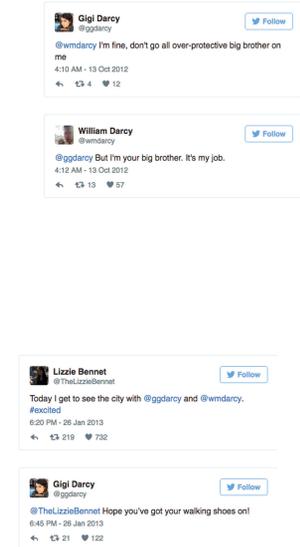
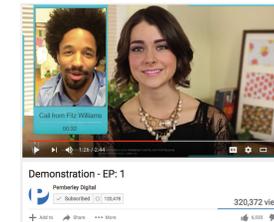
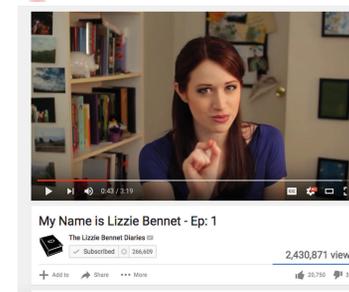
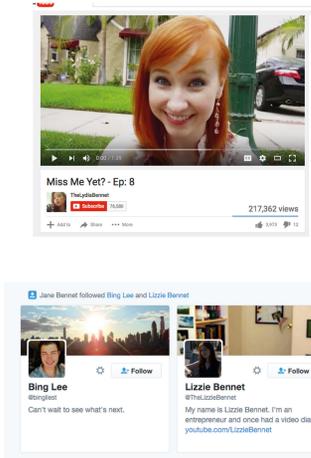
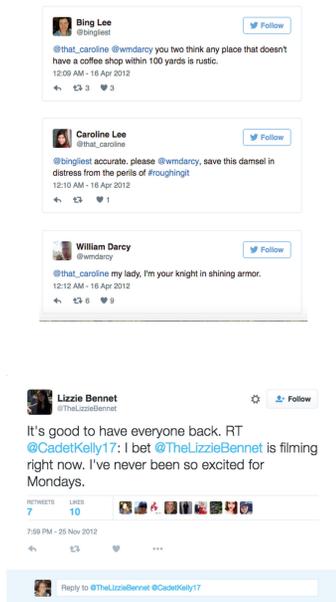


BEYOND ORIGINAL E-LIT: DECONSTRUCTING AUSTEN CYBERTEXTS

Meredith Dabek, Maynooth University

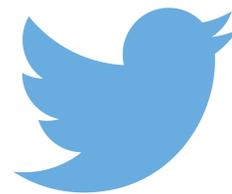
WHAT IS *THE LIZZIE BENNET DIARIES*?

- Multi-platform, digital update of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*
- Character-driven transmedia narrative deconstructed across multiple media channels, with alternative perspectives and expanded plot points
- A new interpretation of an analogue novel
- Developed and adapted for the Internet by Hank Green & Bernie Su
- Originally released as a serial narrative in 2012 and 2013
- Primary narrative channel features YouTube videos from 24-year-old graduate student Elizabeth "Lizzie" Bennet
- Winner of the 2013 Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Original Interactive Programme.



FEATURES OF *THE LIZZIE BENNET DIARIES*

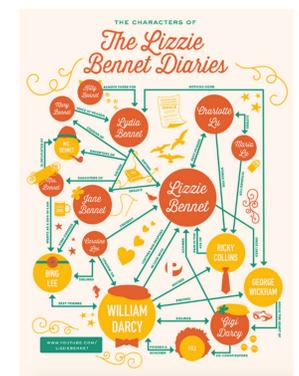
- Structured as a transmedia narrative
 - » "A deliberate attempt to make media converge around shared narrative content" (Ryan 2015:2).
 - » Creates a narrative storyworld and a more complete narrative experience
- Costume Theatre: using "the virtual to reflect constructively on the real" (Turkle 1999:647)
 - » A performance of identity on screen
 - » Allows for the inclusion of secondary characters not otherwise seen in videos
 - » Highlights Lizzie's biases and prejudices
- Interactivity and participation: technical affordances of various media platforms invite a level of engagement not found in Austen's analogue novel
 - » Questions, comments, and "conversations"
 - » A sense of immediacy and agency among readers
 - » Development of the fan community



THE LIZZIE BENNET DIARIES AS CYBERTEXT

- The structure and organisation of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* is a fundamental part of the reader's exchange with the text and offers multiple narrative paths and entry points, allowing readers to experience the story based on their individual choices (Aarseth 1997).
- This research considers how the text's cybertext structure, and a reader's exchange with the text, creates a reading experience significantly different from an analogue reading experience.
 - » How might the participatory and interactive elements of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* influence contemporary (digital) reading practices?
 - » What new experiences do readers encounter through their literary exchange with a digital and deconstructed cybertext that they do not get from an analogue novel?

The Lizzie Bennet Diaries



PROPOSED TRAJECTORY FOR THIS RESEARCH PROJECT

- Detailed development of the project's theoretical foundations
- Further critical analysis of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* (LBD) with reference to Austen's original novel
- Qualitative surveys and interviews with LBD readers
- Additional research questions to consider:
 - » What do Lizzie's videos and her costume theatre portrayals reveal about the construction and performance of identity online?
 - » How does LBD fit within the "post-broadcast" political economy found in the specific convergent digital media environment?
 - » What new avenues for research might exist within the electronic literature field beyond studying the born-digital?
 - » How does this research help inform the creation of future digital narratives and cybertexts?

REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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