or the world of another fictional creation.

- *Beta reader* – a volunteer who reads a work of fanfiction and provides feedback before it is published to a fanfiction site.

- *Cannon* – elements that are true to a piece of original fiction rather than created in fanfiction.

- *Fandom* – the collection of fans of a particular piece of original fiction.

- *Flames* – users of websites, in this case, fanfiction websites, that intentionally cry to anger other users with criticism.

- *One-shot* – a short piece of fanfiction that is only one chapter.

- *Original Character (OC)* – a character in a fanfiction piece that is the creation of the fanfiction writer, not a character from the original fiction from which the fanfiction is created. This character usually interacts with the characters from the original fiction.

- *Original Fiction*- The fictitious work about which fanfiction writers create stories. This is a work in which the world and characters are the author's own, not borrowed from another piece of art. Fanfiction writers may also write original

fiction that are set in their own worlds with their own characters rather than others' worlds or characters.

- *Shipping* – the act of desiring to see a relationship between two characters.

- *Pairing*- a couple in a romantic relationship, either realized in the original fiction or created in fanfiction. Fanfiction readers will often seek out fanfiction about a particular pairing of characters about which they want to read.

- *Songfic* – a fanfiction that incorporates or follows the storyline of a song while using the characters and/or world of another original work of fiction.

- *Tumblr* – a social media site where users can post or reblog others' posts. This site is heavily used by fans as there are several user profiles devoted to being fanblogs with art, fiction, and news about a piece of original fiction.

Positionality

My positionality in relation to this research comes with unique privileges, insights, and biases. I have specific positions and relationships with each of the three materials involved in this study.

Adolescents. Being a high school English teacher allows me unique connection and access to young adults. I entered into this profession partially because of a desire to work with an age group in which I find so much inspiration and promise. My daily interactions with adolescents allow me to be a constant witness to their diversity and complexity, and I often chafe at the negative stereotypes of adolescents in the larger culture and even within my own school.

This defense of adolescents perhaps comes because I additionally relate to the adolescents in this research in age. While my participants are technically part of a new generation, adolescents are often still referred to as Millennials, my own generation. Some of the

same stereotypes applied to adolescents (e.g., over-use of technology, coddled, etc.) are applied

to my age group as well. For example, Prensky (2001) used the term "digital native" to describe

those, like me, who have spent their entire lives surrounded with technology like computers.

Prensky (2001) like many in the education field at the time and still today, claimed that "today's

students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors" (n.p.).

Prensky (2001) outlines a number of stereotypes about digital natives:

> Digital Natives are used to receiving information really fast. They like to parallel process
>
> and multi-task. They prefer their graphics before their text rather than the opposite. They
>
> prefer random access (like hypertext). They function best when networked. They thrive
>
> on instant gratification and frequent rewards. They prefer games to "serious" work. (n.p.)

Prensky (2001), referring to school-aged adolescents in 2001, was directly referring to me, a

middle schooler at that time. Despite the fact that Prensky's (2001) claims are largely

unsubstantiated (Kirschner & De Bruyckere, 2017), these same stereotypes are the ones my

colleagues use to refer to students now. Like my participants, I am not only used to the

adolescent styles of literacy and communication, but also used to being stereotyped for them.

This position has put me on the defensive in discussions of technology. While education

researchers have ridden waves of support for a greater understanding of technology as with the

New Literacies researchers cited previously (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; New London Group,

1996; Rueda, 2013) as well as pushed to critique untempered embracing of technology (Mason

& Metzger, 2012), my experience in education practice has proved to be one of complete lack of

engagement with New Literacies. There is certainly truth to Mason and Metzger's (2012)

critique of some New Literacies ideologies like the National Council for the Social Studies

position statement:

Because the NCSS position statement, based heavily on Jenkins' scholarship, conceives of technology as neutral, it exclusively emphasizes the positive potential of media technology to foster wide democratic discourse and communitarian bonds. This paradigm equates easy, convenient communication through new media forms as inherently superior while ignoring the deeper meaning of the social practices privileged by the forms themselves— practices that may reinforce aggressively individualistic dispositions that can undermine mutuality and a sense of shared experience. (p. 441)

While acknowledging the legitimacy of this critique on an academic level, the truth that technology is not neutral and can be used to leverage power, I find myself still of the belief that Delpit (1988) stated, "being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier" (p. 282). The only way to create equity is through educating everyone on the tools of power. While this critique of the neutrality of New Literacies has been fruitfully explored in academia, in practical teaching spaces, we have yet to delve into New Literacies (Black, 2007; Black, 2008; Black, 2009c; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lammers & Marsh, 2015; Thomas, 2006). While it is important to critically engage with these practices, that cannot happen if we have no way of engaging with them at all. By positioning New Literacies as neutral in this study and seeking only to understand how to use them in the classroom rather than if they should be used in the classroom, I seek to provide a foundation for further study of the benefits of inclusion that cannot be fully realized until New Literacies are practically included in the classroom. This positioning is an outgrowth of my own experiences as a student and a young, millennial teacher.

Additionally, my participants, like the majority of fanfiction writers, are mostly female like myself. This connection is germane as I identify with the marginalization of this group, especially when it comes to literacy. Women's literacy practices are often ridiculed as frivolous,

and fanfiction is no exception (Black, 2007; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Thomas, 2006). As a woman and a digital native, my connection with the participants in this study allows me to relate to the position of the participants.

However, despite all of the connections I feel I have with the people in this study, I am not entirely one of them. As a teacher and an academic, I am in a traditional position of authority over adolescents. No matter how much respect or connections I have with them, I am an outsider. Even though I do not take part in them, the ways in which adults minimize, stereotype, and misunderstand adolescents affects my ability to communicate with and therefore study this demographic. Past experiences with adults trivializing adolescent behavior may make adolescents hesitant to trust me with theirs. Additionally, while often teenagers get called millennials by older generations, adolescents are now part of a new generation of which I am not a part.

Young adult literature. Apart from my connection with adolescents, I am also connected with young adult literature and the particular series under study here. My interest in young adult literature began during my training to become a teacher. As I grew in my career, my connection with the literature did as well, leading me to write a young adult novel, advocate for young adult literature's use in the classroom, and begin a doctoral program to study it.

The particular series that is the focus of this study, *Throne of Glass*, has been an ongoing pastime for me. Since devouring the first three books in the series one summer, I have purchased and read the following four books on their release date. I have found myself excitedly chatting with students in the halls about these books, buying additional copies with special art, and reading fanfiction and gazing at fan art from this series. It is safe to say that I am a fan, and I continue to look forward to the upcoming books in the series.

Fanfiction. I first discovered, read, and wrote fanfiction in high school, and I continue to read and participate in online fanfiction communities in both reading and writing. I have been a member of fanfiction.net since January 2013 and have published three stories on the site. I have read countless other stories in the space. I am involved in fan culture in other ways, from attending conventions to following fan sites and blogs. Jenkins (1992) talks about the advantages of being an "aca-fan," an academic who is also a fan(Jenkins, 1992). While fandom can be a marginalized culture, aca-fans approach it with understanding and respect and are therefore more welcome and are able to gain more insight by being a participant with rather than an outsider to the culture (Jenkins, 1992). As a fan, I will understand fandom terminology and am already initiated in fan discourses.

Female, digital-native fanfiction writers are a marginalized group in many ways. The complexity of my positionality as an insider in this community and an outsider academic allows me to simultaneously gain in-depth insight while also stepping back for delineation and elaboration. From a New Materialist perspective, a researcher becomes part of the intra-action under study as nothing that intra-acts with the subject of study can remain separate from it. In this case, my familiarity with the community allows for a more seamless integration into the intra-action.

Chapter Summary and Organization of the Study

In this chapter I introduced how I came to the research question of "how do adolescent, print book, and online fanfiction space entangle and congeal to create the newness of a hybrid traditional-New Literacies practice?" through witnessing the disconnect between my students' practices and my school's beliefs and practices regarding technology. I outlined relevant

concepts and terms to the study as well as the theoretical lens through which this study was conducted and examined the ways I am uniquely positioned and connected to this research.

The remainder of this study follows a traditional format. In chapter two I review the relevant literature on New Materialism, adolescent identity, fanfiction, and young adult literature. In chapter three I outline the methodology for the study, more clearly defining the materials and contexts of the study and analysis used. Chapter four details the data, findings, and analysis while chapter five discusses the findings and implications.

Throughout all the chapters runs a recurring emphasis on the three materials and framework under study: adolescent reader identity, young adult literature, and fanfiction. Each of these are addressed through new lenses, with new information, and new foci in each chapter. This organization mimics the New Materialism framework for this study, outlined in more detail through different lenses in both chapters two and three. Rather than isolating discussion of any particular element to one section or chapter, the "line of flight" each concept takes weaves through each chapter (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). From the non-essentialist perspective of New Materialism, each concept cannot be described in and of itself, but rather in intra-action with each other and with the framework of each element of the study.

Chapter Two – Review of the Literature

In this chapter I will review the literature on the theoretical framework for this study, New Materialism. After this is established, each of the materials involved in this New Materialist study, adolescents, young adult literature, and fanfiction, are reviewed. The literature presented will be focused. After outlining the basic tenants of New Materialism, I describe how New Materialism has been used in the education and digital literacy fields. For each material, adolescents, young adult literature, and fanfiction, I review how they have been studied in the literacy field.

New Materialism

The primary theoretical framework for this study is an emerging approach to the social sciences that is just now coming into use in education fields. New Materialism shifts study away from both language and human subjects and toward the material, how physical objects and space affect and change a phenomenon or subject. Below are outlined key concepts and theorists of New Materialism.

Deleuze and Guattari. Researchers in New Materialism cite Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari as the post-structuralist root of their approach. In the fields of philosophy and psychiatry respectively, these authors' concept of the rhizome was influential on post-structuralist thought and, eventually, on New Materialism (Mills, 2016; Smythe et al., 2017). Post-structuralism turned focus away from how different structures affected a subject or phenomenon and turned toward an analysis of how various structures interacted in a phenomenon (Clarke, 2010). In Deleuze and Guattari's view, for anything one wishes to study, one must view it not as a single entity, but as a rhizome, a kind of root that grows horizontally with many offshoots (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2006). According to

Deleuze and Guattari (1987), "any point on a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be" (p.7). With this idea, nothing can be studied in isolation, but rather in connection to the many different things it interacts with that constantly shapes it.

Beyond having to study connections, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) were anti-essentialist, positing that, "a rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo… the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, 'and…and…and…'" (p.25). In a sense, there is no boundary, whether it is a human or an object to be analyzed, between it and the outside world. As Dimitriadis and Kamberelis (2006) explained, "the person is not to be found inside the body, composed of autonomous, self-sustaining, and organized internal forms. Instead, the person/body is interconnected, exterior, open, multiple, fragmented, provisional, and interpenetrated by other entities" (p. 96). Deleuze and Guattari broke down traditional dichotomies between subject and environment and even subject and observer.

The post-structuralist thoughts outlined by Deleuze and Guattari focused on how structures interacted, analyzing a connected body rather than a segmented, isolated subject. New Materialism takes this concept and inverts it. Rather than focusing on one subject that is made up of interconnected, contextual parts, New Materialist attempts to draw attention to how each contextual part is changed. In a sense, where post-structuralism focused on how a subject is created by its context, New Materialism finds everything to be a subject, nothing is mere context. The following sections will outline the New Materialist turn more fully.

De-centering the human. Branching off of the works of Deleuze and Guattari, one of the key concepts of New Materialism is what researchers are calling the "spatial turn" or "material turn" (Jones et al., 2016; Justice, 2016). New Materialist researchers call for de-centering the human in research to pay more attention to the interactions among materials,

including humans. Mills (2016) phrased this distinction saying that "humans are not regarded with greater attention than the object with which they interact" (p.117). Smythe et al. (2017) saw this turn as "a rejection of traditional philosophical dualisms and the hierarchies that often accompany them (human/non-human, thinking/feeling, male/ female, mind/body, research/practice and so on)" (p.19). As previously stated, New Materialism, like Deluze and Guattari's rhizome, rejects essentialism, the idea that any human or non-human has fixed qualities, but rather states that, "people, animals, objects, nature, discourses and so on proceed together in relation to and with one another" (Smythe et al., 2017, p.20). For this reason, one cannot understand an isolated human or object. One can only understand a person or object in relation to other humans and objects within the context.

      Becoming and intra-action. Stemming from Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome, New Materialism studies "invite us to refrain from positing a priori individuations (or boundaries) between things, such as people, tools, furniture and so on" (Smythe et al., 2017, p.20). Because of this lack of boundary, the idea of "becoming" is important to New Materialism. Smythe et al. (2017) saw this approach as, "emphasizing the emergent as well as relational nature of entities that are always in a state of becoming" (p. 21). Materials, including humans, are always becoming through the process of intra-action. Barad's (2003) intra-action is distinct from interaction as interaction "presumes the prior existence of independent entities/relata" (p. 815). Rather, intra-action shows that materials change within themselves while in entanglements with other materials. Smythe et al. noted that "intra-action shifts attention to the relation, and conceptualizes the relation as the unit of analysis" as any specific material cannot be analyzed without the materials with which it intra-acts (p. 25).

Where a post-structuralist study might observe a child with difficulties reading and ask, "what personal and cultural factors are converging to affect this child's literacy?", a New Materialist study would look at the same situation and ask, "what materials are intra-acting to create this literacy experience?" Rather than focusing on the child and seeing the different contextual elements as influencing her as post-structuralism might, New Materialism would not place primacy on the child but look at all elements of the situation, the text, the noise level in the room, objects and people in the room, clothing, etc. as not just influencing the child but as influencing and changing one another. In this way New Materialism expands the concept of post-structuralism by attending to and placing primacy on what may otherwise be considered more minute details, not often factored into a conceptualization of an experience. This is not to say that New Materialism completely disregards cultural factors necessarily, but rather that these are seen as part of only one material in the intra-action, the human.

New Materialism in Education

New Materialism is fairly new to education fields with few published studies citing New Materialism as a framework (Anwaruddin, 2016; Charteris, Smardon, & Nelson, 2017; Ehret, Hollett, & Jocius, 2016; Jones et al., 2016; Miller, 2017; Ulmer, 2016) and some articles overviewing what New Materialism may look like in the field of education (Smythe et al., 2017). Among these works a few key areas of research emerge.

Policy. Several New Materialist education studies are policy focused (Anwaruddin, 2016; Charteris et al., 2017; Miller, 2017; Ulmer, 2016). Anwaruddin (2016) used what he called new materialist discourse analysis to examine the ways in which publications about a well-regarded English language teacher education program (English in Action) addressed or failed to address the context and material reality of teachers' experience, ultimately finding "the

discourses that English in Action uses are detached from the material reality in which teachers live, learn, and work" (p. 260). Anwaruddin (2016) discusses how this lack of connection to the material reality ensures the failure of the policy, and, moreover, that education policy should take into account the material reality of the settings in which it will be applied.

Charteris, Smardon, and Nelson (2017) asked similar questions of innovative learning environments (ILEs), asking "what sorts of relationalities are produced in ILEs between entangled: objects, spaces, policy discourses, practices, students and teachers" (p. 809). To address this question, the researchers interviewed principals who worked with ILEs. Part of the data analysis consisted of coding related to entanglements, spaces, and materials referenced by the principals in discussing ILEs. They found that in switching disciplinary, individual classrooms to modular shared space principals generally found that relationships among teachers and between teachers and students were enhanced by the shared space. However, while principals saw that the change in space led to a change in practice, many feared that, eventually, teachers may funnel back into their own spaces, cordoning off space within the shared space. Overall, a change in space and dispersion of materials affected practice and human relationships.

In an examination and defense of participatory action research (PAR), Miller (2017) explained how New Materialism's post-structuralist approach can serve to combat neo-positivist and neo-liberal views of research that exclude the " indeterminate, unpredictable, sometimes contentious, always elusive, often unknowable, and always changing entanglings of subjectivities, encounters, contexts, desires, and shifting relations of power, among myriad other exigencies" that PAR can help delineate (p. 500).

These articles provide examples of the ways in which New Materialism has come to influence policy research by focusing on the ways in which policy cannot be isolated in study.

Polices themselves, implementation of policies, and research into policies must all take into account the way in which the multiple facets of material context influences outcomes.

Learning experiences. New Materialism has also been used to study classroom intra-actions (Ehret, Hollett, & Jocius, 2016; Jones et al., 2016; Smythe et al., 2017). Ehret, Hollett, and Jocius (2016) studied the intra-actions that took place while middle schoolers created a book trailer. Describing one intra-action among students, space, and book, the authors stated:

> One of the RMCs then hands her the paperback, and after flipping through it for about a minute, Domiana leans forward on the edge of her seat and attempts to gain the attention of the group by raising her hand. She conspicuously flips the pages again, and the response from the other members of the group is immediate—both RMCs and all students—save Marcus—instantly direct their eyes toward the book-as-thing. The ceiling fan muffles Domiana's voice, and as the participants lean forward, gazing at the paperback, her words take on an intense presence, a heft that is louder, and heavier, than the immediate resonance of their soft sound. The book-as-thing is attuning bodies in the circle to its emerging affective heft. (p.359)

In this example of intra-action, the authors take note of how the course of the book trailer project changes through the ways in which one student holding a book affects the others students' engagment with ideas. Even the environment, such as the ceiling fan, is taken into account as affecting the way the students act and how the final product comes together.

In other studies, Smythe et al. (2017) described the intra-actions among elementary students and a childcare center with a bioreactor and intra-actions with a toddler and the ocean in learning to swim. In both of these examples, the environments affected the development of the children's actions, and, in turn, the children manipulated the environment around them. These

explorations of New Materialism in education focus on observing intra-actions of environment and children in educational settings.

      Digital materiality. New Materialism and New Literacies have also started to converge. Leonardi (2010) stated, "materiality is not a property of artifacts but a property of relationships between artifacts and the people who produce and consume them" (n.p). In this view, digital spaces and tools can be seen as a material with which intra-actions can be studied. Justice (2016) used the term digital materiality suggesting that it is "an assemblage that accounts for the affordances of digital tools" (p.59). Law and Hetherington (2003) outlined forms of materiality such as materials, bodies, and texts, the last of which includes internet sites and other digital material.

      Studies of digital materiality in educational settings is limited, but some do exist. Smythe et al. (2017) wrote about two studies including children intra-acting with a math iPad application, other children, and the classroom space as well as a study of adults intra-acting in a technology learning and help center with tutors and public access computers. These studies took place in a physical location and studied the intra-actions with technology and other materials in the space using observation. In both of these studies, the object was not to which objects had the most effect on what was learned. Rather, each described and mapped how the physicality of the technology and the people using the technology combined. For instance, the children interacting with the math application reacted with excitement at seeing the number zero in a large number, falling to the floor with laughter. The adults in the technology learning center took places at the same computers each session to keep a similar orientation to the screen and its icons. For both of these studies, the findings were about how intra-actions among materials affected the experience – which intra-actions existed and changed the directions of the event.

Somewhat different is Justice's (2016) study of the implementation of digital making technologies at one school. This study mapped digital learning pedagogy in a physical location with observations, interviews, and artifacts. While this study took place over a longer period of time and involved more than just observation, it is important to note that it was still bound within a physical space. Similar to Smythe's (2017) described studies, Justice's (2016) study mapped the intra-actions that happened, what he called "contact points," and described how tools, space, teachers, and students intra-acted. However, Justice (2016) also provided implications for practice born out of these descriptions. Noting how the sudden insertion of technology into a school caused disruptions for both students and teachers, changing the perceived locus of instruction, Justice (2016) recommended a gradual introduction to technological tools. Beyond gradually introducing physical objects, the theory behind materiality and digital materiality should also be introduced to teachers:

Teacher education might benefit from an emphasis on material learning as a way of knowing and, importantly, as a way of doing teaching. Material learning holds content acquisition as a feeling of knowing that emerges from and with enacted encounters with materials, where insight or innovation arrives sometimes as if by accident, by surprise, or as if from the materials themselves, whether those materials be paint, clay, cardboard, bitmaps, 3D polygons, vector data, or virtual reality immersions, or documents from the Revolutionary War, poetry from the Han Dynasty, or a bacterial smear in a petri dish. (p.239)

Justice (2016) suggested that coming to view curating materials as a way of teaching rather than a relinquishing of teaching is key. Understanding materiality can assist in this. Justice (2016) explained that rather than focusing on "what tools do, or what you can do with a particular

machine," ideas around materiality help emphasize "the narratives that tools and materials make available to learners" (p.239).

For all of these New Materialist studies of technology, we see the focus is not on what technology does or what human do with technology. Rather, these studies describe what happens when technologies are placed certain material contexts and people. While studies of technology in education often focus on effectiveness of a tool devoid of context or even perceptions of a tool, with New Materialism provides a much more inclusive and contextualized understanding of digital tools.

Materials

In the following sections I review the literature on each material under study in this project. The focus of each literature review for the materials is how that material has been studied regarding literacy and in intra-action with the other materials.

Adolescence/nts. Understanding adolescents is critical to educating them, and theories about youth and their identities have evolved over the years. Adolescents are often described as being in a time of "storm and stress" (Hall, 1904) and exhibiting what Lesko (2001) calls the "confident characteristics" of coming-of-age: controlled by raging hormones, peer-oriented, and represented by age. However, recent theories such as work done around the youth lens (Petrone, Sarigianides, & Lewis, 2015) complicates our understanding of young adults, illuminating the social construct of adolescence and taking a critical eye to "how ideas about adolescence and youth get formed, circulated, critiqued, and revised" (Petrone et al., 2015, p.506). Lesko (2001) challenged the stereotypes of adolescence, problematizing the notion that they are always "becoming but not being," expanding on "the difficulties of actively mastering one's

environment and securing 'identity' when youth are simultaneously contained within an 'expectant mode'" (p. 106).

This complex notion of adolescence is further complicated under a New Materialist lens. As with any other material viewed through this lens, identity cannot be described in and of itself, but is constantly in flux by intra-acting with other materials. Hayes (1999) goes beyond saying that identity is affected by materials, rather explaining that the separation between the human and the material world is artificial, with one material not exerting any more agency or will than the other:

> There are no essential differences or absolute demarcations between bodily existence and computer simulation … the presumption that there is an agency, desire, or will belonging to the self and clearly distinguished from the 'wills of others' is undercut in the posthuman, for the posthuman's collective heterogeneous quality implies distributed cognition located in disparate parts. (p. 5)

In New Materialism, identity, adolescent or otherwise, is never fixed or essentialist, but always becoming with other materials. In this light, a New Materialist lens fits neatly with our socially constructed notions of adolescents as in a perpetual state of "becoming" since New Materialism views every material as not just existing, but constantly changing with its environment. While Lesko (2001) problematizes viewing adolescents this way, perhaps the real problem is viewing *only* adolescents this way, rather than recognizing "becoming" as the constant state of all identities. By stating that only adolescents are in a period of change, we elevate adulthood as a time of arrival and completeness. This ignores the ways in which adults are constantly changing and being changed by their environment and the materials it contains. Adolescents are becoming, and so are adults. New Materialism's idea of intra-action allows us to bridge the

binary and false distinction between the two socially-constructed groups. This New Materialism study posits that identity, adolescent or otherwise, is always in flux, affected by the materials with which one intra-acts. What follows is an examination of how adolescent identity in particular has been studied to intra-act with other materials in this study.

   Literacy engagement and adolescent identity. Engagement has been defined many ways. Perhaps the most basic definition is investing cognitive resources into a task (Guthrie, Van Meter, McCann, & Wigfield, 1996; Kelley & Clausen-Grace, 2009). However, as literacy engagement has been studied further, additional components have been added to cognition, expanding the definition. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) included motivational and social components alongside cognitive components of engagement stating that engaged readers "coordinate their strategies and knowledge (cognition) within a community of literacy (social) in order to fulfill their personal goals, desires, and intentions (motivation)" (para. 5). As evidenced in this quote, rather than get at the essence of what engagement is, many researchers study what engagement looks like – the habits of engaged readers. While there are several ways in which researchers identify and measure engagement, engagement for social and identity purposes are especially relevant here.

   Research shows that reader identity is an important factor in reader engagement (Beach & Ward, 2013; Cantrell et al., 2017; De Naeghel, Van Keer, Vansteenkiste, & Rosseel, 2012; Gambrell & Morrow, 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; McCombs, 1996; Oldfather, 1996). Cantrell et al. (2017) states that "students' beliefs about their own abilities to read well influence their reading behaviors, their cognitive processes, their reading motivation, and ultimately their achievement" (p. 56). If readers believe they will be successful, reading becomes much more enjoyable and engaging. One participant in Cantrell et al.'s (2017) study noted that

"understanding the book better really is what made it more interesting to read" (p.65). Here, researchers see a direct connection between understanding, motivation, and engagement. Guthrie, Alao, and Rinehart (2017) address the converse, noting that "less successful students lose their intrinsic motivations for reading due to their eroding sense of competence" (p. 440). It is crucial to engagement that participants in literacy tasks view themselves as readers.

However, viewing oneself as a reader extends beyond a belief that one can read well. De Naeghel et al. (2012) notes that engagement is increased when children find reading personally relevant or "identify themselves with the value of reading" (p.1007). In Kirkland's (2011) study of reading engagement for adolescent African-American men, he found that his primary participant needed not only to identify with a text, but to be able to make it personally meaningful to his identity, stating that "Derrick's sense of self was important to his engagement with texts such as comics, and he believed that his sense of self could be found in or constructed through such texts" (p. 204). Kirkland further stated of a pair of participants that "not only did the two young men understand the texts, they used the texts to understand themselves" (p.205). This speaks to the importance of reading being personally relevant to foster engagement, but also for the need for the act of reading itself to be seen as integral to identity, whether this is seeing one's self as a reader or seeing reading as a way to construct a sense of self. Identity is integral to reading engagement.

Integral to identity is social interaction, and social interaction centered around literacy is a major factor in engagement (Beach & Ward, 2013; Cantrell et al., 2017; Gambrell & Morrow, 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Ivey, 2014; Oldfather, 1996; Scheffel, 2016). Cantrell et al. (2017) stated that "social context is a critical dimension influencing a reader's engagement, particularly as it relates to students' relationships with teachers and peers" (p. 56). Engaged

readers are involved in literacy activities with others. Beyond this, Ivey (2014) found that "students who were engaged as readers viewed reading as fundamentally about working on relationships, both with others and with themselves" (p.166). Similarly to how Kirkland (2011) found that reading engagement stemmed from students' ability to make texts meaningful in the construction of their identity, Ivey (2014) found that engagement occurs when students find texts that can be helpful in constructing social being. Cantrell et al. (2017) also found that schools can foster motivation to read in a social context, showing the connection among different qualities of engaged readers.

In educational settings, there are many things teachers can do to build identity and social engagement with texts. Engagement is enhanced when students read books that are on their reading level. Allington and Gabriel (2012) stated that "it's not just the time spent with a book in hand, but rather the intensity and volume of high-success reading, that determines a student's progress in learning to read. When students read accurately, they solidify their word-recognition, decoding, and word-analysis skills. Perhaps more important, they are likely to understand what they read—and, as a result, to enjoy reading" (p. 12). This "high-success reading" is important for students to form reader identity and self-efficacy. However, Hastings (2016) addresses the need for balance between reading-level texts and texts with appropriate interest level for students. If a student's reading level requires them to read books far too simplistic in content for their interests, texts could become too boring and decrease engagement. Research shows that one of the most effective factors in increasing student motivation to read is providing them with interesting texts (Cantrell et al., 2017; Guthrie & Humenick, 2004). For example, in a study of one 8th grade class, increased motivation as measured through factors such as wide reading, book

knowledge, critical reading, and reading mechanics among other elements was demonstrated when students had access to books that they found interesting (Ivey & Johnston, 2013).

Beyond interesting texts, the research overwhelmingly shows that motivation is increased when students get to choose what they read (Allington & Cunnignham, 2007; Brozo & Hargis, 2011; Gambrell & Morrow, 1996; Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Ivey & Johnston, 2013; Oldfather, 1996). Several studies have been conducted in which some students have been given a choice of books (even from a limited number), and a control group has been randomly assigned books. Students who are given choice spend more time reading and perform comprehension tasks with more accuracy than those with no choice (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004). Choice provides motivation and helps students form reader identities, increasing engagement. Engagement comes when adolescents identify with the texts and with reading.

Affinity identity. Gee (2001) outlines four ways to view identity including Nature-identity (state developed from forces in nature), Institution-identity (position authorized by authorities in institutions), Discourse-identity (trait recognized in discourse with others), and Affinity-identity (experiences shared in affinity groups) (p.100). Most relevant to this study is Affinity-identity or A-identity (Gee, 2001, p. 105). Gee (2001) defined A-identity as a way of viewing a person by the "experiences shared in the practice of 'affinity groups'" (p. 100). Affinity groups are groups of people who share and engage in a particular interest together (Gee, 2001). Many fanfiction researchers see online fanfiction communities as affinity groups from which participants take part of their identity (Black, 2007, 2009a; Kell, 2009; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lammers, 2016; Lammers & Marsh, 2015). Lammers (2016) noted that "sharing writing in an online space connects youth to authentic writing identities" (p.309). Black (2005) showed that "ELLs [English Language Learners] in this space are able to use acts of literacy to

publicly perform aspects of their identities and, in so doing, affiliate themselves with the fan community" (p.123). In this way we see fanfiction spaces as greatly connected to identity. This study explores further how adolescents influence fanfiction spaces and how fanfiction spaces influence adolescent identity.

Young adult literature. Another key material in this study is young adult literature. While many practitioner-oriented and research articles study or make use of young adult literature, these are often textual analyses or using young adult literature to study other classroom practices such as discussion (e.g. Hayn, Kaplan, & Nolen, 2011; Henderson & Buskist, 2011). Few studies have analyzed exactly how adolescents engage particularly with young adult literature. However, one fact that cannot be denied is that adolescents do engage with young adult literature (Adams & Bushman, 2006; Ivey & Johnston, 2013; Wilhelm & Smith, 2014). Though limited in number, some studies have shown why young adult literature may be particularly suited to help adolescents achieve reading engagement. The following is a breakdown of how young adult literature has been studied to be uniquely suited to elicit what researchers indicate are the hallmarks of engagement including time and choice (Allington & Cunnignham, 2007; Brozo & Hargis, 2011; Gambrell & Morrow, 1996; Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Ivey & Johnston, 2013; Oldfather, 1996), self-efficacy and identity (Beach & Ward, 2013; De Naeghel et al., 2012; Gambrell & Morrow, 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; McCombs, 1996), strategy (Cantrell et al., 2017; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; McCombs, 1996; Scheffel, 2016), and social use (Beach & Ward, 2013; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Ivey, 2014; Oldfather, 1996; Scheffel, 2016).

Time and choice.   Research shows adolescents choose to spend time reading young adult literature (Adams & Bushman, 2006; Ivey & Johnston, 2013; Wilhelm & Smith, 2014). In Ivey and Johnston's (2013) study, students continued to read young adult books even in other classes. Moje et al. (2008) found that adolescents would spend time reading young adult texts, but not necessarily classics that were assigned. This time spent with the text is not just limited to time reading it, however. Both Ivey and Johnston (2014) and Wilhelm and Smith (2014) found that, with young adult texts, students continued to think about the text long after they were finished reading. When given the choice, adolecents choose to read and spend time with young adult literature (Adams & Bushman, 2006; Ivey & Johnston, 2013; Johnson, 2011; Wilhelm & Smith, 2014).

Self-efficacy and identity.   Particularly important to this study are the ways in which young adult literature has been studied to build self-efficacy and identity. Young adult literature is suited to both build self-efficacy and promote reader identity and construction of identity. Researchers have noted the pleasure adolescents take in reading young adult literature (Adams & Bushman, 2006; Wilhelm & Smith, 2014). Wilhelm and Smith (2014) outlined the ways in which play are integral to learning, and that reading young adult texts is a pleasurable experience for many adolescents that makes the experience like play. This efferent, aesthetic enjoyment (Rosenblatt, 1978) is the most engaging type of motivation, intrinsic motivation, as outlined by De Naeghel et al. (2012). This pleasure in reading can help build both confidence as well as an identity as a reader. Additionally, high-success reading builds self-efficacy (Allington & Gabriel, 2012), and young adult literature provides this high success reading. This is not based solely on Lexile levels, but rather on the influence of prior knowledge. Adams and Bushman (2006) note the importance of prior knowledge in building comprehension as well as how the

young adult literature brings into play adolescents' prior knowledge by addressing their particular experiences. The subject matter of young adult literature plays on prior knowledge, assisting in comprehension, high-success reading, and, therefore, self-efficacy, reader identity, and reading engagement. Ivey and Johnston (2014) noted the power of young adult literature to change reader identity directly when students engaged with young adult literature made statements such as "I'm a bookworm" and "I used to be slow at reading, but I'm kind of, like, in the middle" (p.262). Through reading young adult literature, these students grew to see themselves as readers.

Beyond reader identity, as previously stated, Kirkland (2011) noted the importance of being able to relate a book to one's self and help construct one's identity from it for reader engagement. Young adult literature is best suited to these purposes for adolescents as it relates directly to their lives (Adams & Bushman, 2006; Ivey & Johnston, 2013; Ostenson & Wadham, 2012; Santoli & Wagner, 2004; Wilhelm & Smith, 2014). Ivey and Johnston (2013) and Wilhelm and Smith (2014) found that young adult texts help students construct their identities. Ivey and Johnston (2013) gave an example of a student who connected a young adult book to her life and applied its content:

> I read a couple of books where people get bullied, and it changes my mind, 'cause in a couple of books I read, people commit suicide for it. And in *Hate List* [by Jennifer Brown], that book is really good, and it changes my mind about how people feel about things. And even, like, a little comment can change someone's life. And, like, the other day, I saw people on Facebook picking on this one girl, like, saying nobody liked her because she was ugly and had no friends. And I kind of put a stop to it. I told them it was wrong and that people commit suicide for it all the time. So, it changed my way of seeing

things. Normally I wouldn't have said anything to stop. But now, if I see anything, I stop

it. (p. 263)

Here, an adolescent is able to make a young adult text immediately relevant to her life,

constructing parts of her own identity from the book.

Strategy. Young adult texts allow for particular strategy use. Wilhelm and Smith (2014)

found that some adolescents read young adult literature "as a writer" (p.50). Because this is the

type of literature adolescents like to read, it is also the type of literature they like to write. The

desire to read a young adult text as a writer provides both motivation and strategy for reading a

text. Beyond this, Ivey and Johnston (2013) noted the way students read young adult texts

dialogically (p.257). One of their participants noted "I just feel like I was in the book, and I was

there beside them the whole time" (p.261). Young adult literature allows adolescents to see

themselves in the text and think through the decisions characters make in the text. Ivey and

Johnston (2013) stated that "features of contemporary texts, such as multiple narrators, shifting

perspectives, and multimodalities, invite readers to consider varied viewpoints on personal and

social problems, including those normally underrepresented" (p. 257). The strategies required

for this reading promote engagement.

Social. Finally, young adult literature provides more social opportunities than other

texts. In their study of the reading habits of young men, Smith and Wilhelm (2002) note that

young men are "likely to read material that can be transported into conversations with their

friends" (p. x). Young adult literature can be easily transported into conversation because of its

relevance to adolescents' lives. Ivey and Johnston (2013) noted how students would continue to

talk about young adult texts outside of class with peers or relate aspects of books to social

situations. Adolescents can even extend their knowledge of books to imagined social situations. One student stated:

> I thought [*Destroying Avalon* by Kate McCaffrey] was really good, really sad at the end. But it just makes you think about, to pay attention to how people react, to pay attention to how they're feeling about stuff. Like when you see people you don't really think, you know, you think. well. they don't have problems or whatever. But then some of the ones I've read, you can just understand people better (Ivey & Johnston, 2013, p. 262).

This student now views others and potential social interactions differently because of her ability to connect her reading to real life social situations.

While both reading engagement and young adult literature have been studied extensively, and most agree that young adult literature is highly engaging, limited research exists on exactly what makes young adult literature so engaging for adolescents. The limited research does show, however, that many of the traditionally cited qualities of engaged readers are amplified with the use of young adult texts, and that, by addressing adolescent concerns and life stories, young adult literature is uniquely engaging in itself. Hayn, Kaplan, and Nolen, (2011) called for further research into engagement with young adult literature. With the rising need for promoting reader engagement, young adult literature is a necessary area of focus for future researchers.

Fanfiction. The final material under study for this project is online fanfiction. To see how fanfiction has been studied within the field of literacy education, I searched the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) database, along with Education Source, for the terms "fanfiction or fandom or fan fiction" and "literacy." This resulted in forty-eight articles and books to be reviewed. For the purpose of this review of research, I narrowed this list by attending to only research articles. I also eliminated some articles that focused on fandom only

rather than tying the phenomenon to education. This resulted in twenty-one focused, relevant articles.

Study populations. The literature on fanfiction in education varies somewhat in populations studied. Most studies involve a small number of participants who were studied closely with ethnographic methods and interviews (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Black, 2005, 2007, 2009a, 2009c; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2002; Jwa, 2012; Kell, 2009; B. Kelley, 2016; Lammers et al., 2012; Lammers, 2016; Lammers & Marsh, 2015; Magnifico, Curwood, & Lammers, 2015; Roozen, 2009). However, some studies explore larger groups, including four studies of specific fanfiction communities (Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lammers, 2013; Land, 2010; Thomas, 2006), and two studies involving using fanfiction in the classroom (McWilliams et al., 2011; Sauro & Sundmark, 2016). Because of the focus on individuals, much of the work has focused on what Lammers (2016) called "exceptional cases" of stand-out fanfiction authors. Though Magnifico, Curwood, and Lammers (2015) specifically attempted to study more "typical" cases.

Dominated by the work of one researcher, Rebecca Black, much of the included literature focused on English Language Learners in online fanfiction communities (Black, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c; Jwa, 2012; Sauro & Sundmark, 2016). A majority of the works focus on adolescents (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Black, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2002; Jwa, 2012; Kell, 2009; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lammers, 2016; Lammers et al., 2012; Lammers & Marsh, 2015; Land, 2010; McWilliams et al., 2011), while three focused on adults (B. Kelley, 2016; Roozen, 2009; Sauro & Sundmark, 2016), and two focused on groups in which ages were not revealed (Lammers, 2013; Thomas, 2006). However, in the studies of adults, one was an adult who had been writing

since adolescence (Roozen, 2009) and one was a study of future teachers so that they could use these techniques with adolescents (Sauro & Sundmark, 2016).

Finally, while none of the researchers explicitly intended to focus on female fanfiction writers, the studies of people or communities who already wrote fanfiction, as opposed to studies of classes using fanfiction, all either had female participants or noted that the majority of fanfiction writers were female.

Theoretical frameworks. The research on fanfiction, when explicitly stating a theoretical or conceptual framework, most often called upon a combination of sociocultural/ situated literacy and New Literacies/multiliteracies. Those articles citing sociocultural perspectives directly (Black, 2005; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lammers, 2016; Lammers & Marsh, 2015) emphasized the social interaction that takes place in online fanfiction communities. Similarly, those that cited situated literacy (Black, 2006; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lammers, 2016; Roozen, 2009) focused on online fanfiction spaces as "communities of practice" (Wenger, 1998) and "affinity spaces" (Gee, 2001).

The most prominent theoretical framework used in the research in online fanfiction communities is New Literacies. The researchers who cite New Literacies or 21st Century Literacies as a framework (Black, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2002; Kell, 2009; Lammers, 2016; McWilliams et al., 2011) focus on how online fanfiction communities exemplify the New Literacy practices Lankshear and Knobel (2006) outlined as collaboration, participation, dispersion, and distributed experience (p.27). Along those lines, many of the articles referenced multiliteracies in their discussion of fanfiction in education, aligning their studies with a New Literacies perspective (Black, 2009c; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2002; Lammers, 2016; Lammers & Marsh, 2015). These authors saw the "design" elements of

multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996) to be both integral to online fanfiction communities and relevant to literacy education.

     Methodologies and methods. Most of the studies in this review used similar methods of data collection. All of the studies in this review collected online posts such as fanfiction works and reviews for analysis. Many also included interviews with fanfiction authors to gain clarification or insight into what they were seeing posted (Black, 2007, 2009b, 2009c; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2002; Kell, 2009; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lammers, 2016; Lammers & Marsh, 2015; Roozen, 2009; Thomas, 2006). Regardless of the similar data collection methods, the studies in this review did frame their studies with different methodologies. Most frequently researchers explicitly framed their work as case studies (Black, 2006; Kell, 2009; Kelley, 2016; Sauro & Sundmark, 2016). Some used discourse or content analysis (Black, 2009b; Jwa, 2012; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Land, 2010; Magnifico et al., 2015). A small portion labeled their studies ethnographies (Black, 2005, 2007; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2002; Lammers, 2013).

     Findings. The main findings in a literature review of all of these articles included the following:

     In and out-of-school literacies. One of the most prominent themes in these pieces was the relationship between in and out-of-school literacies. Thirteen of the twenty-one sources addressed this concept (Black, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009a, 2009c; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2002; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lammers, 2016; Lammers & Marsh, 2015; Land, 2010; McWilliams et al., 2011; Roozen, 2009; Thomas, 2006). One of the main discussions regarding the relationship between in and out-of-school literacies was the disconnect between the two that students often face (Black, 2007; Black, 2008; Black, 2009c; Korobkova & Black, 2014;

Lammers & Marsh, 2015; Thomas, 2006). Many differences between school writing and fanfiction writing were noted:

> Unlike school-based writing, which tends to limit audience access to the teacher or other classmates who mostly see each other and each other's writing during the school day, FFN [fanfiction.net] writing expands access geographically and temporally…unlike school-based writing, where teachers assess merit based upon perceived quality, successful writing in the FFN networked public requires understanding and conscious engagement with abstract audience. (Lammers & Marsh, 2015, p. 280)

These researchers speak to the ways in which the writing that students find relevant at home is not the same as the writing being done in the classroom. This causes a rift in application and relevancy.

However, some research spoke to the fact that, despite this rift, some students find their out-of-school fanfiction literacies helped them in school-based literacy (Korobkova & Black, 2014; Roozen, 2009). In fact, in Roozen's (2009) study of one fanfiction writer turned English major his participant reflected on how the two worlds worked together saying, "I don't think that I ever thought of them as separate. I've always been combining them" (p.148). Because of this, many sources call for more research and increased teacher understanding of the literacies involved in fanfiction in order to more effectively teach adolescents (Black, 2005; Black, 2007; Black, 2008; Black, 2009; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2002; Kell, 2009; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lammers & Marsh, 2015; Land, 2010; Roozen, 2009; Thomas, 2006).

New literacies. As addressed earlier, several of the articles used a New Literacies framework for their studies. These and other sources highlighted some New Literacies practices in which participants in online fanfiction communities engage.

Relationship with audience. Many sources discussed the unique relationship between author and audience in online fanfiction spaces (Black, 2005, 2006, 2009a; Kelley, 2016; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lammers, 2016; Lammers & Marsh, 2015; Land, 2010; Roozen, 2009; Thomas, 2006). Lammers (2016) described this relationship saying that in these online spaces, "writing and sharing are inextricably linked as engagement with the audience becomes inseparable from the act of writing" (p. 311). The immediate and constant access to audience and feedback in online fanfiction communities creates a sense of collaboration and participation in writing that is unmatched in traditional literacies.

Multimodal/remix. Beyond the audience element of new literacies, an extremely important aspect is the multimodal and remixed nature of texts found in online fanfiction communities. Several articles addressed this aspect of these online spaces (Black, 2005; Black, 2006; Black, 2007; Black, 2008; Black, 2009; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2002; Kelley, 2016**;** Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lammers, 2016; Roozen, 2009; Thomas, 2006) . From texts that are "linguistically and culturally hybrid" (Black, 2006, p.177), to texts composed using a wide variety of resources (Black, 2007), to texts created using various digital communication and writing tools (Thomas, 2006), to texts that are a mixture of different genres (Korobkova & Black, 2014), and, finally, to multimodal texts drawing on words, images, video, and audio (Roozen, 2009), fanfiction allows for multimodal and remixed literacy practices.

Motivation. Researchers also outlined many motivational factors that played a role in why so many adolescents choose to spend so much time reading and writing online fanfiction. Two major themes that motivated the continued practices of reading and writing in these spaces were the sense of community and the building of voice and identity.

Community. One major motivational factor outlined by the literature was a sense of community within the online spaces (Black, 2005; Black, 2006; Black, 2009; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2002; Kell, 2009; Kelley, 2016; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Thomas, 2006). Candler-Olcott and Mahar (2002) commented on community in online fanfiction:

> Fanfiction writing also helped to develop and solidify relationships with various friends, online or otherwise. Whether they were sharing their texts with each other—or, as was the case with some of Rhiannon's stories, writing their friends into the narratives in a more literal sense fanfics appeared to serve as 'social glue.' (p. 560).

In the case of their participants, writing fanfiction was social. It also showed belonging in an affinity space (Gee, 2001) and provided opportunities for feedback.

Identity. Of particular relevance to this study are the ways in which fanfiction relates to identity. Many authors spoke of the ways that fanfiction spaces allowed adolescents to form identities as writers and experts or explore parts of their offline identities (Black, 2005; Black, 2006; Black, 2007; Black, 2008; Black, 2009; Kelley, 2016; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lammers, 2016; Land, 2010; Roozen, 2009; Thomas, 2006).   Korobkova and Black (2014) explained that "this interest-driven space enables participants to take identity stances of authority, expertise, and legitimacy, which are often at odds with identity stances they are able to take within the classroom walls" (2014, p.624).   Whether it is authority in writing, fandom, or cultural setting, adolescents are able to participate in literacy activities and leverage their strengths for belonging while working on their weaknesses. This literacy identity helps promote continued participation.

Teaching space. In this space, adolescents do not solely write what they know, but rather the community becomes a teaching space where feedback, models, and explicit instruction help individuals develop their skills. The literature addressed the pedagogical moves happening in online fanfiction communities (Black, 2005; Black, 2006; Black 2007; Black, 2009; Kell, 2009; Kelley, 2016; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lammers, 2013; Lammers, 2016; Lammers & Marsh, 2015; Land, 2010; Thomas, 2006). This took the shape of feedback through reviews, fora dedicated to answering questions about writing, technology, or content, and mentor texts. Korobkova and Black (2014) spoke to this quality of online fanfiction spaces saying, "scholars aligned with digital media and learning research communities have argued that fans also create valuable informal learning spaces, in which fans learn and practice valuable skills while engaging with the object of their fandom" (p.619). Though this is not a formal learning environment, adolescent engagement in these spaces allows them to learn and grow in various literacy activities.

Marginalization. One final theme in the literature is the marginalization and therefore embarrassment that some adolescent fanfiction authors feel. Some researchers explained how fanfiction writing was disregarded by the educational community or how adolescents were hesitant to admit to writing fanfiction to their teachers (Black, 2007; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Thomas, 2006). Korobkova and Black (2014) saw this with many of their participants and explained that "this idea of a stigmatized teengirl fandom was echoed throughout the study, as participants spoke about fangirling as a set of practices that can be easily dismissed, or even laughed at, by parents and teachers" (p. 629). Despite the rich literacy activities evident in these communities, fanfiction writers are often dismissed because of stigmas about content and stereotypes about the frivolity of teenage girl pursuits.

Challenges and implications for future research. Research in fanfiction in education settings is limited for many reasons. First, as a marginalized, adolescent, and often gendered activity (Black, 2007; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Thomas, 2006), many teachers, policy makers, and even researchers are unaware of fanfiction, much less its potential for literacy education. Beyond this, the challenge of the perceived stark separation between in and out of school literacies by many educational professionals prevents fanfiction from becoming a serious research topic in education (Black, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009a, 2009c; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2002; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lammers, 2016; Lammers & Marsh, 2015; Land, 2010; McWilliams et al., 2011; Roozen, 2009; Thomas, 2006).

However, even when fanfiction is seen for its literacy potential by adults, the ability to bring these types of out-of-school literacies into the classroom can be difficult because of student perception. Often students feel there is a difference between in and out-of-school literacy, making them unable to connect the two (Korobkova & Black, 2014; McWilliams et al., 2011; Thomas, 2006) . Furthermore, students may not want to connect the two. As Korbakova and Black (2014) pointed out, many adolescents like the fact that their fanfiction is "inaccessible to adults for the most part. Some highlight the positive aspects of carving out a space for themselves on the internet and the inability of adults to truly 'get' their passion" (p.626).

Regardless of adolescent resistance, researchers suggest that, despite the extensive literacy practices taking place in online fanfiction communities, the influence of teachers is necessary. Magnifico, Curwood, and Lammers (2015) state that their look at feedback in online fanfiction communities suggest that, "teachers' expertise is deeply needed in the difficult task of developing students' skills in writing, peer review and critique" (p. 158). A way to harness the beneficial literacy practices of online fanfiction communities combined with teacher expertise

without alienating adolescents is needed. Practical studies of using fanfiction within the

classroom exists, but needs to be expanded (McWilliams et al., 2011; Sauro & Sundmark, 2016).

Additionally, examining classroom practices that may lead to students' independent engagement

with out-of-school literacy practices such as fanfiction might be a more fruitful area of study for

the future.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I reviewed the literature on the theoretical framework for this study, New

Materialism, including its key theorists and emergence in education. I also examined the

literature on each material under study along with each material's connection to literacy and the

other materials in the study. This background will assist understanding the methods and analysis

outlined in chapter three. For instance, where in this chapter I reviewed the literature on

engagement with young adult literature, in the following chapter I elaborate on the specific

young adult text used for this study, where this chapter explores literacy research on fanfiction,

the following chapter explains the specific fanfiction community in this study, etc.

Chapter Three – Methodology

As New Materialism is just emerging in educational research, new methods and combinations of data collection and analysis are also emerging (de Freitas & Curinga, 2015). New Materialism calls on qualitative researchers to rethink the ways in which we imagine the methods and subjects of research, the way in which we report findings, and our own role in research, focusing on material intra-actions (Smythe et al., 2017). This rethinking proves helpful in tackling the complex ways adolescents interact with both traditional and New Literacies. The complexities of interactions and the full context of these literacy practices must be understood in order to be of use in the classroom. For this reason, answering the research question "how do adolescent, print book, and online fanfiction space entangle to create the newness of a hybrid traditional-New Literacies practice?" is served by a New Materialist methodology, attending to all the materials and their intra-actions. In the outline of methodology and methods that follow, I describe the New Materialist framing for each element.

New Materialist Collective Case Study

In representing a rhizome, Deleuze and Guattari (1980) call for "a map and not a tracing" (p.12). Instead of beginning with an existing pattern to analyze a subject, a tracing, we should instead depict a configuration of it through mapping. Dimitriadis and Kamberelis (2006) explain that "a map produces an organization of reality rather that reproducing some prior representation of reality" (p. 90).

Stake (2006) described a case study researcher as needing to "generate a picture of the case and then produce a portrayal of the case for others to see" (p.3). The case study researcher approaches a case in order to describe or map a subject and its context. Hatch (2002) described case studies as "a special kind of qualitative work that investigates a contextualized

contemporary (as opposed to historical) phenomenon within specific boundaries" (p. 30). A case study produces a contextualized image of a specific case, emphasizing it as one piece of a larger whole.

Continuing with the metaphor of mapping, a case study represents an intricate map of a coastline in one area, ready to be augmented with further studies that connect the coastlines into an entire region's shore. Just as Deleuze and Guattari (1987) call for a mapping of a subject, case studies require "generating a picture" (Stake, 2006, p.3). Just as a rhizome is meant to depict subject and context, the meeting of land and ocean, a case study must be "contextualized" (Hatch, 2002). In taking a New Materialist approach to understanding a literacy experience, a case study that attentively maps a contextualized piece of a whole rather than attempting to trace an entire phenomenon seemed appropriate.

However, for a New Materialist case study, subject and context are not only studied together, but rather studied as one. For example, rather than viewing a child who has difficulty reading as a case and the classroom, home, and reading materials as the influential context for the case, a New Materialist lens may focus on a literacy event itself, with the child, the materials, and the setting all as equally important aspects of the case. Rather than creating a tracing of an entire continent, New Materialism calls for particular attention to a specific coast noting how ocean and land come together to create a fluctuating coastline; land and sea are not entirely separate entities, but rather come together to create the map.

Defining the case. Because of this lack of distinction between context and subject, defining a case is particularly difficult from a New Materialist perspective. Smythe et al. (2017) describes this difficulty, addressing how the "selective gaze" of the researchers defined what was considered learning and part of the class project they were researching and what was not (p.73).

While classroom observations from a New Materialist perspective may attempt to be as limitless as possible in inclusion for a study, even these research studies must be attentive to the ways in which boundaries are imposed by the researcher. Other New Materialist studies, such as the policy studies described in chapter two, are more definitive in their boundary-making, limited by more clearly bounded methods such as document analysis and interviews.

Because this study, similar to the policy studies previously mentioned, is not bound in a physical space but rather in cyberspace, it is necessary to outline the specific materials that will be considered the case under study: the adolescent participant, the young adult novel, and the fanfiction space itself. While other materials undoubtedly play a role in creating this hybrid traditional-New Literacies practice, materials such as type of technology used and access to that technology, the space in which the adolescents access the technology and reading materials, the type of reading material (physical, electronic, owned, borrowed, etc.), other humans who participate in the activity with them, etc, these material considerations take a secondary role in this study to the three main materials by nature of the research question. The question, "how do adolescent, print book, and online fanfiction space entangle to create the newness of a hybrid traditional-New Literacies practice?" certainly does not exclude these other materials from consideration, but it does focus the study on the three materials on which I elaborate in the following sections.

Perhaps the area in which I most clearly bound the study is with the material of the adolescent participants. Rather than collecting demographic information or delving-in to personal details in order to gain information on intra-actions between the adolescent participants and the book or the adolescent participants and fanfiction, I chose to rather use my questionnaire to ask the participants themselves what they saw were the connections between themselves and

these other materials. In this way I bound my study to the book, the fanfiction site, and the questionnaire responses. This served to bound the study, but it also allowed for participant voice. As this study is designed to make incorporation into the classroom easier, it was important to bound the study in a way that centered the adolescents' views of their connections rather than my views as the researcher.

However, it is also important here to note my own role in the entanglement of materials in this study. From a New Materialist perspective it is impossible to completely separate the researcher from affecting the materials studied (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2006; Mills, 2016). By asking questions and reading documents, I am intra-acting with the materials in this study. In this sense, my position as an "aca-fan" may prove helpful in not adding too much of an outsider perspective into the entanglement (Jenkins, 1992). However, in entering the entanglement through asking questions of the adolescents and through my own intra-action with the young adult novel and the participants' fanfiction, I am altering the space. While I attempted to pose questions that are as broad as possible, the focus on the specific intra-actions in my questions affect the response, imposing my own bounded ideas onto it. Additionally, by merely approaching fanfiction writers as a researcher who has taken interest in their work, I may cause more positive feelings on the process. In fact, in one case a participant said she would post new stories she had written but had not yet posted because I was studying them. In this way, no matter how much I am fluent in and a part of the fanfiction space, entering the space as a researcher does have an effect on each of the materials under study described in the following sections.

Throne of Glass series. As briefly described earlier, the *Throne of Glass* series is an ongoing young adult fantasy series. At the time of this study, seven of the eight books in the series had been published including five books in the chronological series, one prequel collection of short stories, and one companion novel. The protagonist of the series is Celaena Sardothien, a trained assassin who has been forced into slavery. After a year of brutality, she is plucked from the slave mines to compete to be the champion of the evil king who conquered her homeland. As the series progresses, Celaena uncovers her past, her true identity, and the way to rid the world of an evil greater than the conquering king. With each book the stakes are raised and Celaena and her allies grow.

The fanfiction community surrounding this series was chosen for several reasons. Because of this study's interest in how young adult literature in particular intra-acts with young adults in literacy practices, I decided to choose a fanfiction community centered around a book or book series with both a high number of fanfictions written about it and no film version that could be the source of the fanfictions, ensuring that the text itself inspired the writing. The two young adult book series with the most stories were *The Lunar Chronicles* and *Throne of Glass*. While I was familiar with and enjoyed both series, *The Lunar Chronicles* had a few disadvantages. For one, this series is based upon fairy tales, complicating the source material. Additionally, a spin-off graphic novel series is underway for the *Lunar Chronicles*, adding in a visual element. For the purposes of this study, I wanted a more traditional young adult series.

Another interesting element to this young adult novel is the connection that this series and its author have to the other two materials in this study. The author of the *Throne of Glass* series, Sarah J. Maas, began writing the series at the age of sixteen (Maas, 2018). In this way these books, at least the earliest ones, were written by an adolescent. This differs from most

books marketed to teens which are written by adults. Additionally, Maas began her writing career by writing fanfiction (Maas, 2016). The findings of this study address the ways in which this particular book series intra-acts with the other materials in this study to create a literacy event, what, in the text itself, is particularly suited to this intra-action, including any connections these elements of the author's background contribute to this text's role in the assemblage.

    Fanfiction. The next material under study is the particular online fanfiction space. For this study I examine works and reviews found on fanfiction.net, a site commonly used in fanfiction studies (Black, 2005; Lammers, 2016; Land, 2010). As of this moment, the *Throne of Glass* series currently has 519 separate fanfiction pieces posted to this site (Fanfiction.net, 2018). As explained before, this is the second highest number of fanfiction pieces for a single young adult book series that does not also have a film version, the highest being *The Lunar Chronicles.*

    These 519 stories are written by various authors, are various lengths from a few hundred words to several chapters, and have several reviews on each post. While browsing through these 519 stores, one can filter in many ways. One can sort by publication date or number of reviews, favorites, and followers for each story, the characters that the story features, content rating (eg. M for mature), and even which "pairing" or romantic relationship the story features (Fanfiction.net, 2018). This sort screen can be found in Appendix A. Of importance to this study is not only the content of these stories but the functionality of the online fanfiction space. How does the ability to group fanfiction stories by book series and then further filter by various categories affect the experience? How does the ability to review and favorite stories or follow authors affect the experience? Why and how does this particular medium draw in and intra-act with young adult literature and adolescents in unique ways? An analysis of how the stories and

functionality of the site intra-acts with the other materials in this study seeks to answer those questions.

  Adolescent identity. The final material in these case studies is adolescent fanfiction writers, particularly those who have written stories about the *Throne of Glass* series. Because fanfiction writing is often personal and, for many adolescents, a space separate and safe from the adult world (Black, 2007; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Thomas, 2006) this study focuses adolescents who are eighteen to twenty-five years old. This allows them to participate in the study without informing their parents of their fanfiction writing, protecting them from unnecessary emotional or psychological stress. While eighteen to twenty-five-year-olds fall out of traditional definitions of adolescents as teenagers under eighteen, the distinction is an arbitrary one that is culturally and legal created. It does not represent any biological distinction. Brain development researchers define adolescence as a much broader category extending into the mid-twenties (Arain et al., 2013). The world of young adult literature is also growing to recognize that those aged eighteen to mid-twenties are still young adults with the advent of a new marketing category of "new adult" books (Cataldi, 2015). Because of this, the participants in this study are both over the age of consent, but also still adolescents in many ways. All of the participants in this study began writing fanfiction in their early teen years or before and have continued this practice into their young adulthood. Under study here is how these participants' identities intra-act with the online fanfiction and the *Throne of Glass* series. While little demographic or biographic information about each adolescents' identity was collected for privacy, here the way in which adolescent identity interacts with fanfiction and the *Throne of Glass* series is gleaned from what the adolescents themselves say about their connections and interactions with these two materials.

Multiple cases. Having defined the delimitations of a case in this research, it is necessary to describe the nature of the multiple case study design. To answer the research questions, I conducted what Stake (2000) called a collective case study. This method of inquiry uses multiple cases to come to a better understanding of a particular target which Stake (2006) called a quintain. According to Stake (2006), a quintain is the "collective target, whether it is a program, a phenomenon, or a condition" that is the focus of the multiple case study research (p. 6). For this study, the quintain will be the intra-action among adolescents, fanfiction, and young adult books, and the individual cases will be the specific assemblages of those intra-actions for the different adolescent participants.

While New Materialist studies are often case studies creating a tracing of a particular subject, this multiple case study design is used to focus on the individual cases but also the specific intra-actions. The multiple case study design allows for more data on each intra-action across cases, making this collective case study will instrumental rather than intrinsic. Stake (2000) implies that all collective case studies are instrumental rather than intrinsic since they serve to examine not the cases themselves, but rather the quintain. However, Stake (2006) later suggested that this depends on where the researcher falls on the "case-quintain dilemma" - which piece of the collective case study, the individual cases or the quintain, is to be emphasized. For this study, the quintain, the intra-actions, will be emphasized, making this an instrumental case study. Beyond this, this study is instrumental in that it seeks to answer a narrow research question and how "the concerns of researchers and theorists are manifest in the case" (Stake, 2000, p. 439). I will be specifically looking at how the young adult series, fanfiction, and adolescents intra-act within each case and the quintain as a whole.

While an instrumental study may seem counter to New Materialist perspectives that seek to "map" with open observation and description rather than to "trace" with too specific of a research question or limitation already in mind, Mills (2016) found this not to be the case saying that New Materialist studies, "can address issues such as how to integrate technologies into literacy curriculum in ways that interpret educational innovations with their socio-material relations. The materiality of literacy concerns how literacy practices connect to other entities, and the performance of the human and non-human in the social practices of literacy" (p. 117). As Mills (2016) suggests, I am addressing a specific question about socio-material literacies in order to integrate technologies into the classroom better by bounding the collective case study to specific intra-actions. However, I am still seeking to map the assemblage of adolescent, fanficiction, and young adult novel by attending to each intra-action to create the over-all picture and then again attending to each assemblage case to map the quintain, maintaining the New Materialist perspective.

Along with New Materialism seeking a balance between bounding a study and openness to seeing everything as important, Stake (2006) called for a balance in both the case-quintain dilemma and in focusing too much on specific research questions citing Firestone and Herriott (1984) and stating that "too much emphasis on original research questions and contexts can distract researchers from recognizing new issues when they emerge. But too little emphasis on research questions can leave researchers unprepared for subtle evidence supporting the most important relationships" (p. 13). Keeping this in mind, the methods and analysis I will use for this New Materialist collective case study will stem from an instrumental methodology, but will leave room for discovering relevant intrinsic information as well, including moving beyond the three main materials under study.

Data Collection

  For this collective case study I used multiple sources of data to analyze the materials of this study. The following is a description of the process of data collection.

  Recruiting. Because each separate case was a different assemblage among an adolescent, fanfiction, and the *Throne of Glass* series, recruiting adolescents engaged in this particular entanglement was essential. As a longtime member of the fanfiction.net site with access to the site's private messaging feature as every member of the site has, once I received approval for my study, I went to the subpage of fanfiction.net containing all of the *Throne of Glass* fanfiction stories. I started messaging each author beginning with the most recent. This strategy seemed to make the most sense as these authors would be the most likely to still be viewing the site and the most likely to remember their motivations for writing the recently published fanfiction. I started with the first three pages, containing sixty-one different authors. I then waited two days to allow these fanfiction authors to respond before messaging the next three pages of authors. I repeated this process until I had messaged all 279 authors of *Throne of Glass* fanfiction on fanfiction.net. Because of fanfiction.net's private message policy which does not allow outside links to be sent via private message, the recruitment message (Appendix B) contained a link to my fanfiction.net profile. From there, participants were directed to the initial questionnaire (Appendix C). Case descriptions of each participant are listed in chapter four.

  Online Questionnaire. Those who agreed to participate were directed to an online questionnaire form (Appendix C) beginning with a statement of informed consent. This questionnaire contained a series of open-ended questions so as to be set up more like a structured online interview rather than a limited survey. Flick (2014) addressed the efficacy of an online

interview saying that online interviews may be best "if the research issue has much to do with internet usage or if the target group is best to be found in online contexts" (p.234). Flick (2014) also indicated that an online interview may make sense for people who feel more comfortable being given time to answer questions rather than answering spontaneously. For my participants who were being asked about online activities in which they participate mostly anonymously, this method made the most sense to both keep the data as anonymous as possible and ensure my participants were comfortable and willing to participate. Flick (2014) does suggest that sending asynchronous questions all at once may be more like a survey than an interview and suggests sending some questions, waiting for a response, than sending further questions more closely matches the interview style. However, since my questions were closely related and thinking about the first set might help inform responses on the next set, it made sense to send all of the preliminary questions at once on a convenient form. Personalized follow-up questions were then sent later, as outlined in a later section.

In the original questionnaire, participants answered open-ended questions about their intra-actions with both the *Throne of Glass* series and fanfiction. For example, "is there anything about the *Throne of Glass* series that lends itself to fanfiction?" and "what parts of *Throne of Glass* do you like to write about?" were included in the questionnaire. These questions were generated by addressing each intra-action in the research question, adolescent-book, adolescent-fanfiction, book-fanfiction. Participants were also asked permission to use their public fanfiction in the study and if they were willing to participate in any follow-up discussions. The questionnaire was set to collect twenty-five responses from those in the appropriate age group who gave consent. Nineteen participants meeting these criteria filled out the questionnaire. Two

of these nineteen gave limited responses, skipping questions or providing only a few phrases for answers. This left seventeen usable responses to be analyzed.

Digital artifacts. Several fanfiction studies have examined the fanfiction itself to study the literacy practices within the community (Black, 2005; Lammers & Marsh, 2015; Roozen, 2009). After obtaining permission from the seventeen participants through the questionnaire, I examined all of their *Throne of Glass* fanfiction stories as well as all reviews associated with the stories. While the reviews were not created by participants in the study, the public nature of these comments allow them to be used for research as texts (McKee & Porter, 2009; Paulus, Lester, & Dempster, 2014). Analysis of these artifacts is described in the analysis section beginning with typological analysis of each intra-action (book-fanfiction, adolescent-fanfiction, adolescent-book), followed by inductive analysis.

Follow-up questions. After analyzing both the questionnaire responses and each respondent's fanfiction, I sent follow-up questions for clarification. For example, after noticing one participant mention how she likes to write about female friendships, I asked the following question "looking at the list of other fanfictions you have written as well as what you said about this *Throne of Glass* series, it does seem you have a propensity to write about female friendships. Why is that a central concept for you? Does this connect to your life in any way?".

Analysis

First round coding. I began analysis with typological analysis, forming typologies based on the three sets of intra-actions I was analyzing, book-adolescent, fanfiction-adolescent, and fanfiction-book. I did this for one participant at a time, first coding their questionnaire responses, then their follow-up question responses, then their fanfiction about *Throne of Glass*. For all of these sources a coded specifically for evidence on intra-action as the research questions

seeks to understand how each material intra-acts. The focus of the study was, rather than to define any particular qualities of each material, rather form a tracing of how the materials work together. It is only the intra-action that is the focus, not the individual materials. For example, the following excerpt from the participant Rhymechime's response was coded as book-adolescent:

> I do feel a connection to multiple characters in *Throne of Glass*. Elide has been one of my favorite characters from the beginning. She has gone through so much but is one of the strongest characters in the story. She doesn't let her disability hinder any portion of her life and she fights for what she believes in. As someone with a chronic illness, this really speaks to me. I have tried to live my life to the fullest and even though I have setbacks I see through Elide that it is possible to succeed and fight.

In this Rhymechime clearly speaks to how the *Throne of Glass* series connects to her personally. Connections like these between materials formed the first pass of coding for both the responses to the questionnaire and the fanfiction of each respondent. After this first pass, follow-up questions were sent out to the seventeen respondents. Once they were returned, the follow-up responses were also coded using the three intra-actions from the aforementioned typography. NVIVO was used to track all coding. Fifteen of the seventeen initial respondents also responded to the follow-up questions.

  Member checking. After all responses and follow-up responses were recorded and coded, I wrote up a case description for each of the fifteen full responses. The case descriptions, as displayed in chapter four, focused on the three typological codes describing each participants' intra action with the *Throne of Glass* series, fanfiction in general, and finally how they described the two working together. These case descriptions were sent to each respective respondent for

member checking. Ten participants responded to the member-checking, affirming the accuracy

of the description. Of these ten, I chose six to highlight in this multiple case study based on their

full and unique responses. The four excluded exemplified many of the same characteristics of

the six chosen cases without much variation. For instance, the four excluded showed the same

interest in character and review culture as the other six, but without strong descriptions of

preference for either in their experience in fanfiction. Therefore, the six chosen served to

highlight different approaches, motivations, and interests in fanfiction and the text.

Second round coding. As Hatch (2002) stated, "that typological analysis starts with a

deductive step does not preclude the researcher's being aware that other important categories are

likely to be in the data or prevent the researcher from searching for them. Some unexpected

patterns, relationships, or themes will jump out of the data as they are read and reread by the

researcher" (p. 161). For this reason, while analysis began with typological analysis, inductive

analysis (Hatch, 2002) was used to analyze data within the framework typographies. This

inductive coding was done by breaking each typological code down into more detailed codes.

Using the coding feature in NVIVO, I pulled up and reviewed all data coded for each typological

code. For example, I first pulled up everything coded as adolescent-book. Within this data

participants talked about or their fanfiction addressed connections and engagement with the

author of the series, the characters, the genre, the plot, the style, the progressive themes, and

social interaction about the series. After this second pass of coding all codes were analyzed and

combined or refined. For instance, the original code "character" as described above was split

into "connection with character" and "engaged with character" to differentiate between

characters the adolescents enjoyed versus characters the adolescents felt reflected them in some

way. Additionally, the original codes "reading as a writer" and "style" were combined into

"engaged with style." These splits or combinations were made to reflect the amount of data in each code. If only one piece of data was coded as "reading as a writer" but several more were coded as "engaged with style," it made sense for "engaged with style" to subsume "reading as a writer." The final set of codes can be found in Appendix D. When this list was finalized, the data was coded a third time using these codes.

Limitations

Smythe et al. (2017) stated that in engaging in New Materialist studies we "rather than claiming accurate reflection of the world, we might more helpfully produce stories that invite readers or listeners to learn from them" (p.53). This goes back to Deleuze and Guattari's (1980) call for "a map and not a tracing" (p.12). A New Materialist study seeks to provide information on the complexity of intra-actions in an assemblage, not pin down or define phenomena or objects. Smythe et al. (2017) spoke to the strengths of this approach for education:

> This is a perspective that does not promise clarity, universality or finality about these relationships; however, it may be able to deal more effectively with the complexity of events in education settings that we have heretofore not been able to pay attention to. We are interested in understanding this complexity not because we are pursuing a more exact or faithful or detailed description of educational phenomena, but because it helps us question assumptions about how we conceive of learning and teaching, what causes learning, who is doing the learning (or teaching) and how certain ways of learning and objects of learning are valued more than others. (p. 22)

With this is mind, the study does not provide a definitive image of the relationships among adolescents, young adult literature, and fanfiction that can be generalizable to a larger context.

Rather, it provides information on the specific assemblage described among these specific adolescents, this book, and this fanfiction space.

Additionally, this study did not take in all factors material to the literacy experience such as type of computer access or economic background of the participants. As discussed previously, because New Materialism seeks to take all materials into account, bounding a study can be difficult. While the material factors of economics are certainly relevant, interactions with the physical technology could not be observed as it takes place in a physical space and not the digital fanfiction space that is under study. Further studies should be done to incorporate the physicality of technology into this assemblage to create an even more robust map of the literary experience and more fully show the possibilities and limitations of recreating these experiences in the classroom.

Chapter Summary

This chapter elucidates the methodology for this study and how a New Materialist collective case study was conducted and analyzed. This chapter defined and deliminated each case, the materials under study, and the research context. It explained what can be learned from a collective case study and what limitations this study faces. The chapter also outlines the recruiting process and how each participant and material was selected. Finally, the chapter outlines the analysis process for the data collected.

Chapter Four – Findings

Stake (2006) spoke at length about the "case-quintain dilemma" in which a researcher must balance analysis of each individual case with cross-case analysis. For this study it is important to maintain this balance, showing how each individual case exemplifies unique experiences of the fanfiction space while also highlighting themes across the cases of how intra-actions form similar experiences for each participant. For this reason, I will begin with a description of each individual case, then move into thematic analysis across cases focusing on the similarities among the cases, yet describing important differences as relevant.

Cases

What follows is a summary of each case under study. All names are pseudonyms of each participant's screen name, and all case descriptions were member-checked by each participant for accuracy. These case descriptions are based on analysis of questionnaire responses, follow-up question responses, and analysis of each participant's fanfiction. Like the analysis, each case description covers the participant's views on the *Throne of Glass* series itself, fanfiction, and how and why each thinks *Throne of Glass* combines with the practice of fanfiction for a unique experience. The similarities and differences in each case will be discussed in later sections.

ChrisisDestruction. While he normally writes anime-based fanfiction, ChrisisDestruction found something special in the characters of *Throne of Glass*. He finds the feelings the characters have while going through so much hardship are particularly interesting. ChrisisDestruction says he identifies most with the character Chaol, of whom he says, "he starts out as just a normal guard that has had a troubled past, but slowly is turned into something he doesn't want to be by force." He says it is "not very often that you get to see characters go through that thing and start from the lowest and the brought back up [in not] just

mind but power. "The strength and change in the characters is what draws him to this series. He also values the number of characters and possibilities in the vast world of *Throne of Glass* that allows for fanfiction opportunities.

ChrisisDestruction enjoys the power fanfiction brings over a story. He finds it a good outlet saying, "fanfiction is an outlet that I don't have sometimes. Something that I can vent to and have control over something and make a good story out of it. In a couple words it's just fun and relieving in a way." This control is highlighted by the fact that his fanfiction always features and focuses on original characters. He creates his own characters and has them interact with the world and characters of the original author, often putting a bit of himself in the original characters.

His writing is audience driven. He says, "I usually write what comes to mind in the first chapter and if I think it's good then I will post it to see what kind of impact it will have on readers. If I don't really care for the reviews then I will typically just slowly back away from it or do more of it just for fun." He begins his *Throne of Glass* fanfiction with somewhat of a disclaimer, saying "I probably won't get everything down perfectly since I'm doing this for fun." In this way he manages the expectations of his readers and directs their feedback. From these two remarks, it seems that doing things "just for fun" takes the pressure off. The writing is not expected to be perfect. While he values his readers' input, if reviews are too negative, he will stop or continue without posting.

Pax30. Like many *Throne of Glass* readers, Pax30 loves the characters and plot of the series. She loves how seemingly insignificant elements of the story somehow resurface and become meaningful in later books. While she connects with some aspects of the characters, she enjoys them for different reasons, saying, "I don't love the characters because I can relate to

them, I love the way they're different from me. They're all unique and it adds even more to the story." Pax30 talks about getting into small obsessions that make her just want to write. She likes to write about scenes she wants to see more of, and *Throne of Glass* has so many different parts that can be expanded upon. Pax30 says, "Writing a *Throne of Glass* fanfiction is a way for me to be a part of a world as amazing as Sarah J. Mass'."

Pax30 writes fanfiction to immerse herself in the story. She says, "When I write my fanfic, I look for plot holes and fill them with my own original content. It makes me feel like I'm in the story and in my fanfic, I can add my own touch to the characters." Pax30's fanfiction features original characters because she feels she can do better justice to her own characters in the pre-established world rather than writing pre-established characters. She also finds fanfiction a great springboard for her own original fiction, and creating her own characters is an excellent place to start brainstorming, saying, "I think it's easier to write an OC in a pre-established world than one that you make on your own. It's great writing practice and lets you focus solely on character development rather than trying to incorporate world development and character development at the same time. I can pay more attention to my characters because the world is already built." Though her characters are not based on herself, she finds writing fanfiction an excellent way to dive into a story. She finds her writing has improved because of writing fanfiction, especially because of her beta reader.

Pax30 loves being involved in the fanfiction community. She likes reading different people's perspectives and ideas on the original text. She says, "the great thing about fanfiction is if you don't like it, you can keep on moving on until you find one that you do like." She leaves encouraging reviews for others, and the joy of getting reviews on her own work is highly motivating for her:

My reviews are positive and they motivate me to continue writing. I don't think readers understand how a good review makes an author feel. They make me happy to know that at least one person enjoys my writing. The best reviews are when they point out specific things that they like about what you wrote, a plot twist you snuck in there, or just your writing style in general. A good review gives me one of the best feelings in the world.

In the same way that reviews make her feel connected to the fan community, she likes to make her readers feel connected to her. Pax30 almost always includes author notes in her fiction, saying, "I think it adds the presence of the author. Instead of it being just the reader and the story, there's the author too." This is one of the benefits of fanfiction for Pax30, interaction between author and reader.

QuietSteps. QuietSteps was drawn to *Throne of Glass* because of the description of the strong protagonist, but what became her main interest in the book was the strong friendships, especially among the women of the series. As someone who attended an all-girls school and retains strong relationships with female friends in her life, this connection to the series is strong. She finds the series features so many characters, yet each character is fleshed out with unique goals, backstories, and dynamic changes. The ability to have such distinct characters with different motivations yet all connect with some common goals is one aspect QuietSteps appreciates about the series. While QuietSteps did not know much about Sarah J. Maas before reading the first book of the series, she now follows her on social media accounts and appreciates female fantasy authors in general for their ability to write more realistic female characters.

QuietSteps' *Throne of Glass* fanfiction stemmed from a group writing project organized on Tumblr in which a writer was paired with an artist. The two collaborated to create paired fanfiction and fanart for the series. This was the first time she had participated in an organized

event such as this, but had collaborated similarly yet independently with friends before. Given her love of female friendships, QuietSteps fanfiction centered on this aspect of the series. Though she placed the characters in a completely different world from that of the book, she highlighted and amplified the friendships of the series. QuietSteps says that this is easy to do with a book like *Throne of Glass* which includes so many characters. She says her fanfiction is character-driven, and she likes to write about things not fully explored in the series, such as particular character interactions.

QuietSteps appreciates the interaction she has with readers while writing fanfiction. Not only was her *Throne of Glass* fanfiction created in response to the community in collaboration with an artist, but she also paced the release of each chapter, generating reviews and comments. She says, "I enjoy reading their speculations of where the plot will progress since I already know if they're right or wrong." She also appreciated constructive criticism and says fanfiction has improved her writing:

> It allows me to practice writing with already established characters and settings, which is especially important in practicing staying in character during writing. Fanfiction makes improving writing skills much easier than it would be otherwise since I don't need to spend excess time developing characters before I can start writing.

QuietSteps experience with *Throne of Glass* fanfiction seems to have been driven by female friendships throughout. Her connection to the series itself, her fanfiction story, as well as her collaboration during and after the writing process all involve fictitious or real-life collaboration with other women.

RhymeChime. RhymeChime is a fan of young adult fantasy with strong female protagonists, and when she saw how passionate fans of the *Throne of Glass* series were on Tumblr, she knew she should try it. She fell in love with the trope-defying characters that felt so real despite the fantasy setting. She feels *Throne of Glass* does not fall into many of the traps that young adult fantasy usually does, including love triangles. Commenting on the maturity of the story even though it is classified as young adult, she even gave the series to her older sister and mother, who also enjoyed it. RhymeChime felt especially connected to Elide, a character with a physical disability. RhymeChime says of Elide, "She doesn't let her disability hinder any portion of her life and she fights for what she believes in. As someone with a chronic illness, this really speaks to me. I have tried to live my life to the fullest and even though I have setbacks I see through Elide that it is possible to succeed and fight." Beyond these connections, RhymeChime also keeps up with the author of *Throne of Glass*, Sarah J. Maas. RhymeChime loves how Maas interacts with her fans, saying, "author's that don't engage with their fans make it hard to enjoy series sometimes."

RhymeChime loves writing in and of itself, having started writing fanfiction at 10 and writing her own original fiction which is also a fantasy world with a strong female protagonist. However, she also loves reading others' fanfiction, which she does every day. She says that she has read some fanfiction that's even better than published books, and that it is great to read about her favorite characters in different stories. She also says, "I love that ability to interact with writers and comment on their stories. And I love receiving comments myself." She finds comments on her fanfiction extremely meaningful, saying "there is something special about receiving comments. Every comment makes me smile and a few have even made me cry with

happiness." While she doesn't write just to get comments, she really appreciates it when she does receive them.

For Throne of Glass in particular, RhymeChime seems primarily driven by character. In her author's notes she says, "Don't mind me I just needed some Elide and Lorcan fluff in my life...they have control of my soul and I love them. Hope you enjoy!" This shows how RhymeChime's connection to these characters are so strong that she desires to fill in the gaps in the fanfiction community for these two characters. She also says, "*Throne of Glass* is easily able to lend itself to fanfiction. Because it is a land of magic, it is easy to explore the world itself and mold it the way you want. The characters, especially the minor ones, have not been explored fully and writing fanfiction can give them more depth." Rhymechime's connection to the series and connection with readers drives her participation in this community.

TheBookWorm1718. A fan of young adult fantasy with strong female protagonists, TheBookWorm1718 fell in love with the characters, constant plot twists, and point of view shifts of *Throne of Glass*.   She felt compelled to write fanfiction about the series after the most recent chronological book came out with a gut-wrenching cliffhanger, leaving all the characters in desperate positions until the next book, at the time years away from being published. This ending affected her so much that she had to ameliorate her grief through poetry and a continuation of the story.

TheBookWorm1718 feels that grief is a strong, relatable emotion that is one of the easiest emotions for her to write about. She also enjoys writing poetry, feeling that poetry best expresses emotions. For this reason, she wrote a series of poems to express the grief of various characters at the end of *Empire of Storms*, the most recently published chronological book of the series as of this study. She feels these poems can linger on the emotions of each character rather

than have to move forward with plot. The unanswered cliffhanger, she admits, probably had a lot to do with her need to write about the series, but she feels she would have written poetry about the series even if it were finished.

In general, TheBookWorm1718 enjoys seeing the multiple perspectives on a series offered by fanfiction, and likes to contribute to that with her own. She finds reviews to be both uplifting and instructive, and she leaves reviews to make sure others get the same benefit.

WritingLover. WritingLover's relationship with *Throne of Glass* is fueled by fandom. She first discovered the series through a fan-made mood board on the heavily fandom-based website, Tumblr. Once she picked up the series, she especially enjoyed the style of writing, saying, "Maas cuts through the BS and it's very refreshing to read. I don't have to read through long prose or poetic nonsense. She cuts straight to the point and that keeps my attention." She also likes the drama of the story that stems from dynamic relationships and impending deadlines. Apart from that, WritingLover doesn't seem to have any particular connection to the *Throne of Glass* series, other than that it continues to serve as fuel for her interaction with readers of fanfiction. When asked the reason she writes *Throne of Glass* fanfiction, WritingLover responded with, "I thought it'd be fun and thought I had a good handle on the characters and their voices. I was also very bored last spring and asked for writing prompts, so a few people flooded me with TOG requests. That was nice." Motivated by pleasure and understanding of the book, but more so by requests from fellow fans, WritingLover has published over 58,000 words of *Throne of Glass* fanfiction. Many of her pieces stem directly from writing prompts about *Throne of Glass* that readers have sent her, and she often uses these prompts as the descriptions for her stories. Some prompts include:

- Prompt: a request for rowaelin [the romantic pairing of the characters Rowan and Aelin] fluff [light, often humorous romantic fanfiction]? nothing in particular but like idk sparring maybe? thank you so much

- Prompt: Rowaelin roommates or live-across-the-hall au? [alternate universe, different world than the world of the series] (All human, modern day AU) Rowan and Aelin are neighbors and Rowan is less than pleased.

- Prompt: Aelin's hurt and Rowan gets protective. Rowan didn't see the arrow aimed for his back, but Aelin did.

With each of these requests from readers, WritingLover wrote pieces of various lengths. For her it seems that writing fanfiction is extremely collaborative. She operates with prompts, loves receiving and giving reviews, and often bounces story ideas off of her friends. WritingLover also likes how fanfiction can take a story in infinite directions, saying, "with traditional books the story and characters have to be plot driven, and can't divert from that too much or else it's distracting and nonsensical. But with fanfiction, we get a lot of time back. Fanfiction uses that time to fill in gaps like character bonding, or back story, or just time for the characters to have a coffee and relax." Without the same constraints as published novels, WritingLover enjoys how fanfiction can meander in non-linear ways, into side stories or otherwise "non-essential" details. This is evident in her fanfiction, which is often set in either a different world than the series or in the same world but with major plot points changed to fit her or her readers' imaginations.

Cross-case Analysis

As delineated in the methodology section, I began analysis with typological analysis, forming typologies based on the three sets of intra-actions I was analyzing, book-adolescent, fanfiction-adolescent, and fanfiction-book. After creating the case descriptions above and member checking them, I completed a second round of inductive coding by breaking each typological code down into more detailed codes. Finally, all codes were refined into a final set of codes, the cases were paired down, and the data for these cases were analyzed again with the final set of codes. What follows is a description of themes across cases from the final set of codes. This analysis focuses primarily on what the cases had in common, but it will also highlight important differences that emerged when relevant. It should be noted that, in a study examining the connections and intra-actions among materials, separating out specific connections proves instructive, but also limiting. Each theme presented here is interconnected to the other themes. While this chapter focuses on presenting each theme separately as findings, the implications chapter will discuss the interconnectedness more fully. Additionally, I do include in some sections "lines of flight," places where obvious connections to other themes emerge (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). For each theme in which I include a line of flight, I indicate a major connection with another theme later in the findings that will be elaborated on more fully. This allows for outlining some of the connections among themes while maintaining a linear organization. This highlights the fact that, from a New Materialist perspective, none of the findings are isolated, but, rather, they must all be taken together in the fullness of the context. Figure 1 at the end of this chapter provides a final visual of the connections among all of the themes.

Book-adolescent intra-action. Each of the six participants under study described their relationship with the *Throne of Glass* series. For this intra-action, I make a distinction between two types of intra-actions, connection and engagement. With this distinction I intend to separate the times when the adolescents indicate a part of the book reflects their own personal experiences, which I label connection, and times when the adolescents are engaged with parts of the book but not because it reflected their personal experience. This came to be an important distinction as the adolescents engaged with the book both for its similarities and its differences from their own lives. They described personal connections with the author, characters, or a social connection that ignited an interest in the series. With these connections the participants felt that some aspect of the book related to their experience or personality. The participants also described engaged reading, whether it was the plot, style, fantasy elements, progressive themes, or characters that kept them engaged, even when the book did not reflect their own experience.

Line of flight. While we know that personally meaningful and engaged reading is extremely important in building literacy (Beach & Ward, 2013; Cantrell et al., 2017; De Naeghel et al., 2012; Gambrell & Morrow, 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; McCombs, 1996; Oldfather, 1996), interestingly, not all participants were particularly connected or engaged with the text itself, but rather read and wrote about *Throne of Glass* for reasons more connected to the purposes of fanfiction than for being a fan. WritingLover was the only participant to express an indifferent attitude to the series, stating that her real interest in it was fueled by requests she received to write fanfiction for the series. This will be explored further in the adolescent-fanfiction section.

Connections with character. Kirkland (2011) spoke about the importance of adolescents connecting to a book in order to construct their own identities from the literature. Both Ivey and Johnston (2013) and Wilhelm and Smith (2014) noted how young adult literature helped adolescents with this construction of identity. It is unsurprising then that five of the six participants in this study noted their personal connection with various characters in *Throne of Glass*. Rhymechime, Quietsteps, and Chrisisdestruction described in particular how characters in the book connected with his or her own life. Rhymechime noted two connections. For one, as a woman, she prefers books with strong female leads as is the case in *Throne of Glass*. More specifically, Rhymechime connects with the character Elide:

> Elide has been one of my favorite characters from the beginning. She has gone through so much but is one of the strongest characters in the story. She doesn't let her disability hinder any portion of her life and she fights for what she believes in. As someone with a chronic illness, this really speaks to me. I have tried to live my life to the fullest and even though I have setbacks I see through Elide that it is possible to succeed and fight.

Not only does Rhymechime connect with Elide as a strong woman, but she also appreciates the connection she has to the character as someone with a physical condition that can both cope and thrive.

Similarly to Rhymechime, Quietsteps enjoys the strong female characters in *Throne of Glass*, particularly how they are written to have strong friendships:

> I went to an all-girls school until I was 16, so I've always had a very close knit group of female friends around me, giving me plenty of experience to draw from. They've been there, unfaltering, through difficult times in my life where my family haven't been, which has really given me an appreciation for friendships between girls and how strong they can

be … Outside of YA it can be so hard to find media with well written female characters who have story arcs other than just romantic relationships, so I'm always drawn to series with the opportunity to read female friendships.

Quietsteps finds that *Throne of Glass* has multiple well-developed female characters that are allowed to interact and form bonds in ways many novels and series do not. This connection to her own experience draws her to the series.

Chrisisdestruction also connects with the characters in this series. He describes this connection saying, "personally, I can relate to a couple of characters in the story. But if I had to choose one character then that would have to be Chaol. The reason being that he starts out as just a normal guard that has had a troubled past, but slowly is turned into something he doesn't want to be by force." What Chrisisdestruction seems to connect to here is the feeling of being out of control. When speaking about fanfiction, Chrisisdestruction often cites the control an author has over a story as one of the main benefits. For himself he says, "fanfiction is an outlet that I don't have sometimes. Something that I can vent to and have control over." Chrisisdestruction relates to the character Chaol, whose sense of order is disrupted in a way he cannot control.

TheBookWorm1718 feels a different kind of connection to the characters. Instead of going through similar experiences, TheBookWordm1718 feels an emotional connection to the characters. She says, "I felt such grief at the end of EoS [*Empire of Storms* (*Throne of Glass* #5)] because it felt as if everything had gone right then just fell apart." In talking about writing about this grief in her fanfiction, she writes, "grief and sorrow are two feelings that I feel like I can write about the easiest. I can connect to them. I feel like other people can relate well to them too. I try to force emotion into every word, so other readers can feel how those like Aelin and Rowan were feeling the moment they were separated." Here, TheBookWorm1718 shows her

connection to the characters through the strong emotion of grief – such a strong connection that she felt the need to write about it to connect to others.

  Connections with author. Connections with the author of the series, Sara J. Maas, were noted, but were not of high importance to the participants of this study. As a fan, Quietsteps enjoys following Sarah J. Maas on social media, but this was not the original draw for her to the series:

> I follow her Instagram and Twitter accounts so I know a reasonable amount about her as an author. But I didn't know of her until after I'd read the first two books so it wasn't anything particular about her that drew me to the series, though I do prefer to read fantasy books by female authors since I tend to find the female characters to be better written.

For Quietsteps, following an author is not necessarily a prerequisite for enjoying a series, but rather a way to stay connected once the book has already drawn her in with well-written characters. This desire for connection is reflected in Rhymechime's engagement with the author:

> I do follow Sarah J. Maas on Instagram and Facebook. I have always been someone to follow author's because I love to hear about their new works, and even about their lives. Sarah is such a wonderful woman who cares deeply for her fans and for her books. She does so many events for fans. Author's that don't engage with their fans make it hard to enjoy series sometimes.

Rhymechime's enjoyment of the series is at least in part connected to her ability to connect with the author on social media. Having an author that works to communicate with fans is part of the process of engaging with the work for this fanfiction writer.

Social connections. Many researchers have noted the importance of social interaction centered around literacy as a way to gain literacy achievement and as a sign of engagement (Beach & Ward, 2013; Cantrell et al., 2017; Gambrell & Morrow, 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Ivey, 2014; Oldfather, 1996; Scheffel, 2016). Some of the participants in this study had a social connection to the series that either ignited or prolonged engagement with the series or came as an outgrowth of their interest in the series. Rhymechime both came to the series through social interaction and passed it on socially after. Rhymechime says, "Initially, I came across the *Throne of Glass* series on Tumblr and just listening to how passionate the fans were made me curious." After falling in love with the characters, Rhymechime shared the series with her mother and older sister. In reading this series, she knew her sister would enjoy it:

> My sister has the same connection to the series that I do. She is very picky about books and only picks up books that have strong female protagonists. She does writing of her own, in a different way (she writes movie scripts in New York) and she has written a movie about the struggles of "wives" in the 1940's and 1950's. She said the female characters she grew up with were always pushed aside and she always tried to find characters that portrayed actual woman that she could relate to.

Rhymechime discovered the series through passionate fans, then decided to share her love for the series in kind. A shared interest in strong female protagonists helped Rhymechime know exactly how to share this book.

Writinglover discovered the book in a similar way, through Tumblr. She says, "I first learned about TOG [*Throne of Glass*] on Tumblr. There was a fan made mood board with the quote 'Libraries were full of ideas—perhaps the most dangerous and powerful of all weapons.' I

thought that was very powerful and it piqued my interest." Social interaction brought Writinglover to the series as fans shared their favorite aspects of the series through social media.

Line of flight. The adolescent-fanfiction section lends more insight into social interaction around the series through fanfiction. Obviously, all of the participants in this study engaged in social interaction around this series by sharing their fanfiction about the series with the world.

Engagement with character. Distinct from connection with character, which I define as personally relating to a character or character trait, engagement with characters, even characters vastly different from the reader, was prevalent for the participants in the study. All six participants talked about how the characters kept them coming back to *Throne of Glass*. Chrisisdestruction talks about how he started reading *Throne of Glass* because of the main character, Celaena Sardothien. He is drawn to how the series revolves around her (and other characters') feelings while they experience extreme highs and lows in the story. Chrisisdestruction is not alone in his admiration for the main character. TheBookWorm1718, Rhymechime, and Quietsteps all mention how they love the strong, female protagonist. Pax30 highlights how she does not just like characters that are similar to her, but rather she says, "I don't love the characters because I can relate to them, I love the way they're different from me. They're all unique and it adds even more to the story." Pax30 loves the depth with which each character is written.

Several participants talked about how they were drawn to the way the characters interacted in the story. Pax30 loves "the bonds they create with each other," and QuietSteps enjoys "the strength of the friendships written between characters." Not only are these character relationships an integral piece of these participants' engagement with the story, but they also enjoy how these relationships are also dynamic, changing along with the characters.

Writinglover and Rhymechime both appreciate the lack of the static love triangle, and QuietSteps explains that "it's shown very well how each character changes through the series, and the relationships within the cast are shown to reflect these changes rather than stay stagnant."

Perhaps the most telling information about how closely readers engage with these characters is found in the fanfiction itself. Beyond each participant writing thousands of words revolving around specific characters, in author notes to her readers Rhymechime says that the characters Elide and Lorcan "have control of my soul and I love them."

Line of flight. The book-fanfiction section explores other ways in which the participants engaged with the characters in the series through fanfiction, including how the array of characters in the novel as well as their development is particularly fruitful for fanfiction.

Engagement with fantasy genre. All of the participants showed a strong preference for the fantasy genre. In listing their favorite books apart from *Throne of Glass*, all of them listed almost exclusively fantasy books such as *The Chronicles of Nick* series, *A Court of Thornes and Roses* series (the other series by *Throne of Glass* author Sarah J. Maas), Rick Riordan's series, the *Six of Crows* series, and books by Tamora Pierce and Cassandra Clare.

In addressing her love of fantasy, Writinglover says, "I like [fantasy] a lot because they deal with adventure and happen in different realities. I like being able to imagine their worlds in my head and play the scenes out like a movie." Rhymechime adds, "Even though it's a land of fiction and magic, the character's and the story feels so real and true."

Line of flight. While the participants did not go in to detail about their love for fantasy series, the ways in which fantasy novels lend themselves to engagement through fanfiction are outlined in the book-fanfiction section. This section hones in on some other aspects of the fantasy genre that the participants find appealing, if only for fanfiction purposes.

Engagement with plot. Five of the six participants mentioned the plot as a major reason he or she engaged with the *Throne of Glass* series. Quietsteps explains that what initially drew her to the series was the protagonist's, Celaaena Sardothien's, character, but what kept her hooked throughout the series was the plotline. Pax30, Rhymechime, and TheBookWorm1718 elaborate on this by specifying that the plot twists are what keeps them engaged. Pax30 says that she enjoys **"**how each book somehow will end up connecting to the others… the plot twists are amazing." Pax30 is referring to the way that minor character or events in one novel of the series may end up becoming extremely important in later books. Additionally, the books are filled with twits in which the reader is kept clueless about the protagonist's true plan until it is revealed to the other characters and the reader simultaneously. Even as a connoisseur of fantasy novels, Rhymechime notes that "the plot line actually surprised me." Writinglover emphasized the drama of the plot, saying that she loves when characters are facing a deadline. She says, "in the first book she [Celaena] has to win the competition or go back to Endovier [a mine worked by slaves], which means there's a knife above her head waiting to drop if she fails." The way the plotline of this series keeps readers waiting to see what happens next with constant surprises kept them engaged.

Engagement with style. Five of the six participants valued elements of the series' style as a way they kept engaged in the text. Chrisisdestruction, Quietsteps, and TheBookWorm1718 all commented on how the switching point of views kept them engaged in the novels. Quietsteps explains why this keeps her interest:

> Possibly my favorite aspects of the writing style are the fact that each and every character has their own established goal in addition to the central goal of all the characters which keeps them feeling real, and the changing dynamics between the different characters. It's

shown very well how each character changes through the series, and the relationships within the cast are shown to reflect these changes rather than stay stagnant. As a reader this keeps me on my toes and keeps me invested in each character's storyline.

For Quietsteps, the multiple perspectives allow each character to enjoy strong development, and this keeps her engaged while reading.

Other participants enjoyed other elements of Sarah J. Maas' style. Rhymechime and Writinglover comment on how the story can feel so full and fleshed out, yet it is not full of long, descriptive prose. Writinglover addresses Maas' style:

I fight really hard against the rigid grammar that was taught to me growing up. Sometimes my writing suffers because I have to have full sentences and things like that, but Maas cuts through the BS and it's very refreshing to read. I don't have to read through long prose or poetic nonsense. She cuts straight to the point and that keeps my attention.

Rhymechime reiterates this saying, "the style of writing is amazing and even long descriptions don't feel boring. Every part of this story is fully flushed out." These participants enjoy how Maas develops characters and plot rather than wax poetic.

Engagement with progressive themes. Half of the respondents mentioned a connection to the progressive themes of the novels. In talking about the kinds of books she likes to read, Quietsteps says that a commonality in her book choices are that they all have "a very diverse cast in terms of ethnicities, sexualities, and disabilities which I always find more interesting to read about." While the *Throne of Glass* series did not start out incredibly diverse, WritingLover describes how they progressed:

She [Sarah J. Maas] had the idea for TOG [*Throne of Glass*] years ago and it has since then grown and she's trying to make it more inclusive in terms of POC [People of Color]

and people with disabilities. I like that. I like that she recognizes her once limited view

and has since then begun to expand her world to include more people.

Rhymechime also addresses the progressive bent of the books regarding the complexities of the

protagonist's romantic relationships. She says, "Even though Aelin had multiple boyfriends, she

was never put into a love triangle and have these interests at different times in her life, like

normal relationships." While many books present a female protagonist with a choice between

two male suitors, one of whom she finally chooses for life, *Throne of Glass* has the protagonist

have meaningful romantic relationships with several people throughout the series before finding

her "mate."

Adolescent-fanfiction intra-action. This section explores findings centering around the

participants engagement with fanfiction in general, not limited to the *Throne of Glass* series. In

this way the context of this literacy practice in taken into account. Findings included that

participants enjoyed the access fanfiction gave them to what they considered quality texts for

free and meeting their exact preferences. They also expressed a belief that fanfiction helped

them to become better writers of their own original fiction and improved their general reading

and writing skills. This educational value was motivating for them. Participants also stated that

fanfiction gave them an outlet for self-expression while allowing them to more deeply immerse

themselves in a story they loved. They also enjoyed the ability fanfiction gave them to interact

with the authors of fanfiction or with the readers of their fanfiction. Finally, participants said

reading and writing fanfiction was simply fun and a pleasurable activity in which to engage.

Access. Some of the participants commented on enjoying the access the phenomenon of

fanfiction and fanfiction.net itself gave them to stories. Writinglover commented on the sheer

number of stories to be found on fanfiction.net, and TheBookword1718 likes how it is easy to

publish and find fanfiction as well as the author profiles. Chrisisdestruction says, "Fanfiction.net is just one of my favorite sites because it is nothing but fanfiction." It seems that the volume of fanfiction options in one space is appealing to these readers/writers. Perhaps it is what Pax30 says, "the great thing about fanfiction is if you don't like it, you can keep on moving on until you find one that you do like." These participants enjoy being able to find exactly the content they are looking for, content that seems tailored to them. Because there is a sea of stories, by using the many tagging and filtering options on the site as well as reading the brief summaries of each story, it is easy to find what one wants and pass over what one does not want.

Education. Fanfiction researchers have found that online fanfiction communities have become a teaching space for adolescent readers and writers (Black, 2005, 2006, 2007; Kell, 2009; B. Kelley, 2016; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lammers, 2013, 2016; Lammers & Marsh, 2015; Land, 2010; Thomas, 2006). And Wilhelm and Smith (2014) found that adolescents take pleasure out of and find engagement in having an educational aspect to their choice reading. Participants in this study talked about the ways their involvement in fanfiction has improved their skills in some way. Pax30 and Rhymechime mention how they believed their participation in fanfiction improves how they read. Rhymechime says, "fanfiction has affected my reading positively too and I find myself able to read at a high level." Pax30 is more specific about this reading:

> I think I do gain a deeper understanding to the story after I write a fan fiction piece about it.
> There's something about going through the story and trying to sort out each character and
> action that really adds to my understanding of the plot and characters.

For these participants, it seems to be the volume of reading combined with the intense study of a work it takes to write about it that increases their perceived reading skills.

More so than reading, participants found that fanfiction improved their writing. Some participants credited the massive amounts of reading they have done for their improved writing. As WritingLover stated, "Oh yeah. By reading other's works, I learned how to use a comma basically." Pax30 gives more detail about how fanfiction has improved her writing:

> My writing skills have improved immensely from my fanfiction experience. I've gotten so much better at interpretation and writing figurative language. My writing is more interesting and having a beta really helps improve writing skills. If you look at my first ever fanficton piece on Keepers of the Lost Cities, you can really see the change in my writing style.

Similar to Pax30's suggestion that having a Beta reader edit her work has improved her writing, TheBookWorm1718 says that reviews on her work has helped her increase her skills. Additionally, Quietsteps echoes Pax30's statement about looking back on previous fanfictions still on the fanfiction.net site and being able to see improvement. She also goes further in explaining why fanfiction is a space that feeds her writing skill:

> It allows me to practise writing with already established characters and settings, which is especially important in practising staying in character during writing. Fanfiction makes improving writing skills much easier than it would be otherwise since I don't need to spend excess time developing characters before I can start writing.

In this way, Quietsteps is addressing the ways in which writing fanfiction has assisted her in writing other narratives. This was a major area of importance to the participants, using fanfiction as a springboard for their own original fiction. Along with Quietsteps, Pax30, Rhymechime, and WritingLover all talked about how fanfiction has helped them along the path to writing their own original fiction. Quietsteps was the most specific about how fanfiction help her create riginal fiction saying, "as someone who hopes to publish my own fiction works in the future it allows

me to practise my writing skills without needing to spend time developing characters and settings first, and by publishing my fanfiction I can get feedback on my work to help me improve."

      Line of flight. As seen here, several participants are fanfiction writers who wish to publish original fiction one day. Though, as seen in the adolescent-book section, most participants did not follow the *Throne of Glass* author, Sarah J. Maas's, career closely. She was an adolescent fanfiction writer who eventually published her own fiction. While the participants did not seem aware of this connection, it is worth noting the similarities in the backgrounds of the author and these writers.

      Expression. Five of the six participants talked about how fanfiction was a helpful form of self-expression, writing about how the space and form allowed for multiple ways to introduce personal creativity. Some participants remarked on the infinite freedom and control over a story a creator has in the fanfiction community including the ability to create original characters who interact with the world of the book. Others talked about the ability to remix traditional prose of fanfiction with graphic art, poetry, songs, or other media. Some participants even expressed how, through using other characters and other worlds, they sometimes inserted their own lives into the fanfiction space, making it a direct tool of expression and communication of self.

      First, Chrisisdestruction, Pax30, and Rhymechime all addressed ways in which fanfiction gave them room to control a story and make it their own. Chrisisdestruction was the most profuse about this topic as it is one of the primary draws of fanfiction for him. Beyond saying that it is "relieving" to "vent to and have control over something," ChrisisDestruction explained that "books always have to be in a certain format or always have to follow a linear path while a fanfiction can take whatever path its author wants to." This freedom to go beyond the bounds of linear, traditional fiction was appealing to several participants.

Beyond this control over a story, Pax30 and Chrisisdestruction talked about control of the story through inserting their own original characters into a preestablished story. Pax30 explained why she likes writing using original characters (OC):

> I write fanfiction that features my OC because I find it difficult to write fanfiction only about the cannon characters, I feel like I wouldn't do them justice but if I have my own OC then I can make them whatever I want while incorporating the Cannon characters to make my fanfic.

Pax30 describes the freedom she finds in original characters. While she may feel limited by certain personality traits or characteristics she has to get right when writing about the characters in the book, when writing about her own characters she has no limits, giving her more freedom to be creative within the fanfiction.

Fanfiction writers have other unique ways of expressing creativity in their writing. Remixing is a well-known part of fanfiction writing (Black, 2005; Black, 2006; Black, 2007; Black, 2008; Black, 2009; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2002; Kelley, 2016**;** Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lammers, 2016; Roozen, 2009; Thomas, 2006)**,** and the participants in this study engaged in remixing stories with art, poetry, and songs. Quietsteps worked with an artist to pair stories and illustrations, adding a visual component to her fanfiction. However, TheBookWorm1718 spoke the most about this element of her fanfiction. TheBookWorm1718 has two sets of fanfiction "stories" that are actually a series of poems, and she explained why she found poetry a suitable response to the *Throne of Glass* novels:

> I think poetry adds another perspective to any book not just ToG. When you read or write poetry, you get into a character's head. You know how they feel. Most of the time, when

you read books, you may know how the main character feels but not the other characters.

Poetry communicates the feelings and emotions to readers.

TheBookWorm1718 responded to the *Throne of Glass* series with both prose and poetry, allowing her to both experience and communicate the emotions of the characters and herself more directly.

Finally, there were several ways in which the participants inserted themselves into their fanfiction stories, making them a direct form of self-expression. Three of the participants, Chrisisdestruction, Rhymechime, and Pax30, left author notes in their fanfiction, communicating directly with their audience about their lives or the stories. Chrisisdestruction began his story with an author note:

First thing is first, I probably won't get everything down perfectly since I'm doing this for fun. Second thing is I will write in my own way, not like the great Sarah J. Maas. Next is that this will follow some of the main story for the most part, but I will make this unique with my OC.

Chrisisdestruction uses author notes to clearly outline what readers can expect from his writing, establishing that he breaks away from both style an character from the original book. In this way he creates more room or his creativity. Similarly, Rhymechime uses author's notes to express her love for a couple in the series saying, "Author's notes: Don't mind me I just needed some Elide and Lorcan fluff in my life...they have control of my soul and I love them. Hope you enjoy!" Beyond this direct self-insertion, there is other evidence of participants inserting their lives into their fanfiction to create self-expression. Quietsteps explains how part of her fanfiction, even about a fantasy series, draws from her real life saying, "I went to an all-girls school until I was 16 so I've always had a very close knit group of female friends around me,

giving me plenty of experience to draw from… so I'm not surprised this shows through so much in my fanfiction." Here there is a direct connection between the participant's real-life experiences and what takes place in her fanfiction. Although fanfiction draws from preestablished works of fiction, opportunities for original creativity and self-expression both abound and are taken-up by fanfiction authors.

Immersion. Another aspect of fanfiction that was important to the participants was the level of immersion into the story it allowed them. Two phrases that were repeated with several participants were "fill-in the gaps" and "more time with characters." Participants saw fanfiction as a way to delve into the minutiae of a story and therefore immerse themselves in it. Five of the six participants described how fanfiction allows them to fill-in the gaps of stories, whether that is plot, character, or emotional gaps. This filling-in the gaps expands the time spent with each character or idea in the novel. Writinglover speaks to this:

> With traditional books the story and characters have to be plot driven, and can't divert from that too much or else it's distracting and nonsensical. But with fanfiction, we get a lot of time back. Fanfiction uses that time to fill in gaps like character bonding, or back story, or just time for the characters to have a coffee and relax.

With fanfiction, authors are not limited by what Chrisisdestruction calls "a linear path." Rather, fanfiction writers can devote as much time as they want to small character development scenes. Quietsteps agrees with this saying, "I feel like fanfiction is much better at exploring character's feelings than traditional books are, prioritising scenes with domestic moments and conversations that would normally be skipped over in favour of plot-advancing scenes in traditional books." With hundreds of these stories available for each book and infinite stories available in the minds

of the fanfiction authors, this leads to a deep immersion in the world of the book. Pax30 says

this is why she writes fanfiction:

> I write fanfiction to immerse myself more into the story. When I write my fanfic, I look for
>
> plot holes and fill them with my own original content. It makes me feel like I'm in the
>
> story…its always been a fantasy of mine to be in a fictional world, and writing a *Throne of*
>
> *Glass* fanfiction is a way for me to be a part of a world as amazing as Sarah J. Mass'.

Writing fanfiction puts authors inside their favorite stories where they can interact with the world

and shape it.

    Line of flight. In the book-fanfiction section findings include that *Throne of Glass* lends

itself to fanfiction because the world is so vast and full of characters with which to create side-

line, non-linear stories about.

    Interaction. One of the key draws to fanfiction the participants indicated was interaction.

Whether it was interaction with the authors of fanfiction they read, interaction with the readers of

the fanfiction they write, or collaboration in creating fanfiction, reading and writing in

community was a benefit of fanfiction they found to be unique. From the very beginning of

creating a fanfiction piece, collaboration is key for many of the participants. All of

Writinglover's *Throne of Glass* fanfiction was created from prompts she received from readers.

By having her readers request specific stories, the line between author and reader is blurred, as

with the practice of fanfiction itself. The readers shape which stories get told in this direct

exchange. Similarly, Quietsteps wrote about *Throne of Glass* because of a fan-generated writing

activity that paired a fan artist with a fanfiction writer. Quietsteps collaborated with the artist to

write her fanfiction. Writinglover has a less formal form of collaboration in her writing by

bouncing ideas off of a friend before she writes. After a draft of a story is finished, Pax30 has a

beta reader improve her story before posting. In all of these ways, the writing process is collaborative from the beginning for many of the participants.

Three participants, Crisisdestruction, Pax30, and Rhymechime all include author's notes in their fanfiction. In these notes they directly address their readers, explaining parts of their stories or even responding to reviews. Pax30 explained why she leaves author notes saying, "I think it adds the presence of the author. Instead of it being just the reader and the story, there's the author too. I also started replying to reviews about halfway through my story. I wanted to let my readers know that I appreciate them." To Pax30, fanfiction is enhanced when the presence of the author is strongly felt, when there is interaction between author and reader.

Finally, all of the participants enjoyed getting reviews and feedback from their readers. Quietsteps' comments reflect many of the participants' views:

> I'm always thrilled to receive reviews, regardless of how long or short they are. I find it particularly rewarding when a reviewer picks out moments in a chapter that stand out to them, and when writing multichapter fics I enjoy reading their speculations of where the plot will progress since I already know if they're right or wrong. I'm always grateful for constructive.

Quietsteps shows how meaningful reviews can be to a fanfiction author both emotionally and in improving writing. As she says, reviews can also be somewhat interactive as readers guess the plot of the fiction as it evolves. In turn for these reviews, most of the participants were eager to leave reviews for the fanfictions they read, knowing how meaningful it can be for an author.

Pleasure. Wilhelm and Smith (2014) noted that a key to reading engagement was pleasure. Beyond all the other draws participants had to fanfiction, many indicated that participating in fanfiction was enjoyable. Chrisisdestruction and WritingLover, when asked why they

participated in the fanfiction community, both said simply that it was fun. Pax30 gave more insight into the excitement over fanfiction:

> I usually have stages of small obsessions of certain series or movies and an idea will just hit me… I think of a few scenes that I can't wait to write and where in the plot they'd be, and just begin writing. And when I hit a writers block, I'll usually push through it, or find another thing to be obsessed with and the cycle begins all over again.

Pax30 goes beyond "fun" and "enjoyment" and calls engagement with fanfiction "small obsessions" that she "can't wait" to write about.

Book–fanfiction intra-action. In this final section of findings, the interconectedness of materials and themes is most evident. This section describes not simply the participants' experience with either fanfiction or the *Throne of Glass* series, but, rather, describes both how participants viewed and how participants' fanfiction illuminated the intra-actions between this particular series and fanfiction. This section explores how the *Throne of Glass* series entangles with the fanfiction space and congeals to form the literacy practice. This section is divided into subsections describing how the characters, genre and plot of the *Throne of Glass* series as well as the existing fanbase of the series all intra-act with the fanfiction space.

Characters. Characters were a major draw for participants to the *Throne of Glass* series, and this was evident in the way that *Throne of Glass* characters intra-acted with the fanfiction space. One key way the characters and fanfiction intra-acted was that the sheer number of characters in *Throne of Glass* allowed for plentiful fanfiction. Quietsteps explained this aspect of the multitude of characters:

> The very large cast gives me a lot of freedom as a fanfiction writer to select the characters I most want to write about rather being stuck with a smaller group of

characters… the large cast meant I could have a more developed storyline with use of background characters taken from the story in addition to the main characters I focused on.

Queitsteps agreed with this as the many characters in the book allowed for many relationships to explore. Particularly, the large cast of female characters allowed Quietsteps to write about female friendships, a subject dear to her heart. Quietstesps also thought that, beyond the sheer number of characters, "the depth of the characters' backstories gives them a very detailed personality, which makes the writing process both easier (since there's more material to work with) and more rewarding." Each character is given enough space and time to allow for sparking interest in the minds of fanfiction writers. Writinglover expressed a main reason she chose to write fanfiction for *Throne of Glass* was because she felt she had a good grasp on many of the characters. However, that is balanced by not getting quite enough of all the characters to be satisfied. Rhymechime couldn't even find enough fanfiction about her favorite characters, Elide and Lorcan. She said, "I love Elide and Lorcan as characters and even though they are minor characters, I wanted to explore their lives and personalities more… The character's, especially the minor ones, have not been explored fully and writing fanfiction can give them more depth." It was clear that the vast number of intriguing, fully fleshed-out characters left the fanfiction writers wanting to read and write more about them.

Plot. The plot of the *Throne of Glass* series was also a prominent reason that the participants chose to write about it. Interestingly, while the plot twists and story line is an aspect that drew many participants to reading the series, in writing it seems the parts of the plot that left readers dissatisfied led to their fanfiction. Rhymechime said, "Fanfiction is for the fans. For fans who weren't given proper endings. Or given horrible endings that need to be changed."

Chrisisdestruction seemed to agree saying that there were just so many things that could have been. This feeling of needing to fix or complete parts of the plot was important to the fanfiction writers. TheBookWorm1718 felt a different type of dissatisfaction saying, "The ending of *Empire of Storms* left me crying and upset. It was one of the craziest endings I've ever read, so I wanted to pick up and take away some of my grief." The plot left TheBookWorm1718 so distraught that she felt fanfiction was a necessary way to deal with her grief. With its many plot twists, *Throne of Glass* leaves many characters in dire circumstances or with unhappy endings. This balance between satisfying readers enough to stick with the series while generating enough emotion to leave readers wanting to engage with fanfiction is a tension *Throne of Glass* holds well.

    Genre. Beyond the specific characters and plot of *Throne of Glass*, it semes the fantasy genre of the series played a large role in the participant's fanfiction. Participants found a fantasy novel, as opposed to a realistic one, provided more lee-way in writing. When asked what other books or original works for which they wrote fanfiction, all participants listed many and mostly speculative fiction books, television shows, or movies such as *Naruto, Six of Crows, Harry Potter, Star Wars, Stranger Things*, and *Game of Thrones*. TheBookWorm1718 was the only participant who had not written any other fanfiction.

    Pax30 comments on this fantasy element of fanfiction, specifically with Throne of Glass, saying "its always been a fantasy of mine to be in a fictional world, and writing a *Throne of Glass* fanfiction is a way for me to be a part of a world as amazing as Sarah J. Mass'." In this was the fantasy world draws her into writing. Rhymechime also comments on why fantasy worlds might serve as better fodder for writing, "because it is a land of magic, it is easy to explore the world itself and mold it the way you want." While the real world has fixed rules that

limit fictional possibilities, a fantasy world has opened the door for new twists and turns even beyond what's already present in the story itself.

Additionally, participants found the vast world of *Throne of Glass* left room for parallel stories to be written alongside the official stories in the book. Because the series is so large and covers so much space, time, and so many characters as may fantasy books do, many doors to characters and plots are opened and then quickly shut, sparking imaginaition and leaving room for interpretation. It is in the spaces where writiers feel the need to fill-in the gap that the participants chose to use for their fanfiction. Pax30 said, "I like to write about parts of the book that haven't been explained. Or parts I'd like to see more of." Chrisisdestruction felt, "there's just so many things that could have been" and Rhymechime said, "the character's, especially the minor ones, have not been explored fully and writing fanfiction can give them more depth." For all of these participants, some element of the vast series felt incomplete. With a realistic and therefore oftentimes more limited in scope novel, less is left unexplored. In this way fantasy and other speculative fiction allows for more opportunity for fan input.

Finally, because *Throne of Glass* is an ongoing series rather than a single entity or even a completed series, there is constant room for talking back to the series in predicting the direction in which the next book will take the characters and plot. The series format allows for natural stopping places to write or even long breaks before the next book comes out to generate a need for more stories. While several of the participants used fanfiction as a way to pass the time before the next book in the series cam out, TheBookWorm1718 talked most directly to this saying, "I probably wouldn't feel as strongly to write if it was finished. I needed to know what happened at the end of EoS [*Empire of Storms*] and how all of the characters felt throughout the books, so I wrote about it. I probably wouldn't write as much about it if it were finished."

Leaving a book on a cliffhanger and having to wait a year or longer for the next book in the series to come out makes even more space for the unanswered and unexplored than what already exists in the vast world.

   Fandom. Finally, the existing fandom already surrounding *Throne of Glass* influences the creation of fanfiction. Not only did some participants find *Throne of Glass* through the fandom to begin with as Rhymechime and Writinglover both initialy became intrigued because of social media posts with quotes and fanart about the book, but some were also driven to create fanfiction because of the fandom. Rhymechime scoured the internet for fanfiction about a couple in the book she was particularly interested in and, finding few stories, wrote her own. In this way her fanfiction creation was a response to the community. Beyond this, some participants, Quietsteps and Writinglover, wrote their fanfiction for the story based on preexisting competitions or bespoke prompts in the fandoms. In this way the fact that Throne of Glass already has an active fandom perpetuates and snowballs into more fans latching on and participating in the community.

   Cross-case analysis summary. Each intra-action described here forms part of the larger mapping of the literacy experience. Each theme is an interconnected part of the whole that must be taken into account when observing the mingling of fanfiction, adolescent, and book. Figure 1 shows a mapping of these intra-actions and themes into an interconnected rhizome.

Chapter Summary

   This chapter featured a summary of each of the six cases in this multiple case study as well as a cross-case analysis deliniating the major findings of the study under three main intra-actions – book-adolescent, adolescent-fanfiction, and book-fanfiction. It was shown that the adolescents in this study connected with the *Throne of Glass* series through the characters,

Figure 1. Fanfiction literacy experience rhizome

through social interaction, and somewhat through the author. They were also engaged with various elements of the series including the plot, style, characters, genre, and progressive themes of the series. Adolescents also intra-acted with the fanfiction community explaining how the access to vast amounts of tailored reading materials and the creation of their own allowed for their education, self-expression, immersion in the story, interaction with a community, and basic pleasure. Finally, this chapter explored how the characters, plot, genre, and existing fandom all allow the *Throne of Glass* series to thrive in the fanfiction communitiy. All of these findings merge to create a specific literacy experience and will be further discussed in the implications chapter.

Chapter Five – Discussion and Implications

I began this study as a way to explore a hybrid traditional and New Literacies practice in a wholistic way in order to begin thinking about bridging the gap between in and out-of-school literacies organically instead of in the decontaxtualized way technology is often brought into the classroom. My own experience as a teacher showed me just how difficult truly incorporating New Literacies into my classroom could be, and research in New Literacies proved this was not limited to my experience alone. Students still lack a connection between their in and out-of-school literacies (Black, 2007; Black, 2008; Black, 2009c; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Lammers & Marsh, 2015; Thomas, 2006). Whether it is because teachers are unknowledgeable about technology (Kalonde & Mousa, 2016), feel constrained by top-down mandates (Kalonde & Mousa, 2016), or are unwilling to engage with New Literacies because of negative perceptions (Lubke, 2013), technology is often only used to disseminate information (Rueda, 2013), ignoring the "ethos" of New Literacies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006).

Fanfiction in particular is a fruitful element of study for bridging these in and out-of-school literacies as Lankshear and Knobel (2006) noted. While reading and writing somewhat traditional prose, fanfiction writers also engage in many New Literacies practices. Because of this, uninformed or hesitant teachers may find fanfiction a more palatable bridge to New Literacies than other formats. The danger, however, is in removing fanfiction from its context to simply become another traditional literacy practice within the classroom. For this reason, this study sought not only to provide more information about the rich literacy practices that take place in this New Literacy context, something for which there is a constantly increasing body of work, but also to explore new ways of examining this and other literacy practices that could hopefully be more useful in transplanting a practice from the out-of-school context to the in-

school. New Materialism offers a view of fanfiction as not a single root that can be easily transplanted from one context to another, but rather as a rhizome for which one must incorporate as much context as possible in any attempt at transplantation. In this way, a New Materialist lens offers an understanding that may prove helpful in this re-contextualizing process.

In the following chapter I discuss the ways in which the findings of this study exemplify both the traditional and New Literacies practices that are integral to providing a hybrid traditional-New Literacies experience for students as well as the implications for incorporating the practice into an in-school context. For traditional literacies, I illustrate how the findings connect to the Common Core standards for English/Language Arts, curriculum standards adopted in all but nine U.S. states (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2018). These standards form the basis on which many English teachers and English students are evaluated and, therefore, demonstrate classroom-valued literacies. New Literacies are discussed in the context of the outline in chapter one. I begin with discussion and implications for each noted intra-action in the assemblage (book-adolescent, adolescent-fanfiction, book-fanfiction), and then move on to discussion and implications for the assemblage as a whole with a focus on how the findings of this study in combination with prior research have implications for classroom practice for two groups of students – those already involved in fanfiction or other similar New Literacies practices and those with limited practice with these types of New Literacies.

Discussion and Implications of the Book-Adolescent Intra-action

The intra-action between book and adolescent is one that takes place both in traditional literacy and, in this case, in New Literacies. The intra-actions the participants had with the book in the process of their fanfiction writing exemplify some of the traditional literacy skills still

highly valued in classrooms. For example, participants' focus on multiple well-developed characters and intricate plotting show readings that emphasize one common core standard:

> CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3: Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
> (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2018)

The participants in this study made specific comments about character and plot development, as seen in their connections and engagement with characters and plot, that showed analysis of these elements, just as the traditional standards require. Additionally, participants noted the strengths of the multi-voiced structure of the text, meeting another Common Core standard:

> CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact. (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2018)

The participants in this study showed evidence of readings that were attentive to the elements of literature emphasized in the Common Core standards, showing that these fanfiction readers are still engaging with the traditional literacy values of the English/ Language Arts classroom.

While maintaining this traditional literacy focus, the intra-actions between the book and the adolescents in this study still incorporated many of the New Literacies skills necessary to navigate the changing media landscape. The ways in which fanfiction practices exemplify New Literacies is outlined at length in chapter two. However, for this particular study we see additional evidence of this. Particular to the adolescent-fanfiction intra-action, we see a social connection to the book series and author as indicative of the ethos of New Literacies. Several of

the participants discovered the series through social media and then shared their reading with friends in real life and online. This, along with following the author's social media accounts, shows the collaborative and participatory way of New Literacies explored by several researchers (Coiro & Moore, 2012; Kellinger, 2012; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; Leu et al., 2013; Sang & Park, 2017; Simsek & Simsek, 2013).

In addition to exemplifying both traditional and New Literacy qualities, the findings of this study revealed several points at which the participants intra-acted with the *Throne of Glass* series that have implications for text selection in a classroom wanting to combine traditional and New Literacies. Several of these points fit with what we already know about engagement with literature. The participants' connection with characters, such as learning to be strong despite a disability with the character of Elide, echoed what several researchers have already found about adolescents engaging with literature with which they can construct their identity (Ivey & Johnston, 2013; Kirkland, 2011; Wilhelm & Smith, 2014). However, participants also enjoyed reading about characters that were vastly different from themselves. Rather than being interested in specific types of characters, the findings indicate that it is a diversity of well-developed characters that draw engagement from readers. Participants remarked about the number of characters and how much each character was fleshed-out and changed throughout the series. The implications of this for text selection in the hybrid traditional and New Literacies classroom is that teachers may need to incorporate texts with multiple characters and multiple points of view. The more diversity among characters in a single book or possibly across texts, the better.

In addition to characters, just as Wilhelm and Smith (2014) identified several qualities of literature that engage adolescents, this study showed that the multi-voiced structure and the vast fantasy world with an intricate plot were some of the key features of the *Throne of Glass* series

that participants noted. One way to engage students in reading, especially for the purpose of engaging in New Literacies, may be to incorporate novels with these features in the classroom. While fantasy is a genre that tends to be kept out of the classroom, this study along with others (Wilhelm & Smith, 2014) suggests that it may need to become a part of the curriculum for the purposes of engagement. Beyond this, the multi-voiced structure of *Throne of Glass* appealed to the participants, connecting to the ways in which they were able to engage with multiple characters, both similar and dissimilar to themselves.

Finally, the participants in this study engaged with the progressive themes of the *Throne of Glass* series. In addition to valuing having multiple diverse characters for the purpose of engagement, participants valued diverse characters for real-world representation. This includes characters with disabilities, various sexual orientations, and various races. They particularly enjoyed how female characters were portrayed as strong protagonists. For this reason, beyond making sure there are a wide variety of characters in the literature provided for students, teachers may try to ensure texts go beyond traditional tropes of gender roles and heterosexual, white, able-bodied characters in order to engage students.

While the findings of this study suggest that selecting texts with vast worlds and multiple, diverse characters with multiple points of view is conducive to fanfiction and thus combining traditional and New Literacies, with this recommendation teachers must be aware that even when choosing an appropriate text for this activity, student support is necessary. Though in choosing the right text teachers may be incorporating more of the rhizome while transplanting a practice from out-of-school to in-school, it is still a transplanting that requires scaffolding. Adolescents who are already involved in fanfiction or similar New Literacies practices may find it easier to connect with these texts than those adolescents who are unfamiliar with these literacies. As with

each recommendation in this discussion, explicit instruction is necessary for both the initiated and the uninitiated in fanfiction. Magnifico et al. (2015) spoke of the need for teachers even within the fanfiction space to help make full use of the space's potential. This aligns with what the New London Group (1996) said about the need for a meta-language, helping those who are already using New Literacies to be attentive to their process and understand its connection to traditional literacies, assisting in switching from one literacy to another. For this reason, brining fanfiction into the classroom, even for those already familiar with it, requires direct instruction. Teachers should make explicit the multiple entry point the text they choose contains and encourage adolescents to take advantage of this choice in their reading of the text and writing about it. This will make explicit the thought process for those familiar with fanfiction and help familiarize students unfamiliar with fanfiction with the multiple entry points often found in New Literacies.

Discussion and Implications of the Fanfiction-Adolescent Intra-action

The ways in which the adolescents in this study intra-acted with fanfiction were obviously indicative of many elements of New Literacies. Of course, creating and posting fanfiction requires new technologies. Beyond that, the respondents in this study valued the wide dispersion of content about the series. They enjoyed being able to search through hundreds of stories to find the exact content they wanted, and they enjoyed the immediate access to the content. Furthermore, the process of writing and posting fanfiction was collaborative throughout from writing collaboratively with artists, friends, or beta readers to interacting with reader comments. In these collaborations, some participants took part in multimodal creations that were a combination of prose and art. In all these ways, this process of fanfiction was a rich New Literacies experience for the participants.

However, writing fanfiction was also a rich traditional literacy experience for adolescents. In viewing the Common Core standards for writing, it is easy to see how writing fanfiction meets many standards, the most obvious of which is the set of standards regarding writing narratives:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.A: Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.B: Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.C: Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.D: Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.E: Provide a conclusion that follows from

and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the

narrative. (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2018)

The fanfiction writers in this study not only practice all of these elements in their writing, but

also seek feedback on how to better achieve these goals through their beta and general readers.

Any narrative writing would meet the goals of the narrative writing standards. However,

fanfiction writing has the added benefit of meeting the Common Core production and

distribution of writing standards:

Production and Distribution of Writing:

CSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the

development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

(Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by

planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing

what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions

should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grades 11-

12 here.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce,

publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing

feedback, including new arguments or information. (Common Core State Standards

Initiative, 2018)

Writing fanfiction requires attention to task, purpose, and audience. Participants in this study

noted their interaction with their audience in creating their narratives, looking for gaps in the

stories in the community, asking for prompts to write exactly what their audience wanted, and even choosing to write or not based on if the audience appreciated what they wrote. The writers in this study also engaged in the editing process through beta readers and even slowly improving each different story over time through feedback. Finally, there may be few writing projects that more naturally meet the standard about collaborating around technology-produced texts and updating in response to feedback as fanfiction. The participants in this study all used technology to publish and update stories. Many collaborated throughout some portion of the experience. And most of them communicated with their audience in some way, responding to feedback in updating chapters.

Beyond meeting these Common Core standards, these participants demonstrated other indicators of traditional literacy, especially in how their responses indicated self-efficacy and reader/writer identity, key elements to engaged reading (Beach & Ward, 2013; De Naeghel et al., 2012; Gambrell & Morrow, 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; McCombs, 1996). The respondents noted how, in their eyes, participating in the fanfiction community helped them become better readers and writers. In their own words, participants indicated that writing fanfiction increased their traditional literacy skills and their view of themselves as readers/writers.

With the benefits to both traditional and New Literacies' skills evident in this practice, incorporating it into the classroom could be a helpful step toward bridging in and out-of-school literacies. The findings of this study imply some major elements teachers may want to keep in mind when trying to bring fanfiction into the classroom. One of the major elements participants in this study noted about their involvement with fanfiction was the immense access they had to stories that fit their exact wishes. Here, a traditional reading motivation tool of choice is evident

(Allington & Cunnignham, 2007; Brozo & Hargis, 2011; Gambrell & Morrow, 1996; Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Ivey & Johnston, 2013; Oldfather, 1996). Teachers incorporating fanfiction should help students understand how the millions of stories available allows them to choose exactly what they would like to read, and help guide them towards examples they may be interested in. This element of finding one's exact preferences was important to the intra-action of the participants in this study and may be key to creating buy-in within the classroom. However, it is important to note that the freedom of fanfiction allows for many narratives that may be uncomfortable and inappropriate for a classroom setting. Teachers should be wary and clear with students about this and knowledgeable about how to search for stories with appropriate maturity ratings. Once again, making this element of choice explicit can help those experienced in fanfiction be metacognitive about their process and help those inexperienced access the process.

Just like any other medium, genre, or combination of the two, one must know the conventions before attempting to engage with them. Students should be exposed to the format of fanfiction before attempting to write it. In particular, instruction in the New Literacies elements of the format may be necessary. While instructing in the Common Core strand on producing and distributing writing, instruction on the particular example of fanfiction could serve as an illustration of these points, students would need to explore how fanfiction authors interact with and appeal to their audience through author notes and reader feedback. Instruction in how to be aware of the fandom community and what kinds of stories they are interested in can help students interact through their writing. This is the main strand of instruction that Magnifico et al. (2015) discussed as necessary to help those already involved with fanfiction make the practice more useful to them. And, indeed, it is the strand of the process that may require the most

instruction for those who are unfamiliar with fanfiction. Helping adolescents learn how to analyze audience needs through fanfiction benefits all students and teaches both traditional and New Literacies simultaneously.

Beyond attentiveness to audience, students should be introduced to the many options they have for creative expression through fanfiction. In addition to direct narratives, students should be exposed to remixed and multi-modal options such as songfics and collaborations between artists and writers. Not only does this incorporate some of the important New Literacies elements of fanfiction, but, to the participants in this study, it was important to the overall experience of creative expression they found in the literacy practice. This is another elements for which explicit instruction can help those experienced in fanfiction be metacognitive about their process and help those inexperienced access the process.

Finally, the process of writing fanfiction should be made as collaborative as possible. This may include paring or grouping students to create fiction together or creating a system for beta readers or reviewers. Teachers could set up this collaboration through a traditional fanfiction site such as fanfiction.net or, after exploring fanfiction.net, set up a closed system on which students could interact with one another online, creating an online classroom community centered around fanfiction.

Fanfiction-adolescent and Book-adolescent Summary

The fanfiction-adolescent and book-adolescent intra-actions align with what previous researchers have suggested about engagement with fanfiction and young adult literature (Black, 2005; Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; Wilhelm & Smith, 2014). The findings also point to the ways in which fanfiction connects to both traditional and New

Literacies. Figure 2 displays the findings of this study with additional connections to traditional literacies, as evidenced by the Common Core standards, and New Literacies.

What is new in these findings about fanfiction-adolescent and book-adolescent is connected to the third intra-action, book-fanfiction. To bridge elements of traditional literacy as discussed in research on engagement with young adult literature (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Wilhelm & Smith, 2014) and New Litercies as discussed in research on fanfiction (Black, 2005; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006), the findings on the simultaneous engagement with both through the book-fanfiction intra-action gives teachers a key piece in in making this hybrid practice work in the classroom.

Discussion and Implications of the Book-Fanfiction Intra-action

The findings for the book-fanfiction intra-action may be the most instructive on how the practice of fanfiction works as a whole assemblage and may have the most direct impact on any attempt to bring fanfiction into the classroom. While these findings repeat many themes from the book-adolescent and fanfiction-adolescent intra-actions, they show the particular ways in which adolescent engagement with both the book and fanfiction work together to create the literacy experience.

The findings of the study suggested that the *Throne of Glass* series was an accessible series for fanfiction writers because of its large cast, vast, continuing world, and existing fandom – qualities not shared with traditional classroom novels. While these were also qualities that engaged readers in the book in the book-adolescent intra-action, they proved to serve the additional purpose of assisting in the creation of fanfiction. These findings imply that it may not be any work of fiction, even an engaging one, that can be easily worked into fanfiction.
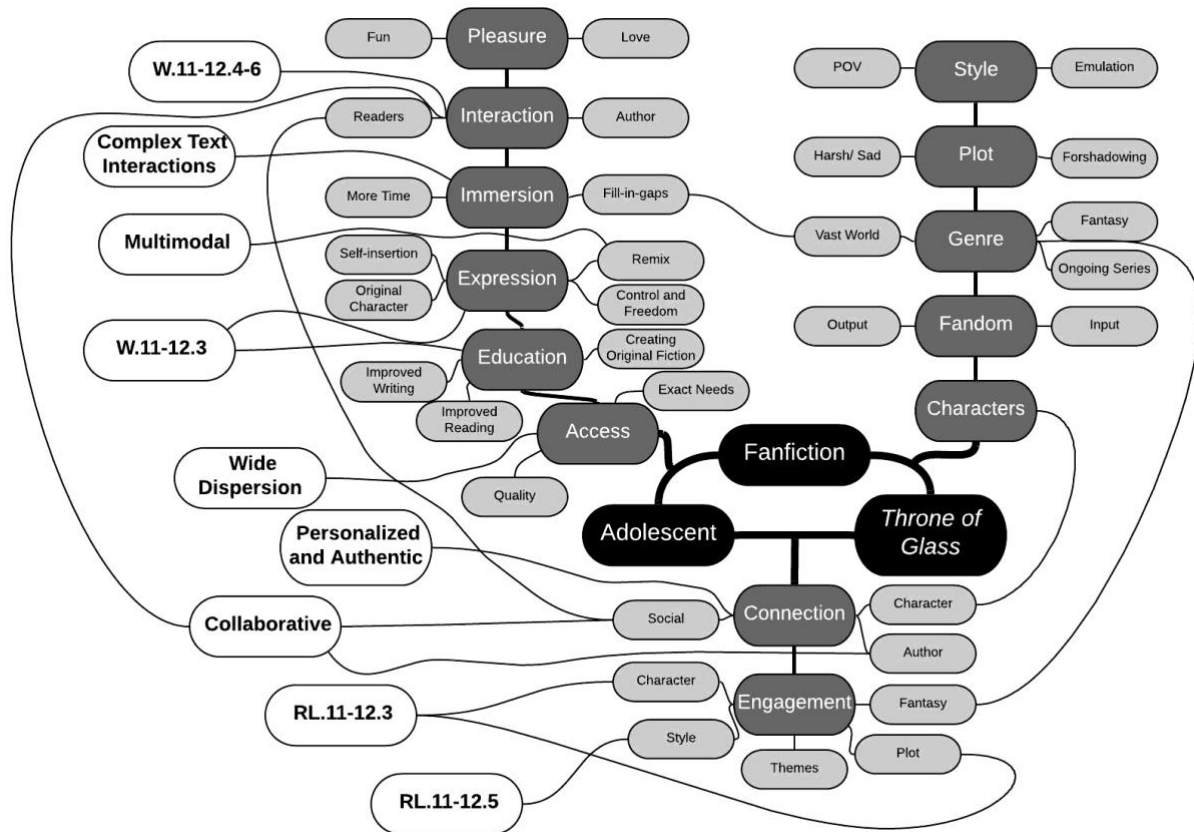
Figure 2. Rhizome with Common Core and New Literacies connections

The participants in the study found in the series room for their own voice through multiple characters who needed further description, winding plots that sparked predictions, and vast worlds in which to set original characters.   Beyond merely being able to connect with a character for engagement, the adolescents indicated that having multiple characters was helpful for fanfiction. For teachers, books with a wide selection of characters and voices, plot twists, and an extensive setting might be better suited for this type of engagement, bridging New Literacies and traditional, even if other types of texts can be engaging in other contexts.

Beyond the world being vast, the world was also ongoing. As discussed previously, at the time of this study, the final book in the series had yet to be published. This created a need for closure and an immediacy to the fanfiction they were writing. For teachers, this may translate into choosing ongoing series or more contemporary books that are still part of ongoing discussions or perhaps adaptations. Books that are part of the current cultural ether may provide the sense of immediacy that encourage deep immersion in writing.

Additionally, some participants engaged in fanfiction because of or through the existing fandom. From first discovering the series through the fandom, filling-in gaps missing in the fanfiction space, or receiving requests from the fandom, this interaction with fans of the series made a difference in the engagement of the participants. For teachers, it may be necessary to select texts that have some sort of fandom, allowing students to join in an existing community for full engagement in the New Literacies aspect of the literacy activity.

When selecting a book based on these suggestions, multiple characters, multiple points of view, a vast world, with an ongoing fandom, just as with the previous classroom suggestions, teachers should take into account both students who are familiar with these types of texts and fandoms and students who are not. Explicit instruction on reading stories with multiple points of

view and keeping track of characters can help both groups of students as well as instruction on how to seek out and join contemporary conversations surrounding books in places outside of the classroom.

Discussion and Implications of the Assemblage as a Whole

A New Materialist approach to looking at this hybrid traditional-New Literacies practice gives insight both into the particular details of the intra-actions that take place in this literacy practice but also how each of these intra-actions form a whole. Beyond having students engage in a writing task or engage in reading, through a New Materialist approach with three materials, we gain insight into how to approach engagement with both simultaneously. Rather than uprooting one reading practice or writing practice and transplanting it into our classroom, a New Materialist approach captures more of the vast network of the literacy activity for more effective integration into the classroom.

As a whole, we see that some of the qualities that engaged students with the book were also the qualities that helped students write about the book. The multiple characters and perspectives in a vast world of a book with a large fan base contributed both to engagement with the book and writing fanfiction about the book. Additionally, we saw that some of the same qualities that helped students engage in the writing task of fanfiction were specific qualities of the book itself including the large fandom, vast world, and dynamic plot of the book. By attending to these specific intra-actions among materials, we begin to map the experience as a whole as seen in Figure 1. From this study, this map includes the ways in which adolescents, fanfiction, and the book itself intra-act.

Based on this mapping, specific recommendations for including fanfiction in the classroom can be made regarding setting up an appropriate writing experience and choosing an

appropriate text allowing both to work together to merge traditional and New Literacies. The fanfiction writing task should involve choice in genre and modality, should be shared with an audience, and should be collaborative. The text should have a fandom, multiple characters, and a vast world. However, this map of the literacy experience is incomplete. As a rhizome is nearly infinite in its connections, there is more for which to account than these materials. This study focused on creating an appropriate task and choosing an appropriate text for this literacy practice, but it did not account for the ways in which the adolescents involved in this experience were already fluent in this space. As stated before, explicit instruction is necessary in both the task and the text to help all students access this hybrid-literacy practice.

Suggestions for Future Research

There are several aspects of this study that should be repeated and extended to assist in our understanding of bringing New Literacies into the traditional classroom. First, education researchers should continue to explore using a New Materialist lens in order to take in the entire context of out-of-school literacies. As this study was done on a small scale, more studies are needed exploring how all the aspects of fanfiction come together to create the practice. Beyond this, studies that take into account more than text, adolescent, and fanfiction space would be useful, expanding out map of the phenomenon. Studies that observe fanfiction writers in the process of reading and writing fanfiction in their normal setting will gain more insight into the full entanglement of materials that create the literacy practice. Additionally, researchers should expand beyond fanfiction to explore other New Literacies practices that can be used in the classroom such as blogging, social media, podcasts, live-streaming, etc.

Beyond this, it is essential that practical classroom research be done. Researchers need to explore how a literacy practice like this functions in a real classroom. From a New Materialist

perspective, no matter how much this study has attempted to take context into account, the new context of the classroom will assuredly have an impact on the assemblage. Beyond taking into account the text, the student, and the fanfiction space, a New Materialist study on a classroom application of fanfiction would include the teacher, the technology, and the classroom atmosphere itself.

Conclusion

Just like when I tried to engage my students with new technologies in a podcast project yet found that there was something else that they were interested in, teachers cannot ever be fully prepared to engage students with new technologies in this rapidly changing world. New Literacies has created a world in which people can find exactly the content with which they want to engage and communicate about that content in whichever way they wish any time they wish. As teachers, our rigid, stationary assignments and texts cannot compete but also cannot prepare our students for this reality.

Rather than be discouraged, it is time teachers stop franticly trying to engage with each new piece of content or technology and begin to explore the ethos of these changing communications. To do this we must explore the ideas behind each aspect of current communication and connect those to the traditional, academically-valued skills that we are required to teach and know are still valuable for students. This requires a reimaging of the materials with which we choose to teach.

First, a reexamination of our texts is necessary. We need texts that provide entry points for all of our students with multiple, diverse characters with which they can both connect and engage. Additionally, as in my experience with my podcast project, I had chosen traditional novels that had been the same for decades while they were interested in what was happening

right now, the FCC net neutrality hearing. Though they still managed to connect the live-stream FCC hearing to historical documents, the historical elements were connected to an ongoing cultural conversation, not isolated to the past. Students need to be able to connect with an ongoing, culturally relevant text. We also need to reimagine our assignments as not isolated interactions between a student and a teacher, but authentic interactions with a class and a wider audience. Assignments should not be finished products, but a continuing, ongoing product. Finally, we need to reimagine our adolescents not as drones connected to their devices who cannot focus on one extended task, but rather as humans capable of interacting with constantly changing materials in ways with which we sometimes cannot fathom.

This study provides one limited look at one New Literacy practice that takes into account text, assignment, and adolescent, looking for ways that we as teachers can both meet adolescents with all of their diverse interests yet also prepare them to be active, knowledgeable participants in the media landscape in which we know they are entering. By carefully examining and rethinking each material in our classrooms and how each fits with others, we can more closely bridge the gap between in and out-of-school literacies that leave so many of our students disengaged and unprepared for their future.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Fanfiction.net Sorting Tool

Appendix B

Recruitment Message

Hello!

My name is Brooke Bianchi-Pennington, and I'm pursuing a Ph.D. in Literacy Studies. For my dissertation, I'm studying fanfiction about young adult literature. Specifically, I'm examining how identity, the *Throne of Glass* series, and fanfiction come together to create a new literary and artistic form.

I've contacted you because you have written fanfiction about *Throne of Glass*, and I would love the opportunity to get your input on your experience with fanfiction.net, *Throne of Glass*, and fanfiction in general.

I've put together a 30 minute questionnaire. If you are 18-25 and are interested in sharing your experience with me, I invite you to read through the statement of consent on this questionnaire and answer away!

You can find the survey on my fanfiction.net profile:

https://www.fanfiction.net/u/4504620/bbp1989

Thank you for your contribution to my research and the world's knowledge about how incredible fanfiction is!

Brooke Bianchi-Pennington

University of Tennessee Children's and Young Adult Literature Doctoral Candidate

msmit159@vols.utk.edu

Appendix C

Initial Questionnaire

Consent

<u>**Introduction**</u>

If you write *Throne of Glass* fanfiction on fanfiction.net and are eighteen to twenty-five years old, you are invited to participate in a research study examining how identity, this particular book series, and fanfiction come together to create a new literary and artistic form for young adults. Please read the following sections carefully to consent in participating in this study.

Participating in this study means answering the questions on this questionnaire which consists of 24 questions about your experience writing fanfiction and reading the *Throne of Glass* series and allowing me to read and use your fanfiction in my study.   This should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. After completing the questionnaire, you will be asked if you would like to participate in

optional follow-up questions via fanfiction.net. If you participate in the follow-up questions you will have the opportunity to veiw a write up of the finding of the study to check for accuracy and make any additional comments.

Risks, Benefits, and Confidentiality

Risks:
If you are unable to or uncomfortable answering any of the questionnaire questions, you may skip them or choose to exit the questionnaire. You may decide you only want to answer the questionnaire and do not want any further contact regarding the study. One risk in this study is breach of confidentiality. While I will not ask for your real name nor look at your fanfiction.net profile and will not publish your fanfiction.net screen name, if you choose to participatei n the study it is possible that someone could search for your work on fanfiction.net via an internet browser. This risk will be minimized by keeping all screen names anonymous with pseudonyms and only excerpting small pieces of your publicly available work. All of your answers to the questionnaire and ay follow-up questions will be kept both anonymous and on a password-protected computer.

Benefits:
You may not benefit directly from your participation in this research. This research is intended to explore the reading and writing practices of young adult literature fanfiction writers. It is an exciting space for engaging with text that deserves more attention. I hope it will provide information on reading and writing practices to help educators more effectively teach reading and writing skills. Your participation helps to contribute to the body of knowledge on both fanfiction and young adult literature as fuels for literacy. Additionally, if you choose to participate in follow-up questions you will receive a write up of findings to both check for accuracy, make final comments, and gain some insight into what this study shows about this community of writers.

Confidentiality:
As stated above, all information you provide for this study will be kept secure and confidential. Pseudonyms will be used in all reporting to maintain confidentiality.

Contact Information

If you have any questions at any time about the study or procedures, you may contact me, Brooke Bianchi-Pennington, at msmit159@vols.utk.edu or at my fanfiction.net account, bbp1989. You may also contact my advisor, Susan Groenke, at sgroenke@utk.edu. If you have any questions about your

rights as a participant, you may contact the University of Tennessee IRB Compliance Officer at utkirb@utk.edu or (865) 974-7697.

Participation and Consent

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be destroyed.

I certify that I am 18 or older and can consent to participate in this study.

○ Yes, I am 18 or older.
○ No, I am under 18.

I have read the previous sections. I understand that I may return to these sections for information at any time and may print them for my records. Selection of the option below constitutes my consent to participate.

○ I consent to participate in this study.
○ I DO NOT consent to participate in this study.

Demographics

Question Set 1 of 4: Preliminary Information

These questions ask about some demographic information as well as if I may read and use your fanfiction and reach out to you for further questions. You may choose not to respond to any of these questions.

How old are you?

○ 18-25
○ 25-35
○ 35+

With which gender do you identify?

○ Non-binary
○ Female
○ Male
○ Prefer not to say

What is your fanfiction.net username? (This is to connect your fanfiction with your responses.)

[   ]

Question Set 2 of 4: Throne of Glass, Young Adult Literature, and You

Question Set 2 of 4: _Throne of Glass_, Young Adult Literature, and You

The following questions ask about your relationship with the _Throne of Glass_ series and Young Adult Literature in general. Please answer with as much detail as possible. Any information you can give will be helpful. You may skip any questions you feel are irrelevant or do not want to answer.

What draws you the _Throne of Glass_ series? What speaks to you?

[   ]

Do you feel a connection to any of the characters in the _Throne of Glass_ series?

[   ]

Is there anything about the style of *Throne of Glass* that you find particularly special or engaging?

Do you know much about/follow Sarah J. Maas, the author of the *Throne of Glass* series? Is there anything about her that draws you to the series?

Apart from the *Throne of Glass* series, what are some of your other favorite books? Why are you drawn to them?

Question Set 3 of 4: Fanfiction and You

Question Set 3 of 4: Fanfiction and You

The following questions ask about your relationship with Fanfiction. Please answer with as much detail as possible. Any information you can give will be helpful. You may skip any questions you feel are irrelevant or do not want to answer.

Why do you choose to write fanfiction?

[   ]

What kinds of fanfiction do you like to write or write the most? (e.g. Alternate Universe, Alternate Ending, Gender Bend, Cannon, Alternate Pairings, etc.)

[   ]

What do you get from reading fanfiction that you don't get from traditional books?

[   ]

What do you like about fanfiction.net as a space for reading and posting fanfiction?

[   ]

How do you react to reviews of your fanfiction?

[text box]

Do you enjoy reviewing others' work? Why?

[text box]

How has fanfiction affected your reading and/or writing skills?

[text box]

Question Set 4 of 4: Throne of Glass, Young Adult Literature, and Fanfiction

Question Set 4 of 4: *Throne of Glass*, Young Adult Literature, and Fanfiction

The following questions ask about your relationship with the *Throne of Glass*, Young Adult Literature, and Fanfiction together. Please answer with as much detail as possible. Any information you can give will be helpful. You may skip any questions you feel are irrelevant or do not want to answer.
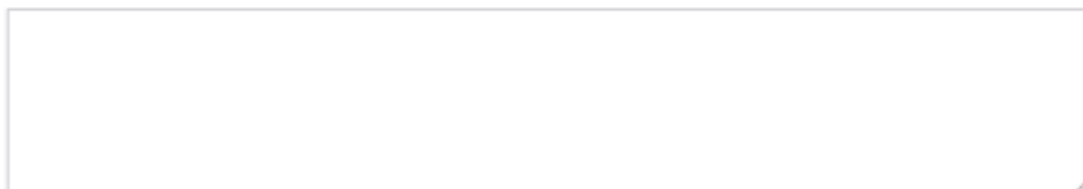
Why did you choose to write fanfiction about the *Throne of Glass* series?

Is there anything about the *Throne of Glass* series that lends itself to fanfcition?

What parts of *Throne of Glass* do you like to write about?

What other books, movies, etc. have you written fanfiction about?

How do you choose what you write fanfiction about?

Appendix D

List of Final Codes

Adolescent-Fanfiction
- Access
  - Exact Needs
  - Quality
- Education
  - Creating Original Fiction
  - Improved Reading
  - Improved Writing
- Expression
  - Control and Freedom
  - Original Characters
  - Remix
  - Self-insertion
- Immersion
  - Fill-in-gaps
  - More Time
- Interaction
  - Authors
  - Readers
- Pleasure
  - Expressing Love
  - Fun

Book–Fanfiction
- Characters
- Fandom
  - Input
  - Output
- Genre
  - Fantasy
  - Ongoing Series
  - Vast World
- Plot
  - Foreshadowing or Twists
  - Harsh of Sad Plot
- Style
  - Emulating
  - POV

Book-Adolescent
- Connection
  - Author Connection
  - Character Connection
  - Social Connection
- Engagement
  - Engaged with Character
  - Engaged with Fantasy Genre
  - Engaged with Plot
  - Engaged with Style
  - Engaged with Progressive Themes

Vita

Brooke Bianchi-Pennington was born in Radford, Virginia in 1989. She moved to Knoxville, Tennessee in 1996, spending the majority of elementary and all of middle and high school in Knox County Schools. She went on to The Univeristy of Tennessee where she earned a BA in Literature with a minor in Secondary Education as well as a MS in Secondary Education in 2011. Brooke taught high school English for one year in Lauderdale County Schools and then returend to Knox County to teach at Hardin Valley Academy. In 2015, while continuing to teach at Hardin Valley Academy, Brooke returned to The University of Tennessee to begin her doctoral work in Literacy Studies in the inaugural class of the Children's and Young Adult Literature concentration. While pursuing her doctoral work, Brooke focused on the integration of theory and practice and the ways in which educational researchers and practicioners can connect. This led her to pursue leading professional development opportunities for teachers, including creating a literacy research podcast, LitBit. Brooke is currently English Department Chair at Hardin Valley Academy where she has taught for seven years. She continues to seek new ways to bridge theory and practice, especially in regards to Digital and New Literacies. She plans to continue her work in Knox County Schools while fostering relationships between the university and secondary schools through preofessional development and research partnerships.