**Managing Media Production in the Age of Convergence**
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"I'm going to America."
"No, you don't say!  For holiday?"
"No, for work.  I'm going to be an engineer in Silicon Valley."
Aamir shook his head in disbelief.  "So you're going to do it."
"I am."
"Just like you said."  Aamir looked impressed, but as he thought through the matter, his face
clouded.  "I am happy," he said, holding up his hands.  "Yes, I am happy.  But what I am saying
is that really you should go to Hollywood.  That's where the action is."
"Not anymore, Aamir."
-from Transmission by Hari Kunzru

I open my response with the above passage from Hari Kunzru's novel Transmission because it
highlights the contemporary power struggle between Hollywood and Silicon Valley (and the
larger industrial imaginaries these two signifiers represent).  Arjun Mehta, Kunzru's protagonist
who is in for more than he bargains for when he decides to leave India for Silicon Valley at the
height of the dot.com boom, must respond to the reservations of his friend Aamir, who boasts the
virtues of Hollywood even as he runs a successful Internet café.   While their banter regarding
the merits of working in southern or northern California is the only way the two friends seem to
be able to say goodbye to each other,  Arjun and Aamir's conversation papers over not only their
fraternal bond, but also the vast differences between the work practices, labor arrangements, and
products that dominate Silicon Valley and Hollywood and the ways that all three elements
evolve as Silicon Valley and Hollywood increasingly get hybridized.

As convergence marches on, where do we locate power over cultural production?  How do we
analyze the discrete work practices of media firms and practitioners while describing the
dialogues and debates between production cultures in diverse media sectors?

The challenges facing scholars, executives, and practitioners in our current moment include:

-how licensing intellectual properties to third-party developers compares to buying
creative/development studios when the goal is to produce successful games and/or elements of a
transmedia franchise.
-how contract negotiations and disputes such as the No Doubt-Activision lawsuit arise from
potential misunderstandings of detailed aspects of production and how disputes change future
production norms.
-how new forms of labor such as the music supervisor fulfill authorship and administrative
functions that make it more difficult for media studies teachers and scholars to analyze,
categorize, and historicize contemporary labor using film and television studies models which
are rooted in the labor language of the Fordist era.
-how the mainstreaming (and the narrowcasting) of transmedia productions potentially affects
who is in control of transmedia franchises and the types of worlds that are created.

-how investing power and agency in particular figures (e.g., the showrunner or the celebrity game designer) risks reifying auteurist modes of authorship and obscuring the lived realities of production.

-how cultural workers who rarely enter academic analyses such as QA (quality assurance) testers are integral to production cycles and how other groups involved in the production process treat workers in the production cycle whose function is to police the quality of cultural and technical goods.

- how designers iterate the look and feel of the applications, interfaces, and services that undergird the ways in which we consume content on mobile and networked devices.

-how to rethink divides between science and engineering and the arts and humanities in order to treat software design and computer programming as important forms of cultural labor.

- how to understand and chronicle the evolution of collaboration and competition between national/regional centers specializing in film/television production and national/regional centers specializing in ICTs and IT infrastructures (e.g., Mumbai and/vs. Bangalore).

-how to make sense of those who play a clearly defined role in their own industrial sector and who also serve as liaisons between sectors with overlapping and competing interests.

As more scholarly and creative work crisscrosses the filmic, televisual, gamic, networked and mobile media spheres,  those of us engaged in such work need to make sense of the rapidly changing industries and objects that we study and make as well as the evolving practices that work to channel and limit how products are being designed, constructed, consumed, repurposed, and made relevant to the process of living.   We all know that RuPaul's quip of 1992, "You better work," is true.  The question has always been how.