

Foreword: Transmediature

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Transmediature is the literature of the age of digital media. Not only is it developing an esthetic but, just like the old fiction it has a mind bending purpose. Media shape heads, we know that now, but art makes that shape. We became what we read, we now become what we watch, what we trigger, and what we share.

Transmediature picks up from where medieval theatre left off when the printing press rendered obsolete the practices of the manuscript culture. Transmedia share a number of key features with sacred plays that were performed outside the church on the town square. These performances involved the public, using the media available at the time. They involved participation, games, storytelling, local news and politics and their various stages would operate simultaneously. There presented too a kind of hypertextual layout in that people could choose to go from place to place without any particular order unless they preferred to follow the Magister Ludis. Like transmedia today, they were based on a world, the Earth in relationship to Heaven and Hell and allowed for much improvisation on the part of the actors.

Transmedia educates us to hypertextual cognition and multimedia imagination. Breaking the linear imperative, mashup fiction has shattered video in fragments. The job is to re-member them. Connected intelligence ties contents and people over time and space in networks. Transmedia Literacy is putting Humpty Dumpty together again.