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Introduction: Conceptualizing National and Cultural Transmediality

Matthew Freeman and William Proctor

Across the globe, people now engage with media content across multiple platforms, following stories, characters, worlds, brands and other information across a spectrum of media channels. And yet perhaps the biggest challenge and the biggest opportunity for understanding this transmedia phenomenon right now is the sheer breadth of its interpretation. In the contemporary era of media convergence where the sharing of media across multiple platforms is increasingly accessible, transmediality has emerged as a global strategy for targeting fragmentary audiences and spreading content across a spectrum of media channels. But while scholarship continues to dwell on the commercial industry contexts of transmediality, smaller national communities and often far less commercial cultures around the world are now beginning to make very different and altogether nationally specific uses of transmediality, applying alternative modes of the transmedia phenomenon to the needs and structures of a nation or re-thinking this phenomenon entirely by reapplying it to non-fictional, cultural, political, social or heritage based projects.

Consider Colombia, a country that will be interrogated later in this book. Here, transmediality is not – or rather should not be – any kind of commercial practice of storytelling, promotion, world-building, franchising and the like. Instead, it is a political system that is nothing short of pivotal

to developing social change in local communities; for some Colombians, transmediality is about reconstructing memories (Freeman 2016c). In opposition to the giant media conglomerates underpinning many examples of commercial transmedia franchises in the US – characterized by the likes of Star Wars, Marvel and Batman – in Colombia it is independent producers and universities who serve as the key drivers of that country’s current transmedia trend. One project, for example – developed at EAFIT University in Medellín in 2015 – aimed to create non-official narratives of the Colombian armed conflict from the victims’ point of view. By using different platforms such as games, maps, web series, books and museums, the Medellín victims were able to communicate their thoughts and memories about the Colombian armed conflict to both local and national public spheres. In short, in the context of contemporary Colombia, transmediality goes beyond social change – it is a blessing born out of a long history of cultural tradition and community-building that can help Colombians reconstruct the country after more than 50 years of armed conflict. As one of the postgraduate students at EAFIT University asserts, ‘I strongly believe that transmedia in Colombia can contribute to creating processes of memory, recognition and solidarity for the victims of the Colombian armed conflict. I think that using transmedia with local communities can be the clue to starting real processes of reconciliation in the country.’

The emphasis, then, is on using transmediality – most broadly describing ‘the increasingly popular industrial practice of using multiple media technologies to present information ... through a range of textual forms’ (Evans 2011, 1) – for something *real*, going beyond fictional and commercial contexts of storytelling, branding, marketing and franchising. If nothing else, the Colombian project above signals the importance of beginning to fully interrogate transmedia cultures – in the plural – and to establish a cultural specificity approach to transmediality.

Not only do these more localized, cultural perspectives on transmediality remain considerably under-documented in academic circles, but so far there has been very little attempt to analyze, theorize and to fully understand a national or cultural idea of transmediality. Convergence culture is really only an umbrella term for making sense of the proliferation of interconnected screens and media texts that dominate our contemporary media culture. And as has been rightly pointed out by James Hay and Nick Couldry, ‘international differences are obscured by the generality of the term “convergence culture”, and it can be helpful to consider convergence “cultures” in the plural’ (2011, 476). *Global Convergence Cultures: Transmedia Earth* aims precisely to pluralize understandings of both convergence culture and transmediality, and in turn to redress the gap by contributing new frameworks and taxonomies from international contexts.

Specifically, and in establishing a cultural specificity approach to transmediality, the book looks across four continents – Europe, North and South America, and Asia – and a total of twelve countries, spanning the UK, Spain, Portugal, France, Estonia, USA, Canada, Colombia, Brazil, Japan, India, and Russia. In doing so, it explores how the national media structures, agendas, policies and cultures of these countries (including their institutional systems, politics, heritages, social traditions, leisures, ideologies, etc.) are informing nationally specific models and meanings of transmediality. As such, the book aims to greatly enrich current understandings of transmediality, moving far beyond commonly studied scenarios of Hollywood convergences and globalized digital communication giants by instead beginning to map and to theorize how the rising prominence of transmediality across cultural borders has been used in very different ways to engage and to reshape local cultural communities and their national stories around the world.

Re-thinking Transmediality

The transmedia phenomenon has led to the burgeoning of transmedia studies in media, cultural studies and communication studies departments across the academy, not to mention across a spectrum of creative and cultural industries. And yet the definition of transmediality remains decidedly in flux, indeed meaning different things to different people at different times. Since Marsha Kinder (1991) first used ‘transmedia’ to describe the multiplatform and multi-modal expansion of media content, the term has seen increased academic and industry attention. Henry Jenkins (2006) reintroduced the term within the context of digital change and ‘transmedia storytelling’ has subsequently seen widespread adoption and interrogation. Jenkins’ updated definition of transmedia storytelling as ‘a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience’ (2011) has become one of the dominant ways by which the flow of entertainment across media is understood, especially in a digital and commercial context. The correlation between transmedia storytelling and the commerce of entertainment has since been reinforced in industry and discursively. As *Heroes* creator Tim Kring asserts, transmedia storytelling is ‘rather like building your Transformer and putting little rocket ships on the side’ (Kushner 2008). By providing audiences with more and more content, transmediality is characteristically seen as a practice intended to appeal to migratory audiences. Hence why scholars including David Alpert and Rick Jacobs (2004) and Jay Lemke (2004) theorized transmediality as that which produces a ‘marketing assault’ designed to ‘maximize profits’.

Accordingly, Jenkins' model of transmedia storytelling (of a single narrative that is only complete when elements from multiple media forms are brought together into a coherent whole) is still most closely associated with what Birkinbine, Gómez and Wasko refer to as the global media giants – those being 'the huge media conglomerates such as Disney and Time-Warner, [which] take advantage of globalization to expand abroad and diversify' (2017, 15). Outside of the conglomerates, though, transmedia storytelling has evolved in more experimental spaces – into a brand development practice, or as a way to support traditional media content through transmedia franchising (Johnson 2013), to name just a few of its commercial purposes. But transmediality has equally gained wider scholarly relevance as digital screen technologies have multiplied where the so-called 'old media' of film and television are now experienced through transmedia distribution practices (Evans 2015), integrating with social media and other online platforms. Other terms such as 'multiplatform' (Jeffery-Poulter 2003), 'cross-media' (Bechmann Petersen 2006) and 'second screening' have joined it (Holt and Sanson 2014), but transmediality remains a dominant concept for both scholarly and industrial attempts to understand fundamental shifts that digital technologies have wrought on the media industries and their audiences.

However, the more that transmediality has broadened its definition and practical use – growing into both a distinct subfield of scholarly investigation and a cross-disciplinary theoretical concept that underpins work in film, television, digital media, game studies, communication studies, cultural studies and beyond – the more that it has arguably become something else entirely.

While in the US and the UK transmediality has evolved into an established marketing and brand-development practice (see, for example, Gray 2010; Grainge and Johnson 2015), emerging research across Europe paints a different picture of transmediality. In Europe, transmediality can

occupy the role of a promotion tool for independent filmmakers, or that of a site of construction for social reality games, or even serve as a means of political activism (see Freeman 2016b; Scolari, Bertetti and Freeman 2014). In countries such as Spain, meanwhile, entire curricula are now being developed around the potential application of transmediality as a tool for educational and literacy enhancement for students seeking advanced global citizenship skills (Scolari 2013).

Hence one thing starts to become very clear: when conceived of or utilized as a cultural practice – rather than as a commercially-minded industrial one – transmediality is suddenly no longer about storytelling, at least not in a traditional fictional sense. Instead, it is about something more, something more *real* – that is to say, something more political, more socially minded and more ideologically profound. So while Jenkins famously theorized transmediality within a digital and industrial context, what does it really mean to study transmediality from a *cultural* perspective?

From Global to Cultural

In one sense, examining transmediality from a national and cultural perspective first means acknowledging the innate multiplicity of its potential. And so in another sense, examining transmediality from a national and cultural perspective also means establishing a whole new *cultural specificity model* or approach to understandings of transmediality, taking into account the politics, peoples, ideologies, social values, cultural trends, histories, leisure and heritage of individual countries and their smaller communities. Taking a cultural approach to analyzing transmediality really means mapping the many faces of transmediality in different countries.

In some ways, the idea of mapping the many faces of transmediality around the world flies in the face of globalization, which most broadly describes the growth of media on a worldwide scale. The process of global integration concerning the international influence of economies and cultures has led to a change in the way that scholars now discuss present-day media as that which is ‘produced, distributed, marketed, exhibited and consumed in many different countries, and which intends to reach international audiences and provide international conglomerates with profit’ (Mirrlees 2013, 2). Media globalization has of course led to a rise in the number and size of multi-national media corporations, but also in a proliferation of cross-border transactions of media products, such as the same film characters and stories being distributed globally, or the same news being watched globally. As such, scholars such as David Machin and Theo van Leeuwen have emphasized the close association between globalization theory and the idea that ‘cultural differences are disappearing as a result of globalization’ (2007, 26). The disappearance of cultural differences, otherwise known as homogeneity, is linked to the interconnectivity between previously separate audiences and media forms that is itself part of the globalization process. If homogeneity is seen to be a potential cultural impact of globalization most broadly, then interconnectivity between industries, platforms and even products very much shapes media on a textual level. For instance, Doris Baltruschat (2010) understands global media ecologies as connections between television networks, as co-productions in the film industry (between the US and China, for example), as international news coverage, or as format franchises (*The X Factor*, to name just one). Put simply, globalization may well equate to a standardizing of media culture.

In contrast, however, the chapters in this book – showcasing the diverse, localized practices, meanings, policies, expectations, limitations and cultures of transmediality around the world –

aim to collectively free transmediality from its standardized, globalized and highly Western-centric understanding. The oft-cited model of transmediality – that is, the one seemingly based on convergences in the name of commerce – is not the only one. As Freeman has demonstrated elsewhere, ‘past builders of fictional story worlds employed many different strategies that showcase just how many possibilities there really are for telling tales across multiple media’ (2016a, 189-190). Similarly, we claim that only by looking to other countries and by localizing understandings of transmediality can one truly begin to comprehend all of the strategies that can be used – and indeed are being used – to communicate media messages across multiple platforms. For as Machin and van Leeuwen note, ‘in globalization theory, the ‘national’ and the ‘international’ are closely interrelated ... Historically, as the world ‘universalized’, people began to hank for ‘the particular’, the reinvention of differences’ (2007, 29). This book is about the cultural particularities of transmediality, showcasing a reinvention of its national differences.

Towards a Cultural Specificity Approach

So, again, how might one examine transmediality from a cultural perspective? Or to put it another way, how do the unique cultures, politics, heritages and social traditions specific to a given country and its media systems and audiences inform specific workings of transmediality? In identifying a conceptual framework for exploring the multiplicities of transmediality, it is crucial to turn to the discipline of cultural studies – in this case, particularly, its longstanding concept of ‘Culturalism’. Introduced by sociologist Florian Znaniecki in the early twentieth century, Culturalism is an ontological approach that ultimately aims to eliminate simple binaries between seemingly opposing phenomena, such as nature and culture. For our purposes, this approach is important for remembering that all sorts of cultural factors, including the likes of

politics, peoples, ideologies, social values, heritage, etc., are not opposing factors, but rather contributing factors in the building of a larger (trans)media system. Znaniecki proposed that a Culturalism approach allowed him to ‘define social phenomena in cultural terms’ (Halas 2010, 2), noting that our culture shapes our view of the world and our thinking (Dulczewski 1984, 187-188). Similarly, and as will be demonstrated in different ways throughout the pages of this book, the cultures of individual countries work to shape the meanings, models and functions of transmediality in distinct ways. Importantly, Znaniecki argues that while the world is composed of physical artefacts, such as films, television programmes, corporate offices, policy documents, and so on, we are not really capable of studying the physical world other than through the lenses of culture (Dulczewski 1984, 189) – just as the peoples of each of the countries examined in this book are prone to understanding their transmedia system through the lens of their culture.

Cultural studies, of course, has always sought to explore the forces within and through which people conduct and participate in the construction of their everyday lives. As a field of study, it is based on observing the narrower or more personal cultures that people create; it understands communities – or, in this case – cultures of transmediality – as unique communities, which while still part of larger systems, operate independently. A turn towards cultural studies and to interrogating the cultures of transmediality is in many ways only a logical continuation of what is already happening in other areas of media studies. In *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries*, for example, Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks and John Thornton Caldwell sought to ‘dig deeper into this notion of production as a culture’, looking at ‘how media producers make culture’ (2009, 2). Here, Mayer, Banks and Caldwell conceived that ‘the off-screen production of media is itself a cultural production, mythologized and branded much like

the onscreen textual culture that media industries produce' (2009, 2). Conceptualizing media production in this way has become crucial to our understanding of media industry studies, for it points to ideas that media industry workings can all be analyzed, textually, in much the same way that a film or a television programme might be analyzed textually. Going a step further, then, it figures that by exploring different manifestations of transmediality through the lens of cultural studies, we can not only understand transmediality as a culture, or as a set of cultures, but also assess the relationships between the workings of a given culture and its transmedial formations, with the ethnographic turn towards studying social spaces such as shopping centers and museums equally useful here for analyzing the cultural mappings of transmedial zones.

When thinking discursively and through the lens of Culturalism, moreover, it is likely to be the case – as it so often is in the chapters of this book – that 'transmedia' is not actually the focus of study at all, but is instead the theoretical framework through which a different though no less significant area of enquiry can then be investigated and analyzed. For example, chapter 4 positions transmediality as key to understanding transformations in the cultural heritage sector in France; chapter 5 sees transmediality as a mechanism for supporting cultural heterogeneity and for understanding cultural semiotics in Estonia; chapter 8 unravels the role of transmediality in generating processes of social memory construction in Colombia; chapter 10 argues that transmediality is central to the workings of national branding in Japan, and so on. Or to put it another way, this book's cultural specificity approach is about rethinking transmediality as something else – transmediality as slow journalism, transmediality as social identity construction, transmediality as cultural heritage, transmediality as national branding, transmediality as documentary, etc. That is not to say that we ignore industry, however; chapters

1 and 2 are rooted in explorations of the British and Spanish media industries, respectively. But in both of these cases the authors seek to showcase the different systems of transmediality that exist within these media industries – systems that are entirely specific to those two country’s media infrastructures. And this positioning of transmediality as, alongside or within the context of some other media, cultural and industrial phenomena altogether speaks of the sheer diversity that now makes up the very fabric of transmediality around the world, and reiterates the extent to which transmediality is now beginning to thoroughly reshape our media and cultural landscape.

Nevertheless, even as our cultural specificity approach implies a rethinking of transmediality as some other cultural phenomena, it is still necessary to pinpoint what we mean by ‘culture’ in this context. Earlier we indicated an interest in studying how the likes of politics, heritage, traditions, ideologies, leisure and war might lend themselves to workings of transmediality. But all of these cultural phenomena are of course quite different entities, and so is it possible to map different cultural phenomena to different approaches of transmediality? The answer, as the ensuing chapters will demonstrate, is yes – but for now allow us to summarily map the approaches to transmediality taken throughout this book to Raymond Williams’ three theories of culture.

Back in 1958, Raymond Williams published *Culture and Society*, a seminal work exploring how the notion of culture developed in the West, especially Great Britain, from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries. Williams proposed that culture can be defined according to one of three categories: culture as ‘the ideal’ (meaning culture as a process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development); culture as ‘the social’ (meaning culture as a specific way of life); and culture as ‘the documentary’ (meaning works and practices of intellectual and artistic activity).

Logically, the cultural phenomena interrogated in our book (people, politics, heritage, social values, ideologies, and so on) fit most comfortably into Williams' second category, indicating that we are exploring the meanings, functions and workings of transmediality as *a way of life*. Chapters devoted to the transmedia brand narratives surrounding Portuguese port wines and to the role of transmediality in the radicalization of Canada, for example, exemplify understandings of transmediality as 'the social'. But that is not to suggest that our book is limited to social perspectives on culture. Other chapters devoted to the use of transmediality in reconstructing social memory in Colombia and to building national branding in Japan, for example, can be seen to embody Williams' notion of 'the ideal', with both of these chapters positioning transmediality as a form of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development. And each of the other chapters can be said to be exploring the cultures of transmediality through the lens of what Williams calls 'the documentary' – interrogating how the creative works and practices of a country are being crafted as intellectual and artistic exercises in communicating messages across multiple media platforms.

The Structure of the Book

The book is divided into twelve chapters and split into three parts – European Transmediality, North and South American Transmediality, and Asian Transmediality. Within these three parts, each of the chapters interrogates a different country. However, our goal is certainly not to cover all transmedia producing countries around the world; that would be encyclopedic and an impossible task for one edited collection. We also do not intend each chapter to represent the practices that are most characteristic of a given nation. Instead, our chapters show that there are multiple versions of transmediality emerging around the world, even within the same country. In

broadening understandings of transmediality from its oft-cited US-centric model, our book pays particular attention to forms of transmediality that are not tied to the globalized media industry, focusing on ways in which transmediality takes on cultural, social and political impacts locally.

In Part I: European Transmediality, then, Matt Hills' chapter asserts that transmedia studies can (and should) be extended beyond its customary focus on film, television and videogames by instead tackling pop music and, more specifically, the cultural mythos surrounding UK band the Justified Ancients of Mu Mu and their 2017 'comeback'. Showing how the band transmedially aligned themselves with a mythos of grandly elemental (but hidden) conflict played out through popular music, Hills delves into the transmedia aesthetics of popular music. The chapter argues that the band's 'Welcome to the Dark Ages' events occupy the status of a complex self-reflexive transmedia undertaking – spanning the forms of novels, merchandise, film, fan-created art and events – that embrace contradictory discourses between art and folk, subversive and on-brand.

Also centered on European transmediality, chapter 2 sees Carlos A. Scolari, Mar Guerrero-Pico and María-José Establés examine present-day Spanish transmediality. This chapter presents what the authors call a 'state of the art' of transmedia production in Spain, focusing on fictional narratives. Despite the explosion of transmediality, Scolari, Guerrero-Pico and Establés-Heras argue that Spanish productions feature a number of limitations compared to projects from broader markets. They explore differing attitudes towards transmediality in the Spanish media industries, introducing and describing a first generation of transmedia productions – led by *Águila Roja* (2009) – before reflecting on the emergence of a more advanced second generation of transmedia fictions – as exemplified by *Isabel* (2012-2015), *El Ministerio del Tiempo* (2015-

16) among others. The authors pinpoint the significance of public service broadcasting and crowd-funding on the narrative and promotional expansion of media across platforms in Spain.

Chapter 3, by Matthew Freeman and Ana Margarida Meira, considers how the transmedia narratives surrounding Portuguese port wines have forged affective connections with people via their cultural connections with the collective memories of a Portuguese culture heritage. The chapter explores how transmedia brand narratives convert the relationship between consumers and products in cultural spaces. Transmedia narratives are typically built by brands to tell the stories that define the essence and identity of their products, but Freeman and Meira analyze how consumers construct a bridge between the tangibility of products, producers and brands, and a more intangible dimension enclosed by emotions and collective memories. More specifically, the chapter analyzes how the work of cultural intermediaries ties consumers in a moment of sharing individual and collective memories that transform this dynamic into a fluid transmedial dimension formed by cultural spaces. Since few products are quite so closely tied to Portuguese tradition, culture, history and memory as port wine, the chapter focuses on the transmedia brand narratives of two port wines – Kopke and Vasques de Carvalho – to understand how these brand narratives are interwoven into the culture, heritage and memory of the Portuguese people.

Chapter 4, by Mélanie Bourdaa, moves on to document the role of transmedia storytelling as cultural heritage in France, exploring how new technologies and their use have changed the way that culture is apprehended in the French context. Bourdaa aims to specify the relationship between museums and other institutions that preserve local, national or international cultural patrimony – in a broad sense, including exhibitions, historical monuments and facts, folklore,

etc. – and the rise of a participatory culture. To do so, the chapter focuses on the ‘MediaNum’ (Digital Media for Patrimony and Culture) project, analyzing the role of transmedia storytelling in terms of the valorization of patrimony and cultural heritage in France. By examining how Jenkins’ canonical definition of transmedia storytelling (‘a process where integral elements of a fiction is dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience’ (2006, 95-6)) can be applied to educational projects, museums exhibitions and the valorization of cultural patrimony, Bourdaa shows how French projects use strategies of transmedia storytelling to better communicate the cultural heritage of the country and in turn to engage a younger, participatory audience in the process.

Chapter 5, by Indrek Ibrus and Maarja Ojamaa, considers the dual role of transmediality in Estonia, showing it function as both a mechanism for supporting cultural heterogeneity and for enforcing coherence and stability in culture via maintaining the relevance of historical media texts. The chapter delves into both of these two distinct contexts – exploring transmediality in the local film and television industries and also showing how the transmedia concept evolved within the Tartu-Moscow semiotic school’s conception of cultural dynamics. Ibrus and Ojamaa argue that, more than any other rationale, transmediality in Estonia is expected to serve as a strategy for converging with the much more successful ICT industry, largely on account of the small scope and relative lack of funding for media in Estonia. But the chapter also outlines the key cases of transmedial development in this country, pointing to the importance of the public sector (for example, the Estonian Film Institute), whose neoliberal agenda has facilitated a commercial efficiency and global reach for parts of the local audiovisual sector. In so doing, the chapter offers a comparative analysis of these two different yet complementary frameworks for

transmediality in Estonia, ultimately arguing that what connects both frameworks are the dynamics of change in the country's local cultures and markets within the globalized world.

In Part II: North and South American Transmediality, William Proctor's chapter challenges the current 'no adaptation rule' (Dena 2018) in transmedia storytelling by drawing upon the imaginary world of US author Stephen King as a case study, focusing on literature. As with Hills' comments in his chapter regarding music being largely occluded from work on transmedia, Proctor argues that studies of transmediality have often excluded literature from the media ecosystem, considering the way in which the contemporary fetishization of transmedia storytelling, especially the utopian model proposed by Henry Jenkins (2006), has prioritized platform migration over other elements, especially what Richard Saint-Gelais (2011) describes as 'transfictionality.' Redressing this, Proctor examines the way in which King developed and deployed his imaginary world not with coherent worldbuilding in mind and design but in hindsight, through various narrative techniques including: transfictional storytelling, 'retroactive linkages' (Wolf 2012), 'ontological rules' (Ryan 2017), and a distinct version of what he terms *reflexive transmedia storytelling* whereby authors and proxy-authors evoke the ontological rules of the storyworld in 'orienting paratexts' (Mittell 2015) to enable and activate various transmedia elements towards imagined coherence and 'stratified hyperdiegesis'. In so doing, Proctor demonstrates the way that binaries between adaptation and transmedia, between licensing and transmedia, are complicated and confounded by the King multiverse, showing that such transmedia expressions are but one element in a lengthier chain of trans-associations.

Chapter 7, by Marie-Ève Carignan and Sara Marcil-Morin, analyzes the media coverage of the terrorist attacks of Canada in 2014 in order to understand the role of transmediality in the radicalization of Canada. Politically, these attacks were linked to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant activities in the media, and Carignan draws on this political context to examine the implications for transmediality in terms of how we understand radicalization and terrorism in Canada. Specifically, this chapter outlines the media coverage of the shooting that took place on Ottawa's Parliament Hill on October 22, 2014. Carignan and Marcil-Morin argue that the way that traditional media related what was said on social media, including by the perpetrator, which was integrated with the live broadcasting of a speech to the nation by Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, all raises questions about the coverage of the events as a transmedia experience. In short, the chapter takes this situation as a jumping-off point for assessing how transmediality is implicit in citizens' understanding of terrorism and religious radicalization in this country.

Chapter 8, by Camilo Tamayo Gómez and Omar Mauricio Velásquez, builds on Carignan's study of Canadian radicalization by exploring how the peace politics in Colombia have led to cultural projects that unite displaced citizens via the communicative power of transmedia messages. The chapter analyzes the communicative and expressive dimensions of civil society's collective action as a mechanism to restore a sense of citizenship through the development of transmedia projects. Gómez and Velásquez show how collective belonging and human rights are constructed through processes of memory, recognition and solidarity, where the development of transmedia projects is key in order to catalyze social cohesion in fragile Colombian communities. The city of Medellín serves as the chapter's case study, analyzing two projects: the transmedia social project 'Memory, Territory and Peace' and the Antioquia's Museum exhibition 'Exile and

Reparation'. A key aim is to understand what kind of citizen processes these two transmedia projects can open up within contexts of armed conflict and how these practices have affected human rights in Medellin from a civil society perspective. Gomez and Velasquez argue that it is evident in the Colombian context that the development of transmedia projects for different civil society groups can generate processes of social memory construction and political solidarity.

Chapter 9, by Felipe Muanis and Rosane Svartman, examines the experimental boundaries between fan and corporate content in relation to Brazilian telenovelas. With television changing – artistically, socially and economically – this chapter considers the role and power of audiences in the new era of Brazilian transmedia television. If in the past only the ‘cold’ audience rating or information gathered through qualitative researches (focus groups, for example) influenced the television stations and content producers, nowadays a campaign made by fans online can help a programme build audiences and prestige. Muanis and Svartman explore this contemporary context in Brazil, and by reflecting on the relationship between the audience and telenovelas, this chapter discusses how the former can – in addition to influencing the development of the latter, which is the most traditional product in Brazilian television – interfere in the production and consumption of those narratives. Using empirical research drawn from audience engagement and crowd-sourcing projects for telenovelas in Brazilian television – namely TV Globo, Brazil’s biggest media firm – this chapter reflects on the renewal possibilities of Brazilian television in its quest for relevance today, demonstrating how telenovelas have been changing in their forms of participation and spectatorship amidst national and international media transformations.

In Part III: Asian Transmediality, Manuel Hernández-Pérez's chapter explores transmediality as institutional communication and national branding in Japan. The chapter uses narrative theory as the main axis for a communicational and rhetorical study of Japanese media and its transmedia culture. To do so, Hernández-Pérez explores the main Japanese communication agents and the current state of the convergence process in this country, taking into account both technological and sociological aspects. In particular, he assesses how the reformulations of non-fictional national branding strategies aligned to the popular 'Cool Japan' fictional narratives in Japan work together to create the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games discourse as a transmedia narrative. Pointing to the function of fictionality and the role of fictional characters in seemingly non-fictional cultural narratives, Hernández-Pérez argues that it is almost impossible to build effective cultural (or non-fictional) messages across multiple media platforms that avoid referencing elements from other communication structures, notably fictional entertainments.

Chapter 11, by Matthew Freeman, considers questions of location in relation to transmediality, explored against the backdrop of digital technologies and mobile devices in contemporary India. Freeman's chapter focuses on *Priya's Shakti*, a transmedia project that uses comic books, exhibitions, augmented reality and street art to call attention to the struggles faced by women in Indian society. It uses *Priya's Shakti* as a lens through which to explore the significance of interactive mobile devices and augmented reality technology on the role of transmediality, thinking about what it now means to conceptualize the transmediation of reality and arguing that *Priya's Shakti* exemplifies the way in which transmediality can be used to reshape how we see the world. In short, Freeman demonstrates how mobile devices, comic books, augmented reality and street art murals are all used strategically and creatively in this transmedia project to draw

attention to the line standing between worlds of reality and fantasy simultaneously, using the separation and technologically-aided overlap between these worlds to provoke emotions.

Chapter 12, lastly, by Renira Rampazzo Gambarato, examines the ways in which transmedia storytelling strategies have come to operate as new forms of political activism in Russia. To do so, Gambarato's chapter examines *Grozny: Nine Cities*, a transmedia experience created by a team of Russian documentary photographers, journalists, filmmakers and photojournalists. This collaborative project depicts the hidden layers of Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, a city coping with the aftermath of two wars. It is a non-fictional cultural project that aims to raise awareness of the post-war suffering that the population is facing and to begin the much-needed dialogue between Chechens and Russians, fighting against their mutual prejudices, and to unify both communities. The chapter discusses the forms of interactive documentary and slow journalism as the theoretical background through which the transmedia analysis of the *Grozny: Nine Cities* project is founded. The methodological approach to analyzing this project is the transmedia project design analytical model established previously by Gambarato (2013), which outlines the features of the design process behind transmedia experiences in order to, in this case, understand the diverse facets of the *Grozny: Nine Cities* storyworld in the midst of convergence cultures.

Looking forward a little, two overarching themes link the chapters of this book. The first theme concerns the importance of conceptualizing transmediality as a series of systems for building and capturing memory. Colin Harvey (2015) argues that memory is a key component of transmedia storytelling insofar as audiences are required to remember the specifics of a storyworld across media, and also in terms of the remembered set of expectations with which audiences encounter

and engage with transmedia artefacts – a mechanism that certainly relates to chapter 1’s exploration of the Justified Ancients of Mu Mu’s ‘comeback’ and chapter 6’s study of the Stephen King universe. But beyond this individualized definition of memory, this book’s chapters collectively highlight a notion of transmediality as the capturing of a broader, more collective *cultural* memory. While chapters 3, 4 and 5 all deal with questions of cultural heritage, chapter 8 explicitly explores transmedia projects that were designed to preserve the memory of the Colombian population. Chapter 10, too, is rooted in memories of Japan’s past. The second theme concerns the way in which a number of chapters depict transmediality as something that helps people. Chapter 8 certainly conveys this theme, as do chapters 11 and 12, which both deal with transmedia projects designed to help citizens cope with oppression and grief. Regardless of its different systems, practices and meanings around the world, the idea that transmediality is a method for helping people and for holding onto fading cultural memories is a powerful thought.

Looking even further forward, the book’s diverse approach to analyzing transmediality according to specific cultures does raise some important questions about the future of transmediality, particularly in terms of its definition in academic circles and what it actually *is*. This book paints an enormously varied picture of transmediality, but as Henry Jenkins asserts, ‘this does not mean that transmedia means everything to all people and thus means nothing to anyone. Rather, it means that we need to be precise about what forms of transmedia we are discussing and what claims we are making about them’ (2016). It is our hope that the chapters of this book have successfully grounded their interpretation and manifestation of transmediality in the local cultural context of the country being studied. Nevertheless, given that our cultural studies approach is based on observing the narrower or more personal cultures that different people

create every day, the inevitable question must follow: how else might other groups of people come to interpret transmediality in other cultures not dealt with in the pages of this book? And how else might transmediality begin to reshape cultural communities, to tell stories of political, social and heritage tradition, and indeed to fulfill any number of other cultural functions around the world? Only time will tell, but for now let's relish in the extensive, salient and wide-ranging insights of our contributors, beginning with a study of the UK before moving through chapters on Spain, Portugal, France, Estonia, USA, Canada, Colombia, Brazil, Japan and, finally, Russia.

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