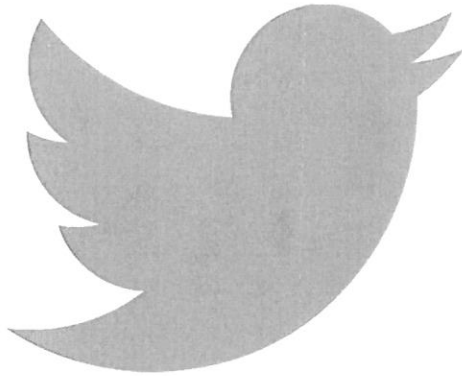


Twitter Fiction: The emergence of the microblogging novel

By Gabrielle Brydges

Abstract: This article discusses the emergence of the Twitter Fiction novel as well as the use of social media in creating the microblogging novel genre.



Social media has changed the publishing landscape. Fans and readers are demanding that authors have an online presence and that they update their fans as to the status of writing projects. Many authors are using social media to keep their fans interested in future works, and as a venue for forums to discuss what fans liked or disliked about their writings.

A recent addition to the social media world is the emergence of the microblogging novel. A microblogging novel is published online using websites such as Twitter and Facebook. Novels range from 140 characters to 300 characters a post (depending on the text restrictions). Some of these novels are completed in a single post, while others are completed in multiple posts. Microblogging is a form of interactive fiction and gives the readers more opportunities to becoming involved with the writing process. Using social media to write fiction allows stories to become multimodal texts by adding such extra material such as artwork and sounds.

Terence Eden discusses how creating “choose your own adventure stories” on Twitter offers a new media narrative where hypertext is brought into the mainstream (Young, 2015). Stories written on social media allow readers to interact with the text while giving them choice and control of a story. As well, online stories allow for transmedia narrative. Stories can be shared, adapted and added to across a variety of platforms.

Twitter has become a popular forum for fiction to be created. On May 11-15, 2015, Twitter will host the Twitter Fiction Festival. This festival is about “embracing, exploring, and developing the art of storytelling on Twitter” (Twitter Fiction Festival, par. 1). Authors have the choice of completing a story in a single Tweet, or Tweeting out a story using multiple Tweets. This microblogging novel format is becoming popular and some of the authors participating in 2015 festival include Anna Todd, Margaret Atwood, and Lemony Snicket. One can follow the festival by searching the handle @twfictionfest and #TwitterFiction.

Twitter is a unique platform to publish on because it is meant to be a platform where multiple voices are heard. As Dragon points out, “as a medium for storytelling, Twitter isn’t a place for one individual to speak by him or herself. The medium is most suited to telling stories through many voices – more of a jazz composition. Which means that if you’re the inciter of the story, you have to be willing to let go of a certain amount of control” (Dragon, par. 11). Instead of being a story with one author, Twitter fiction can become a collaborative work.

Social media is changing how stories are produced and how fans are responding to stories. Although still in its infancy, the arrival of the Twitter Fiction Festival offers a format where readers and writers of all ages can participate in a joint effort to promote creativity, reading and the love of the storytelling tradition.

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