“Every civilisation was built off the back of the disposable war force. But I can only make so many . . . .”—is how Niander Wallace, head of Wallace Corporation, the chief manufacturer of replicants in the 2049 Los Angeles expresses his inability to reproduce his army and, accordingly, expand his area of influence. Reproduction, be it in the form of bioengineering humans; hence their memories, versions of the past, or patterns of behaviour, seems to be the main concern of Blade Runner 2049 (2017) by Dennis Villeneuve. This is visible also in the film being structured as a sequel to the 1982 Ridley Scott movie Blade Runner, itself a screen adaptation of the 1968 novel Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? by the American SF guru, Phillip K. Dick. The complex architecture of so re/created diegesis does not, however, end at that, for Blade Runner 2049’s aesthetically noir world referring us to Fritz Lang’s Metropolis (1927) and hence, to the German expressionism, sprouts—also morally—far beyond its typical (post)cyberpunk limits of the mid-21th century. So universalized, the same moral context of Villeneuve’s masterpiece, in turn, facilitates its audiences’ affective identification with the film’s protagonists, in particular with K, the more so that the latter role has been starred by an actor famous for his versatility, Ryan Gosling. In Blade Runner 2049 Gosling embodying a replicant who is replicant-catcher thus transforms the film audiences into what Wallace could not attain to be: active searchers not so much for the reproduced but, primarily, for the secret to further reproduction in the reproduced and thus, for living the transmedial.

In her Creator’s Guide to Transmedia Storytelling (2012), Andrea Phillips demarcates transmedia as “storytelling on the cusp of new possibilities,” or practice that “has proven to be a moving target” (15, 18). At the same time, however, she makes the reservation that formal aspects of such vastly mobile storytelling are very difficult to pinpoint (A Creator’s 15). Therefore, instead of resolving doubts about “whether . . . project[s are] technically going to be transmedia,” Phillips proposes one should rather worry about making these projects “something people will care about” (A Creator’s 15). In so doing, Phillips obviously bows to Henry Jenkins who, in his renowned Convergence Culture (2008), calls transmedia the “art of world making” and claims it is focused not on “the definitional” but on “the analytic.”¹ “Taking care” about the transmedial world would therefore, primarily, entail making its participants engaged in it, by to use Jenkins’ idiom again:

assum[ing] the role of hunters and gatherers, chasing down bits of story across media channels, comparing notes with each other via online discussion groups, and collaborating to ensure that everyone who invests time and effort will come away with a richer entertainment experience. (Convergence loc. 528)


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Active tracking down of various story threads functional in the transmedial world has value in and of itself. Yet, engaging all possible audiences in the care of such a world has more benefits. One good example can be their common recreation of the dialectics, *ergo*, the value of transmedia, typically conceived of in terms of quantity rather than quality. Necessary for “contemplating things as they are in and for themselves” dialectics, in consequence, also studies the frictions produced by juxtapositions in the form of “past and future, history and fiction, theory and practice, change and continuity, text and image, visuals and sounds, narrative and database” (Kinder and McPherson xiv) existing between such things. With reference to transmedia, the shared desire to build “decision support” for problem-solving will therefore not only provide an end to the “finitude of the one-sided determinations of the understanding” (Hegel 131) of transmediality as yet another meta-discourse. It will also stimulate the reconfiguration of transmedia as a collaborative work system whose synthetic value bringing about an increase in its complexity thus makes transmediality a “supremely ultimate,” as Taoists would say, method of self/organizing the process of creation.

Monistic as it may seem, the transmedial method has little to do with the single fundamental creative principle as Greek philosopher Heraclitus conceived of it. This is because the dialectics of transmedia does not eventuate from an incessant clash of its inherent opposites; rather, it is a result of both cyclical and progressive changes. On the one hand, this means that transmedia production rests on developing, more or less subtly linked together and narratively synchronized, stories across multiple forms of media to deliver unique pieces of content in each channel. On the other hand, however, the transmedial content-creation is performed so as to mobilise audiences’ viewpoints, experiences, even resources to be part of the creation process, hence, to allow creation to permeate their daily lives (Nuno 153). Thus, offering audiences—endless, it seems—opportunities to think critically, gain knowledge (via identification with the viewed material), and interpret it from the individual perspective, transmediality, in effect, simultaneously transforms their greater mental patterns and, by extension, culture itself into a universal “brand” whose main “product” appears to be unconventionality itself.

Embodying a brand can, however, be misleading, for it connotes the identification of transmedial culture—so also transmediality itself—with capitalism; hence, with such economically justified phenomena as, e.g. “multimedia,” “interactive fiction,” “cross-media,” or even Alternative Reality Games (ARC). As Phillips (*A Creator’s* 16-24) has demonstrated, not only has transmediality little to do with these phenomena; it also defies its own common misperception of being, like the said phenomena, “nothing but a marketing tool” (*A Creator’s* 19). In his *The Better Mousetrap. Brand Invention in Media Democracy* (2012) brand-builder Simon Pont explains this via giving the example of motion pictures marketing which, according to him, is “all about promoting the story” (203) along the lines marked by the so-called “Bow Tie model” (206).

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This model structures every cinematic event into three parts: Before, During, and an After, each of which drip-feeds its audience with only a portion, also affective, of the entirety of cinema experience. By extension, it also maps the delivery of transmedia—as well as the culture which it underwrites—not so much in terms of “due date of a movie starring” (*The Better 205*) but simply as “bringing the story to life” (*The Better 205*).

Anchoring itself to the world of story, on which the transmediation of culture hinges, has in turn been justified by the latter’s actual workings. No longer capable of operating on the traditional industrial model based on the principles of mass production, contemporary culture, much like contemporary cinema existing without the support of the studio system which guaranteed its profit, must resort to other means of securing its continuity.3 In this light, the best solution seems to be building guarantees into the system itself in the form of the story which, in Pont’s idiom, plays the role of culture’s “golden thread stitched in any number of directions to create an immersive, multi-sensory shroud” (*The Better 205*). Pre-sold to, or even produced by such entertainment-streaming companies as e.g. Netflix, sporting a host of bankable stars, and sequelised, such a story becomes culture’s product, custom-made for those who are bold enough to try it on, that is, for everyone, like all people, Simon Pont believes, “crave the ride of a great story” (*The Better 205*).

Therefore, when transmediated, the “studio system” of culture which the Frankfurt school has thought us to envision as a site of “industrial” production, receives a chance to become a studio, both in fact and name. For one, this is because transmediation, like contemporary cinema, is, as we have seen, about “studying” culture perceived not as a “factory” (of dreams) but, as film historian John Belton puts it, as a “kind of preindustrial workshop in which the final product is . . . to express the unique interests of . . . an ‘interrelated group of artisans where unique talents contribute to the handcrafting of individual [stories]’” (*American Cinema* 80). Such a “shroud” demarcation of transmedia’s final product gets even vaguer in that it concerns the “transitory assortment of artists who come together for this particular project, then move on to new ventures” (*American* 80). Last but not least, these vaguely related artists—ourselves—contributing to the creation of transmedial culture in the vague understanding of one big story (“a shroud” again), at the same time might seem to propound its cognitive perception in terms of “big vision,” that is, theory rather than practice.

However, to quote Simon Point one last time, the “fact that ‘transmedia’ is still buzzy has . . . everything to do with it being [precisely] a ‘broad beam ambition . . . ’ that few-to-none have really cracked . . .” (*The Better 205*) From this viewpoint, putting transmedia theory into practice appears to be a “mission impossible” project, and few have managed to complete it. This primarily means that, as of today, there exist only a sparse number of publications on transmediality. Two of them, probably the most influential, are the already mentioned *Convergence Culture* (2008) by Henry Jenkins and Lev Manovich’s 2002 *The Language of New Media*, yet even these do not work as the dynamic rope helping its readers across culture. Bearing this in mind, one cannot but ponder over the role affective factor plays in effecting the process of transmediation. Affect, be it anticipation felt in the “Before” part of the transmediation process, fulfillment (“During”), or the nostalgia of its “After” section, seems to be the chief influencer of audiences’ engagement in the construction of a cultural storyline. Neither too sophisticated, as theories tend to be, for its performers, and mysterious enough to become a down-to-earth routine, as practice not infrequently gets, affect seems an optimal—for offering limitless possibilities of application—culture transmediation channel. The authors of the essays in this collection seem to have bet on it—and in the result of this decision, we, their prospective audience, can, too, experience, and not vicariously at all, the last scene of *Bladerunner 2049*: the thrill of the contact between two related (human) beings that is about to commence.

The essays of this issue of the Journal offer innovative considerations, demonstrating the potentiality of transmediation processes in a wide range of fields with a variety of theoretical approaches adopted by the authors. The transdisciplinary character of the collection embraces texts that cluster around film, literary and visual studies, architecture and video games. However, as transmediation is all-encompassing

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and hybrid in its very nature, the texts open up different theoretical and practical perspectives, proving that cultural productions are always networked across various platforms and archives. In consequence, what emerges are multiple and ongoing processes of transmediation simultaneously correlated with the economic, social, cultural, psychological and technological praxes/units. What unites our contributors is thus not a shared view of the state of the field, but rather the originality, importance and vigour of their interventions into that profoundly fluid and developing area of interest. We believe that throughout all the essays run serious theoretical and analytical reflections on the powers of the transmedial possibilities they pose for research and practice.

Also, the transcultural exchange of thoughts collected in this issue is attuned to transmedial transfer as both operate as processual transitions to different socio-cultural contexts, reworking the encountered technology-based forms and cultural phenomena. The Special Issue of the Journal thus does not limit itself to one cultural region but takes a global perspective, presenting scholars from Austria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States who offer new conceptual rethinking of the widely recognized cultural materials in the context of the history of media advancement. The critical insights from varied artistic angles develop new possibilities of decoding of incommensurable meanings organized over time and in different media tracks, allowing readers to navigate in a nonlinear topology of mutations and divergences. While the collection of the articles itself is not divided thematically into subchapters, it nevertheless provides vectors, forces and perspectives that can be engaged and read in multiple orders, operating as a conceptual centrifuge for further explorations. This arrangement of mutual relations, constellations and collaborations—as we believe—emphasizes that the participle “ING” matters more than its infinitive form “BE” in the analysis of richly mediated culture.

The article “The Holocaust metanarrative: from discourse to architecture,” gives insight into the transmediation of the narratives of trauma into architecture. While exploring Daniel Libeskind’s projects of the Holocaust museums, Xanti Tsiftsi investigates how transmediated storytelling unfolds the participatory experience of architecture, recreates the shattering events and predominantly reactivates the memory about the victims and survivors. However, as the author highlights, this is not only an embodied experience that enabled Libeskind to redefine the concept of the museum as a static entity but also an intersubjective relation between visitors and victims. Drawing on memory studies and phenomenology, the article proves that the architect’s spaces provide new modes of navigation and vehicles for, as indicated in the text, “a reliving of traumatic effect through an encounter with Holocaust” (Tsiftsi). Libeskind’s architecture, while bringing the question of transmediated memory into the logic of spatial configuration, is thus presented as a threshold of endless empathic relations.

A different approach to transmediated narration is provided in Lauren Walden’s contribution to this volume. The text explores the first example of photo-literature Bruges La Morte by Georges Rodenbach and its surrealist pseudo-progeny Nadja by Andre Breton. Rooted and inspired by the relation of the photographic medium and the literary format, both texts are seen here as mise en abyme. While analysing the word-image ties in both novels, Walden indicates that there is a symbiosis between transmediality and cosmopolitanism as they both mutate and exceed their inherent limits while encountering a variety of socio-cultural materials and practices. The texts are seen thus as a series of interwoven dialogues of the internal psyche of the characters with the external world transmediated via photographs of cityscapes, works of art and exotic artefacts. Thus, the author questions the scope of transmedial processes, claiming that “there is a necessity to move beyond the terminology of networks, flows and convergence and grasp how transmediality impacts upon meaning” (Walden).

Barbara Braid in her article “The Frankenstein Meme: Penny Dreadful and The Frankenstein Chronicles as adaptations” explores the palimpsestic appropriations of Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein and its productive potential for generating transmedial frictions. The essay provides a survey of the 21st-century renditions of the novel, confirming that the literary text mutates while adapting itself to the cultural formats that meet demands of a given period. In fact, her analysis proves that the TV shows are hybrids appropriations that often cross generic boundaries. The productions rework the Victorian novel, unveiling and accentuating formerly peripheral stories almost vestigial in the previous adaptations. In this respect, the screened versions reflect shared anxieties of contemporary technologized society exposed to regular fragmentations,
transformations and circulations of cultural memes. Braid suggests that *Frankenstein* has been in its nature a transmediated text that can be read most productively within its social and historical contexts.

The relation between cinema and novel is also traced by Lovorka Gruic Grmusa in her article devoted to Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*. Nevertheless, in this case, this is literature that borrows language and techniques of rendering from cinematic productions. Drawing from Paul Virilio and Gilles Deleuze's theoretical framework on film taxonomies, the author gives insight into Pynchon's thematic and technical employment of manipulative qualities of the screen enforced by the military-industrial-entertainment agencies. As indicated in the article, Pynchon accurately reflects a blurred distinction between the real/actual and the mediated/virtual that has resulted from unstable systems of codes generated by the media and global economy. Facilitated through the industrial practice of transmedia distribution, the literary piece of writing is thus—likewise cinematic production—open to fragmentation, discontinuity and mutability. Govorka asserts that the complicated relationship between the real and the virtual—which is a direct effect of transmediation processes—becomes, in fact, a cultural force that "unveils literature's performativity, its ability to entertain the 'cinematic', which in turn revolutionizes fiction."

With digital technology revolution and the renaissance of television shows, the term showrunners has been coined to express the signature voices that form multi-platform/transmedial experience intentionally for the worldwide audiences. Elizabeth Blakey in her essay "Showrunner as *Auteur*: Bridging the Culture/Economy Binary in Digital Hollywood" thus adopts a metaphor of showrunner as an *auteur* to grasp the changing mechanisms responsible for the formations and engagement of audiences across different media outlets that provide an access to "over-the-top" distribution ("OTT"). While contrasting different different film directors of the pre-digital era with selected TV showrunners of digital Hollywood, the article delineates the artistic qualities of the latter, confirming their status of auteur merchandises. Blakey emphasises that these are mainly the processes of cross-platform adaptation and compelling marketing campaigns, though heavily dependent on the discourses of commercialism, which enable showrunners to cross the culture/economy binary paradoxically. And hence, as she puts it, TV showrunners have gained the status of artistic productions, transforming contemporary TV into a rich cinematic experience.

While drawing the parallel between Sandro Botticelli’s work *Primavera* and the third season of Bryan Fuller’s 2013 TV series *Hannibal*, Anna Krawczyk-Łaskarzewska reconfigures the scope of ekphrastic relations in televisual medium, asserting that cinematic productions predominately transmedial and appropriate iconic images. As argued, even though ekphrasis and transmedialization complement each other, the latter denotes “not the result but the process of the interartistic transfer” (Krawczyk-Łaskarzewska). In this light, as the author highlights, Botticelli’s work not only constitutes the critical element to understanding characters’ development and transmutation but the painting’s structural and interpretative complexity also enables the director to transgress the generic confines. Krawczyk-Łaskarzewska notices that alchemic process contained in the painting—which triggers the constant state of becoming—is transferred into the TV script of *Hannibal*, producing constant mutations and fractures in the show’s storyline. In effect, the literary franchise and its cinematic offshoots are free to start separate lives.

A discussion of transmedial processes also requires the consideration of computer games, which have emerged as a dominant cultural form and area of artistic practice over the past couple of decades. Hence, the last articles concentrate on the potential of *The Walking Dead* franchise, an exemplary case of transmedial storytelling, whose narrative appeared in the format of a comic book, TV series, a video game, web episodes and novels, creating a vibrant, fictional story world. Matteo Genovesi’s paper “Choices and consequences: the role of players in “The Walking Dead. A Telltale Game Series “discusses the narrative transmediated into the video game to indicate that the decision making and choice excitement factors are responsible for this successful transfer. Nevertheless, the text also presents the evolution of the franchise across various entertainment sectors, engaging close attention to narrative ties developed in every format of the production. From that perspective, as the author points out, it is easier to observe the intricate shift from viewing/reading to playing strategies and understand the differences between engagement with gaming texts and television drama. Immersive and interactive, *The Walking Dead. A Telltale Game Series* fulfils the narrative expectations of the viewers who co-invent the endless versions of the story.
In her text “Game Logics in the TV Series The Walking Dead: On Transmedial Plot Structures and Character Layouts,” Maren Lickhard gives insight into The Walking Dead TV series from a reverse perspective. As a matter of fact, she proves that the franchise itself contains inner ludic logic that shapes the plot structures and contributes to the evolution of different character layouts in the televised version. The repetitive and fragmented narrative, as indicated by the author of the text, corresponds to PC based gamers’ habits that enable the viewers to immerse themselves in the cinematic world and become fully engaged with a fictional world. While analysing the plot structure and character development, the author asserts that the difference between playing a game and watching a television program is intricately bound up with the active/passive position of audiences. In turn, the article allows seeing The Walking Dead as a transmedia text that helps the level of immersion found in the television drama but also the one desired by video game players.

In bringing together the essays, Transmediating Culture(s)? the issue explores where the culture(s) have been, how they may evolve, and what needs to be taken into account to evoke the dynamics of cultural production in the technologically mediated environment. One thing is sure, with the convergences of media, cultural values and experiences construct endless networks of meaning and interactive connections that need to be analyzed as interventions in and into the process of transposition.

Notes on Contributors

**Blakey, Elizabeth** has a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Notre Dame (Indiana) and a J.D. (law degree) from Loyola Law School Los Angeles. Dr. Blakey teaches writing courses and media law courses in the Department of Journalism at California State University Northridge, USA. Dr. Blakey’s scholarship centers on freedom of expression from a critical, cultural studies perspective, examining questions of the mediated public sphere, postmodernity and legitimacy. Her research has been published in Cinematic Sociology, Loyola Entertainment Law Journal, Law and Social Inquiry, Project Censored, and Teacher-Scholar, the Journal of the Comprehensive State University.

**Braid, Barbara** is Assistant Lecturer in the English Institute at Szczecin University, Poland. She has co-edited two volumes titled Unity in Diversity (Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2013, 2014) and published a number of essays in the fields of Neo-Victorian literature, gothic fiction and gender studies. Her research interests also include Neo-Victorian adaptation, bio-fiction and crime fiction. In the years 2010-2015 she was Conference Leader for the Femininities & Masculinities Global Project at Interdisciplinary.Net. She is currently working on a monograph on the motifs of female insanity in selected Victorian and Neo-Victorian novels.

**Genovesi, Matteo** is an Italian Ph.D. student at the Department of Humanistic Studies and Cultural Heritage of the University of Udine, Italy. He is making a doctoral dissertation based on interactive narrative and seriality processes in video games, which are one of his most intense passions since he was a child. He has participated in various national and international conferences. Since 2015, he has been teaching video game history and video game theory courses dedicated to secondary school’s students.

**Grmusa, Gruic Lovorka** is Associate Professor and acting chair of the Literature program at the Department on English, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka, Croatia. She teaches literature courses, American culture and civilization, and media culture. She has been awarded several grants (among which a Fulbright scholarship: UCLA, and a Duke University Literature grant), co-edited a collection of papers: Space and Time in Language and Literature, published one book: The Novelistic Vision of Kurt Vonnegut, and contributed to English and Croatian literary journals. Her research interests focus on interdisciplinary approach to temporality and space-time (literature, science, and technology), contemporary US literature, and media studies.
Lickhardt, Maren studied German Literature, Philosophy and Media Sociology at the Johannes Gutenberg-University of Mainz, Germany. There she received her PHD for a work on Irmgard Keun’s novels of the Weimar Republic. She was Assistant Professor at the Department of German Literature of the University of Siegen, Assistant Professor at the Department of Media Aesthetics at the University in Hagen, Assistant Professor (literature studies and literature theory) at the University of Greifswald and is now Assistant Professor (German Studies) at the Leopold-Franzens-University of Innsbruck. She does research on the picaresque novel of the 17th century, culture and literature, especially on the lifestyle-magazines and pop-culture of the Weimar Republic and contemporary television series.

Łaskarzewska-Krawczyk, Anna teaches film, media, visual culture and intermedial adaptation at the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland. She co-edited several volumes devoted to scripted TV shows and translation studies. She also published extensively on issues connected with film and graphic novel adaptations of literary classics, William Gibson’s prose and cultural representations of the city. Her current research focuses on book illustration and the theoretical and practical aspects of reimagining and repurposing iconic literary characters.

Stępień, Justyna is an Assistant Professor in Literary and Cultural Studies in the English Department of Szczecin University, Poland. She is the editor of Redefining Kitsch and Camp in Literature and Culture (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014) and the author of British Pop Art and Postmodernism (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015). Her research interests encompass the transmediatization of cultural practices, aspects of everyday aesthetics, and posthuman subjectivity analysed from a transdisciplinary perspective. She has published essays on popular culture, postmodern literature, film and visual arts, combining her interests in philosophy and critical theory. She is the member of The Posthuman and Art Research Group that is an ongoing network comprised of 10 practicing scholars, artists and curators from across Europe and North America.

Tsiftsi, Xanthi is Greek archaeologist and art historian, with a Master of Arts degree in Museum Studies and a Master of Architecture in Design, Space and Culture. Currently, she is a PhD candidate at the School of Architecture in Athens, Greece with the focus of her thesis being on the architecture of the museum and the construction of collective memory. She is a member of Memory Studies Association with several presentations at international conferences. Lately, she contributed with an article to a book entitled “Politics of Erasure. From “Damnatio Memoriae” to Alluring Void,” published by the Polish Institute of World Art Studies in 2015.

Walden, Lauren received her BA degree in Modern and Medieval Languages (French and Spanish) at the University of Cambridge, England. Having gained linguistic fluency, her cultural interests broadened beyond literature and an interest in visual arts and cultural institutions emerged. Currently, she studies at Coventry University for a fully-funded PhD in Art History. Her research elaborates a re-writing of surrealism’s cultural memory as cosmopolitan. She views photography as enacting an empirically-lived cosmopolitanism due to its indexical relation to the real. She also learns Chinese, passing HSK 5 (C1 CEF) in April 2017, and hopes to achieve near-native fluency by the end of her PhD.

Zawadka, Beata is Associate Professor in the Institute of English at the Szczecin University, Poland. She has earned her Ph.D. from the University of Łódź, Poland. Her doctoral dissertation was on the work of Peter Taylor. She specializes in American studies (U.S. South), mass culture (tourism/transmediality/performance studies), and cinema (adaptation/serialization studies). As a zealous francophile, Beata Zawadka adds French studies to the scope of her ongoing postdoctoral research project. The latter, to be published in 2018, will be entitled The Dis/Reputed Region. Transcoding the U.S. South. She is a member of the Performance International (PSi), IASA, EAAS (PAAS), and of the Southern Studies Forum of the EAAS. Dr. Zawadka has presented at conferences in the European Union and beyond, and has also published—in Poland and abroad—on topics linked to her fields of research.
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