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Bridging Local and Global Gameplay through Identity Games.

Transworld Glocal Identities for a Globalising World

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Introduction

The main question to be discussed in this article is a *philosophical* or *existential* one: in our increasingly remediated, interconnected, physically and virtually mobile contemporary world, it is actually conceivable, or feasible, for us to be “*here, there, everywhere*” at one and the same time? Have our predominantly locally oriented individual and collective histories, and the cultural narratives that have grown out of these, furnished us with relational and identitarian strategies that enable us to participate adequately and reasonably in ongoing globalisation processes, playing an active, constructive and ethical role in the global playing field? Or will we need to develop new types of “glocal” identities that allow us to mediate and transcend in positive ways the emotional, conceptual, cultural, and other divides that seem to exist regarding the identification, management and balancing of both ‘global’ and ‘local’ needs, rights and interests? Can shared experiences of using and evaluating new technologies designed to facilitate ludic and other forms of transmedia, transworld cooperation at-a-distance help us develop more effective strategies for engaging at-a-distance with a multitude of ‘non-local’ othernesses in ethical, responsible, ecological and otherwise *mutually sustainable* ways?

“Here, There and Everywhere”

In 1963 one of the first globally renowned pop music groups, the Beatles, four mop-haired kids from the gritty northern England port city of Liverpool, sang on their “Revolver” album: “Here, there and everywhere – changing my life with a wave of her hand”¹, to (presumably) express the power of romantic, or universal, love to change our fundamental sense of self in different ways at different times and in different situations, and perhaps too, in the process, change the course of our own and others’ lives in the present and in the future. This popular lyric seems to have caught, and mirrored, a broad current of cultural change prevalent at that particular time in history, characterised by increasing social, national and international mobility on the part of young people, and an attendant growth of autonomy in relation to many of the current systems of values espoused by their parents in their local home environments. This initial tendency towards a *globalisation* of youth culture, was coupled with a growing understanding by young people of the relative transitoriness and fragility of the natural and cultural resources of the world we live in, and share. This widely shared sentiment was in part due to then current Cold War fears regarding a possible nuclear holocaust, the traumatic military adventure in Vietnam, and the increasingly visible and sometimes worrying effects of an extremely intense period of technological and economic development in the West after World War II. There was also a growing sense among the young of the need to develop the means to ensure an internationally shared ‘global’ responsibility for an effective protection and well thought out management of vital natural and cultural resources, beginning at very ‘local’ levels. In this period, positive forms of innovation on a global scale were often seen as best fuelled by small scale experimentation and innovation processes in small communities at the periphery of mainstream society that could develop and promote responsible, ethical ways of living and relating to others, and to nature as well. “Small is beautiful” was a prevalent catchword at the time.

The simple pop music lyric of the Beatles mentioned above essentially underlines some of this yearning for a cultural turn “back to basics”: a simplification and humanisation of a seemingly too careless, over-technologising, unethically commercialising world. In the song, it is our most intimate, caring relationships with others that represent a real hope for change, since they add genuine colour and meaning to our lives, and also represent a real potential for local forms of personal growth and development – not only for ourselves, but also for others we relate to this way. John, Paul, Ringo and George, then, were extolling an optimistic, almost naively childlike and idealistic view of life, love and the world in general that foregrounds the intrinsic value of intimate relationships with significant others, and, also too, when seen in more generic, symbolic, terms, our ongoing relationship with alterity, or *otherness*, in a crowded, shrinking, otherwise vulnerable world. In accordance with some of the sentiments behind this rather euphoric, and first and foremost optimistic, train of thought from the ‘60’s – which might perhaps act as a kind of symbolic counterbalance to the some of the predominant gloom, doom and pessimism characterising our day to day experiences of the present global economic downturn – I shall examine, in a philosophical² and semiotic³ framework (Coppock 2008) that stresses the processual relationship between possibility and actuality in our lived experience of remediated fictional possible worlds, to what extent our fundamental sense of self – our “personal identities” if we will – can be seen to possess a potential for positive forms of growth and mutation into what I refer to as glocal⁴ transworld identities⁵. I also examine the role of some newer types of digitally remediated cultural artefacts in sustaining developmental processes of this kind.

Engaging with the Innovation Game Engine

Today there is an extremely powerful “game engine” that is quietly driving processes of transcultural innovation, transaction and growth that are permeating and changing, in some sense “from the bottom up”, our societies and cultures all over the world. This innovation engine is opening up for increasing *glocalisation* of our personal and collective identities – and more generally speaking, our personal and communitarian sense of dwelled in, or lived place: the *genius loci*⁶. Like most machines, the innovation game engine is a man-made artefact that has been emerging for a number of years from a complex cultural process involving confrontations between conflicting conceptions of global and local needs, requirements and interests in a period of exceptionally rapid technological, economic and cultural development. This innovation game engine may be exemplified by the increasing number of hybrid digital work/play social networking environments that offer opportunities for instantaneous interactions with friends and colleagues at-a-distance, and the sharing of a constant flow of remediated⁷ cultural artefacts that offer us *local* engagements with past, present and future possible (and actual) worlds (Coppock 2008) with their origins in other *at-a-distance* local cultural realities, often very different from our own.

Of course, close encounters with possible worlds from other cultural realities have always been made available for us, not only by way of traditional face-to-face storytelling practices in the days before writing came into being, but also through conventional mass-media such as literature, art, photography, music, cinema, theatre, television and the press, as well as through established cultural institutions of science, religion, education, politics, commerce and travel/tourism, and the various spaces,

places, rites and rituals associated with these. All offer us actual and possible spaces, places for encounters and interactions in a variety of modalities, with past, present and future possible worlds that seek to model alternative ways we might conceive of, or relate to one another and to our actual world, through narrative descriptions of experiences, practices and values that are characteristic of our own, or of other, cultural traditions.

However, what is rather special about our contemporary digital media picture is the rapidly increasing degree of interactivity, intimacy and immediacy associated with the networked hybrid remediation artefacts mentioned above. Paradigmatic examples of these are computer games played with others online, and networked ‘virtual worlds’ such as *Second Life*⁸ and *Twinty*⁹ that combine and interface more or less seamlessly with multimodal social networking environments like Facebook¹⁰ and YouTube¹¹. The day to day fruition of interactive environments of this kind, especially by the young (but not only), generates profluent streams of at-a-distance communication, interaction and sharing of many kinds of digital ‘content matter’ in a wide range of aesthetic and experiential formats. Another characteristic of these environments is that they encourage ‘live’ streams of self-created, multimodal¹² ‘remake/remix’¹³ materials that incorporate and blend *fictional* and *actual* content. Hybrid textual materials of this kind derive from, and frame, our own and others’ ‘local’ conceptions of our – and their – actual and possible worlds in a ‘global’ context. These sharing activities serve to “bridge”, in subtle, almost ‘viral’ ways, not only the obvious physical distance between protagonists/interlocutors, and the specifically ‘local’ origins of the artefacts they create, exchange and consume, but also the often considerable emotional, conceptual and cultural distances between them. It has been noted for some time that traditional processes of production, marketing and consumption of ‘goods and services’ are becoming increasingly *intertwined* with one another, as are the roles of producer, distributor and consumer. This has given birth to a new *prosumer*¹⁴ culture, a hybrid system of cultural and economic exchange, based the fact that consumers who master innovation game engine technologies can become producers and distributors themselves, coexistent with, and parasitic upon, conventional market economics and consumer culture.

Fiction and Reality – Possibility and Actuality

Before we continue, it is probably necessary at this point to make a few brief observations regarding the nature of the relationship between fiction and reality, which I have chosen to conceive of here in terms of a continuous, processual relationship linking and blending aspects of inherent possibility with aspects of emergent actuality, sometimes in disturbing, but often, too, in constructive, creative, ways.

Our seemingly fundamental attraction to narrative forms that re-present aspects of our embodied actual world experience, as fictional possible worlds, is probably best considered an evolutionary trait that has turned out particularly functional for our survival as a species, and for the emergence and development of our nurturing societies and cultures over time. Our deep fascination with fictional narrative appears largely based on the fact that the possible worlds and protagonists they try to persuade¹⁵ us to believe in and develop a relationship with, have their origins in culturally coded forms of *otherness*. Fiction describes narrative histories involving

other individuals, other populations, other ethnicities, other cultures or sub-cultures that we easily recognise as meaningful on the basis of our own experiences of the world, but which we nonetheless are capable of conceiving of as possessing a specific kind of *fictional otherness*. They are enough like fragments of our own lived experience to be recognisable as *possibly actual*, while at the same time different enough for us to recognise them as *actually fictional*.

But one of the most important points here is probably that fictional possible worlds, as products of human imagination and endeavour – “constructed by human minds and hands”, as Eco (1994: 74) puts it – always regard our *human condition in general*. These possible worlds, and the protagonists that ‘inhabit’ them, not only seem recognisable to us in some way or other, they also seem *meaningful*. This is especially so when we consider how described experiences of fictional characters might supplement our lived experience of those people, places, things and events in our own narrative histories that have significantly contributed to the development of our personal and collective identities. We seem to believe that experiences of fictional characters may help us understand – or even resolve – problems, traumas or dilemmas from the past or in the present. Eco also notes that fictional characters are doomed to inhabit incomplete, “handicapped” worlds. It is not possible for authors/ designers/ constructors of fictional possible worlds to recreate the ephemeral, processual complexity of ‘reality’ in all its details. They can only suggest how we *might* be able to imagine it, or parts of it, on *other possible, actual, past, present or future occasions*. Once we have understood this, he continues, we realise we probably think of, and relate to, our actual world in much the same fragmentary way that fictional characters think of, and relate to, their possible worlds. Fictional possible worlds, then, help us see that our own understandings of the actual world may be as imperfect as those of fictional characters. This is why, concludes Eco, successful fictional characters often are seen as paramount examples of our “real” human condition.

Genius Loci of Transworld Transmedia Gameplay Space

Clearly, our remediated, more or less embodied¹⁶ encounters with a conceived of multitude of othernesses through our participation in online games, fictional worlds or social networking environments, may tend to evoke, at least to begin with, a bewildering sense of being rather lost in a huge milling crowd. But in a more positive reading, we may also experience¹⁷ ourselves one of a swarm of passionate, intentional player-agents with unique opportunities to project salient aspects of our own identities and our ‘local’ *genius loci* as ‘actors’ onto the gigantic stage of a globalising world culture. The transworld transmedia arena we enter into as we join in the gameplay will be coloured and animated by the activities of people with life stories and cultural traditions often very different from our own. Each player-avatar will furnish the possible world gameplay space with flavours and tastes of other identities, other competencies, other life stories, other ideas, hopes and dreams for the future as actual players that move them contribute to the gameplay with their own special ‘glocal’ identities and personal resources. If we continue this theatrical metaphor for conceptualising the transworld, transmedia ‘*genius loci*’, we might even envision ourselves as part of an ongoing spectacle: a gigantic glocally driven game development project, where each of us can alternate between roles of co-ideator, player or prosumer, taking a more or less active role on different occasions, and different levels in a (serious) glocal gameplay, that might, for example, involve

working together with others (at-a-distance and in “real life”) to develop collaborative projects that contribute to building a more inclusive, more secure, more liveable and shareable world for the future.

As we log on to Facebook, simulated possible worlds like Second Life or Twinity, or online gaming communities like World of Warcraft and become entangled in transworld, transmedia gameplay activities and encounters ‘there’, we are experiencing an extensive, other-oriented “sense of place”. We are ‘moving house’ emotionally and conceptually – not physically, of course – into a new kind of technologically enhanced and extended *genius loci*. Glocal transworld, transmedia gameplay space has become for us a new type of “meaningful place”, as Norberg-Schultz (1980) characterises the semantic core of the concept of *genius loci*. It has also become part of what he refers to as the “concrete reality man has to face and come to terms with in his daily life” (ibid.). Indeed, as any hardened online game player, Second Life or Facebook denizen will bear witness to, such possible world *genius loci* often come to play an important, even integral, role in our day to day identity work, in relation to both our professional¹⁸, educational and recreational spheres of being. In so doing, they contribute in meaningful ways to expanding our personal horizons and our shared understandings of where, and how, we might possibly see ourselves as “situated” – not only culturally, socially or professionally in relation to others, but also in relation to the actual physical world, and historical time and space.

Transworld Glocal Identities and “Real Life”

Our technologically enhanced glocal transworld identities – based on experiences of ludic and other, more or less intimate, encounters and relationships with other players who take part together with us in actualising the *genius loci* of glocal transmedia transworld spaces/places, each with their own specific, often unique, potential for fostering new forms of interpersonal at-a-distance transcultural (inter)action and cooperation – may also begin to permeate into some of the other material, social and cultural “spaces” or places we “inhabit” in our day to day “real lives”. This expands our conceptions and expectation of the capacity of also *these* places to accommodate and facilitate new forms of glocal transworld (inter)action. This in its turn may lead us to expand and develop the range of actions and activities we believe we ‘normally’ can take part in these places, either on our own, or together with others – as we realise that no matter who these others may be, or where they may be situated in the “real” world, we can engage relatively easily in glocal encounters with them in a new kind of ‘here and now’. Indeed, mobile networked multimodal computing devices and telephones, based on GSM, EDGE, GPS and other wireless technologies are already playing an increasingly important role in our everyday work, play and study activities, permitting us, for example, to transform a train compartment, a café or an airport waiting room into a mobile office, a group study node, part of a global gameplay session, or just one small corner of a glocal family reunion.

It is important to remember, however, that our personal and collective experiences of transmedia, transworld encounters in glocal multiplayer game space/place are not only a product of quotidian encounters – face-to-face or by way of old or new communication and information media – with *actual* otherness. They are also in part a product of our own and others’ culturally narrativised conceptualisations of actual and

possible, past, present and future processes and events: cultural transitions, traumas, diaspora, migrations and other forms of intra- or intercultural mobility, that are a consequence of, or have contributed to, destabilising, often conflictual historical epochs involving periods of radical material, biological, and socioeconomic growth – or decline. However, given the extreme complexity, fluidity and tensivity¹⁹ of our multitudinous, ever more intimate, transparent, intermingling lifeworlds of today – Baumann (2000, 2005, 2006a, 2006b) speaks, for example, in a series of works of “liquid” ‘*modernity*’, ‘*times*’, ‘*life*’, and ‘*fear*’, envisioning contemporary culture as “a container filled to the brim with a countless multitude of opportunities yet to be chased or already missed.” (2000 p. 61) – I suggest we may profit professionally and personally if we actively seek to develop and polish our capacities and competencies – as individuals, communities of practice, private and public enterprises, institutions and so on – to engage creatively and positively in as wide as possible a range of glocal transcultural, transmedia gameplay activities. If we are willing to accept, as numerous philosophers, scientists, educationalists and creative thinkers throughout the course of history – Huizinga (1938/1971), Wittgenstein (1953/1967), Caillois (1958/2001), Gadamer (1960/1998), Bateson (1972/2000), Juul (2005) – to name but a few – have suggested we must, that lived participation in games and play is a fundamental human trait absolutely essential for the success of any kind of learning, enculturation or socialisation process, then in our densely remediated, rapidly globalising contemporary cultural environment, active participation in transcultural, transmedia gameplay activities may quite simply be seen as an investment for the future, and part of a completely normal, highly desirable, quotidian process of individual and collective, intersubjectively grounded, innovation, regeneration and growth.

In fact, I go even further and suggest that a measured amount of strategic (or other intentional) participation in transcultural, transmedia gameplay activities of various kinds can be seen as an important presupposition for the development of “healthy”, balanced, and *ecologically sustainable* (in the widest possible metaphorical sense of this notion) glocal transworld identities. James Paul Gee (2007: 45) has emphasised that “learning in all semiotic domains requires taking on a new identity and forming bridges from one’s old identities to the new one(s).” In qualifying his firm conviction that well designed video games provide a positive, challenging learning environment for children – and adults (ibid.: 48-54), he goes on to posit three types of identities involved in gameplay situations that facilitate embodied (or enactive²⁰) processes of identity development. These three identities, he claims, interact and blend with one another holistically during play. They are i) a *virtual identity* as a character in the fictional possible world of the game; ii) a *real-world identity* that is the way the player conceives of him or herself in the actual world at the present time, and iii) a *projective identity* that is *both* a projection of players’ own values and desires into the possible gameplay world, and their conceptualisation of their virtual game character as a *project in the making*, defined, as he puts it “by my aspirations for what I want that character to be, and become.” (ibid.: 50) This way of thinking about identity as intentional, enactive, value-driven processes is mirrored in A.N. Whitehead’s post-platonic, “organic receptacle” conception of identity as: “a *locus* that persists and provides an *emplacement for all the occasions of experience*. That which happens in it is *conditioned by its own past, and by the persuasion of its immanent ideals*.” (Whitehead 1967a: 187) (my italics).

Opening ourselves up for more fluid conceptualisations and actualisations of our own personal and collective identities in glocal transmedia transworld terms, will enable us to switch more smoothly and successfully between actual and ‘virtual’ forms of mobility in everyday work and play situations, and help us to feel more at home in a multiplicity of day to day encounters – at-a-distance and face-to-face – with “alien” forms of otherness. It may help us too, for example, to build a realistic, living awareness of our own, and others’ relative *strengths* – seen as the sum value of positive differences between us – and to envision ourselves and others as co-players, in ludic competition with one another, within a larger vision of a glocal gameplay directed toward imagining, planning and constructing a shareable and sustainable future possible world, rather than feeling we must try and exploit others’ weaknesses to “defend” ourselves, because we feel unsure about how to manage the apparent complexity of all these meaningfully pregnant othernesses. Clearly, glocal, transworld identities of this kind will need to be built on a profoundly shared sense of our common humanity, and on an implicit willingness on the part of all parties involved to trust non-present others, though we ‘objectively speaking’ may perceive them, initially at least, as very different from ourselves. Glocal transmedia, transworld identities will need to embody an even more ephemeral sentiment – one which, paradoxically, may perhaps be a bit more likely to be reinforced at this present time in history, as a felicitous, indirect result of the catastrophic state of our global financial and commercial institutions – that in our intimately interlinked, densely remediated high tech glocal gameplay environment, we really have no choice but to conceive of ourselves as being in this – and here I quote the Beatles again, this time from Yellow Submarine – “all together now!!”

Sherry Turkle (2004 p. 5) believes “information technology is identity technology”, and that: “embedding it in a culture that supports democracy, freedom of expression, tolerance, diversity, and complexity of opinion is one of the next decades greatest challenges. We cannot afford to fail.” She continues: “When I first began studying the computer culture, a small breed of highly trained technologists thought of themselves as ‘computer people.’ That is no longer the case. If we take the computer as a *carrier of a way of seeing the world and our place in it*, we are *all computer people* now.” (my italics)

Towards Some Kind of Conclusion ...

Putting all forms of absolutism and naive idealism aside, there undoubtedly exist a vast array of interpersonal norms, systems of values and practices operative at very local levels of contemporary culture that affect, or mirror, conceptualisations of, and relationships with, otherness that need serious rethinking and remodelling. At least if we seriously want to float the notion of getting ourselves and others involved in enactive, ethical, ecologically sustainable forms of gameplay activities to develop *glocal* transmedia transworld identities as a way to build better understandings of otherness, to mediate, and perhaps even resolve some of the most controversial and violent sociopolitical, religious, economic and resource based conflicts in the world today. Most of the *ad hoc* systems of local norms, values and practices mentioned above serve *felt* pragmatic needs on the part of smaller or larger groups of individuals that wish to maintain a certain degree of ‘in-group’ unification. The problem is that the “rule systems” of this gameplay tend to focus on perceived *negative* forms of difference, and the presumed irresolvability of established “truths” regarding *group relations* with otherness. A certain degree of emotional, conceptual and pragmatic

‘distance’ is *felt* to exist between ‘in-group members’ and ‘out-group’ others’. Entrenched local value systems of this kind may make it extremely difficult to bring to the fore, or attempt to resolve actual and possible conflicts involving complex problems with local and global ramifications. These problems regard not only fundamental human rights issues in general, but also nitty gritty practical matters connected with the protection, management and distribution of natural and human resources; tangible and intangible goods and services, and financial, commercial, property or other rights issues, where striking a reasonable, just balance between local and global interests is fundamental.

It was certainly not for nothing that Senator John Mc Cain, and his Vice Presidential candidate, Governor Sarah Palin of Alaska opted to spend so much time and energy in the recent presidential election campaign, especially in the traditionally more conservative, poorer, racially divided, immigration-pressured states and regions of the southern states, hammering away at ‘localistic’ “America First!” and “Hockey Mom” messages. After all, if the “real” big time gameplay arena for political, economic and commercial growth is widely conceived of – and represented as such by politicians – as being *only* the global one, with little or no chance that local “peripheral” values and concerns will be taken seriously there, it is clearly easy for people to fear *their* precious ‘local’ values and interests will get trampled on in the fray. Accordingly, they will begin to “close ranks”, and look around for “tough”, intractable leaders.

But America, as we know, not exactly your, or my own back yard – it is an extremely complex society, probably one of the most profoundly and densely *multicultural* society in the world today. In spite of this narrative history, one of its biggest problems – and it is by no means alone as a national state in this particular respect – still seems to be developing the right kind of ‘balance’ between global and local interests in managing its relations with its own ‘internal’ and “external” othernesses. For the first there at those nested ‘local’ *othernesses* ‘internal’ to America itself – as a reflection of the extreme cultural and ethnic diversity of its population, differences between town and country living, single states and regions etc.. Then there all those other ‘*at-a-distance*’ *othernesses* constituted by the (increasingly diversified) populations of other countries in the rest of the world. So as we can see, the real problem here is one of identifying, managing and balancing the relative *benefits* (and limitations) of local and global forms of *diversity conceived of as otherness*, wherever we might come to encounter them.

Clearly, none of the problems associated with developing sustainable, ethical relations between local and distant forms of otherness can be approached, or resolved in a unilateral way. The active participation of states, regions and individuals in transcultural, transmedia gameplay actions may begin open the way for the growth and spread of glocal, transworld identities; setting the stage for peaceful forms of cooperation, locally and at-a-distance; and the development of innovative and effective strategies, plans and solutions to pressing social, economic and environmental problems. However, if we are to judge by the results of this recent election it seems to emerge, at least at first sight, that perhaps not everyone in America does actually see things in the kind of myopic, localistic, regionally and nationally self-centered way as Senator Mc Cain and Governor Palin appear to have imagined. This simple fact alone might give us reason for hope and some measured optimism for the future, in spite of everything. So now let’s see...

We have now offered a speculative hypothesis that glocal transmedia transworld gameplay space constitutes an exciting new “frontier” for human endeavor and innovation. It is a vast, largely unexplored ‘zone of proximal development’ where we can perhaps start experimenting with, rethinking and redesigning in more “glocal” terms how our local and global relations with otherness might be played out in the longer run of things. We could ask ourselves what might ‘playing the game’, ‘fair play’, ‘equity’, ‘rules and regulations’, ‘participation’, ‘democracy’, ‘human rights’ possibly mean if viewed from a glocal transmedia transworld identity perspective? We will obviously need to work *much* more together to understand how we best can move to create a more healthy balance between local and global interests.

What seems clear at this point is that such interests must not be conceived of, or articulated, in solely financial, commercial or market value terms, but first and foremost in terms of those types of values that – like those of our beloved fictional possible worlds – always turn out to regard our basic human condition, as it was, as it is now, and as it might possibly be in the future...

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Notes:

¹ “I want her everywhere and if she's beside me, I know I need never care. But to love her is to need her everywhere. Knowing that love is to share. Each one believing that love never dies. Watching her eyes and hoping I'm always there. *To be there and everywhere. Here, there and everywhere.*” Accessed January 29th 2009: <http://www.songfacts.com/detail.php?id=105>

² Primary sources of inspiration here are Alfred North Whitehead's (1967a,b) philosophy of organism, and Charles Sanders Peirce's (1931-1935, 1958) evolutionary philosophy and pragmatism.

³ Primary sources of inspiration here is work on cultural semiotics by Juri Lotman (1990/2000), and on general theories of semiotics, interpretation and fiction by Umberto Eco (1979, 1991; 1984, 1990)

⁴ According to Wikipedia: “The term *glocalization* originated in Japanese business practices. It comes from the Japanese word *dochakuka*, which simply means global localization. Originally referring to a way of adapting farming techniques to local conditions, dochakuka evolved into a marketing strategy when Japanese businessmen adopted it in the 1980s. It was also used in the Global Change Exhibition (opened May 30th, 1990) in the German Chancellery in Bonn by Manfred Lange, the director of the touring exhibit development team at that time. He described the interplay of local-regional-global interactions as "glocal", showing the depth of the space presented and drawn.” Accessed January 27th, 2009: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glocalisation>

⁵ The notion of ‘transworld identity’ referred to in the title may bring to mind the logical concept of the same name developed by philosopher David Lewis in his *modal realism*, as a conceptual device for framing philosophical and logical problems in word reference and, more specifically, the constancy (or not) of semantic properties across different (“other world”) contexts. Here, I am revisiting one of the original (‘ante’ modal logic) meanings of the term ‘identity’, which *Wikipedia* – in many ways itself the quintessence of an ongoing “glocalisation” of dictionaries/encyclopedias and of “author identity” itself – defines as follows:

“In philosophy, personal identity refers to the essence of a self-conscious person, that which makes him or her uniquely what they are at any one point in time, and which further persists over time despite superficial modifications, making him or her same person at different points in time also.” Accessed January 27th, 2008: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_identity_\(philosophy\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_identity_(philosophy))

Another, more ontologically-oriented definition of personal identity by Eric T. Olson (2002, revised November 26th, 2008) is found in the Stanford Online Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

“Personal identity deals with questions that arise about ourselves by virtue of our being people (or, as lawyers and philosophers like to say, *persons*). Many of these questions are familiar ones that occur to everyone at some time: What am I? When did I begin? What will happen to me when I die? Others are more abstruse. Personal identity been discussed since the origins of Western philosophy, and most major

figures have had something to say about it.” Accessed January 28th, 2009: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-personal/>

See also Hannerz (1996), who argues convincingly that, in an increasingly interconnected world, national understandings of culture have become insufficient. He explores implications of cross-boundary and long-distance cultural flows for our established notions of "the local", "community," "nation" and "modernity".

⁶ Norwegian architect and philosopher Christian Norberg Schultz (1980: 5) describes the notion of “genius loci” as follows:

“A place is a space which has a distinct character. Since ancient times the genius loci, or “spirit of place,” has been recognized as the concrete reality man has to face and come to terms with in his daily life. Architecture means to visualize the genius loci, and the task of the architect is to create meaningful places, whereby he helps man to dwell.”

⁷ See Bolter & Grusin (2000) for discussion of the notion of remediation from a technical and theoretical point of view. See Coppock (2008) for a discussion of the issue of transmedia remediation of past, present and future possible worlds in particular.

⁸ See the Second Life website. Accessed January 27th, 2008: <http://secondlife.com/>

⁹ See the Twinity website. Accessed January 27th, 2008: <http://www.twinity.com/>

¹⁰ See the Facebook website. Accessed January 27th, 2008: <http://www.facebook.com>

¹¹ See the YouTube website. Accessed January 27th, 2008: <http://www.youtube.com>

¹² For discussion of the notion of multimodality see Bateman, J. (2008), Baldry & Montagna (In Press). Baldry (2000), Baldry, Lemke, & Thibault (2006), Ventola, Charles & Kaltenbacher (2004). For more technologically oriented discussions of the notion see Granström, House & Karlsson (2002).

¹³ See Spaziante & Dusi (2006)

¹⁴ Toffler (1984); Toffler & Toffler (2006). See also the wikipedia entry for “prosumer” for a brief history and general overview of the concept. Accessed January 27th, 2008: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosumer>

¹⁵ See Bogost (2007) for discussion of the *procedural rhetoric* of computer games, one that engages players through rule-based forms of representation and interaction.

¹⁶ For discussion of philosophical perspectives regarding the notion of embodiment see Brockman (1999); Lakoff & Johnson (1999); Noë (2006); Violi (1990, 2003); Violi & Pozzato (2002).

¹⁷ There is a growing body of research in computer game studies on player experience and player culture. See for example Leino, Wirman & Fernandez (2008), Egenfeldt Nielsen, Heide Smith & Tosca (2008)

¹⁸ See Ferdig, Dawson, Black, Paradise Black & Thompson (2008) for a recent study of medical students’ and residents’ use of online social networking tools, and discussion of some possible implications for teaching professionalism in medical education.

¹⁹ See Fontanille & Zillberg (1998) for discussion of the notion of tensivity.

²⁰ See Noë (2006) for discussion of the role of embodied *skillful* action in the construction of subjective phenomenal experience.