The digital transmedia narrative composition of the storytelling of Lost

La construcción narrativa transmedia digital del relato de Lost

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Abstract:

Analysing the transmedia narrative through the virtual environment means recognizing the communication model used by television fiction today and the behaviour of its audience. Thanks to the development of digital media, numerous audio-visual productions have addressed these platforms to transmit and expand their narrative. The pioneering production in this field is the fantasy genre series Lost (2004-2010). Therefore, this research proposes a methodology of analysis of the narrative discourse of three transmedia works in order to identify and study their repercussions in the final narrative of the work. In particular, the digital transmedia construction of the story is analysed in short films, ARGs and videogames. All of this in search of the recognition of a single common narrative formed thanks to different media and languages. Likewise, the connection and dedication of the community of followers of the series with these proposals will also be explored.

Keywords:

Narrative, transmedia, fiction, television, audience.

Resumen:

Analizar la narrativa transmedia a través del entorno virtual supone reconocer el modelo de comunicación empleado por las ficciones televisivas en la actualidad y el comportamiento de su audiencia. Gracias al desarrollo de los medios digitales, numerosas producciones audiovisuales han abordado estas plataformas para transmitir y expandir su narrativa. La producción pionera en este campo es la serie de género fantástico Lost (2004-2010). Por ello, esta investigación plantea una metodología de análisis del discurso narrativo de tres obras transmedia con el fin de identificar y estudiar sus repercusiones en la narrativa final de la obra. En concreto, se analiza la construcción transmedia digital del relato en cortometrajes, ARGs y videojuegos. Todo ello en búsqueda del reconocimiento de una única narrativa común formada gracias a distintos medios y lenguajes. Al mismo tiempo también se explorará la vinculación y dedicación de las comunidades de seguidores de la serie con estas propuestas.

Palabras clave:

Narrativa, transmedia, ficción, televisión, audiencia.

1. Introduction

In recent times, we have witnessed a generational change in the television drama scene. The narrative constructions for this medium have been developed in an expansive way and with a special communion with the habits of the audience (Kinder, 1991). The 2004-2005 television season "was a real creative revival for networks thanks to the success of *House, Lost, Desperate Housewives* and *Grey's Anatomy*" (Cascajosa, 2007: 20). All of these series, renowned fictional brands, have in common the same strategy of communication and a semantic construction based on "high quality standards, a particular idiosyncrasy of the plot, the characters, and a specific target audience, who are unconditional followers of these products" (Tous , 2010: 80). They are new audio-visual proposals that have succeeded in developing a new kind of viewer.

This new generation of series has taken the television medium to unexplored lands. They are composed of new formats of audio-visual products that have gained a worldwide audience. Therefore, anyone can watch the same premieres of new episodes, releases, plots and advertising campaigns all over the world. Afterward, they can comment on everything internationally on the Internet. In addition, the case of *Lost* was composed of an "online community fragmented into subcategories to avoid spoilers" (Brooker, 2009: 58). This is a result of the Jenkins participatory culture (2008). It is based on the exchange of information,

> and on the search for synergies between television work and the Internet, in a strategy to promote a community of fans and a 'participatory culture' around the series in question, from *Babylon 5* to *Lost* (Pérez, 2013: 79).

This meant a break with the television programming of traditional networks. Thus, the space for the new viewing platforms on demand was born. The viewers can decide how to watch these works of fiction on their computers, mobile phones or televisions at the time and under the circumstances they choose. Even more, "the new viewer accesses the content in its original version thanks to the subtitles" (Ramos and Lozano-Delmar, 2011: 421). Gordillo (2009: 15) refers to this new television model as hypertelevision. This is defined as a type of television: "generalist, multi-thematic of different platforms, and the one that converges with the Internet and mobile telephony". In this context, we can recognise this new style of series. They are productions that connect with different types of audiences through different media and networks, composing complex, autonomous, and at the same time complementary stories. The technological and communicative skills available for the current audience not only allow the cohesion of consumption, but also the branching of plots and the atomization of these according to the narrative and the media. In other words, the hypertelevision model brings on the transmedia construction of the plot, where "the dissemination of complex messages is adapted by adjusting them to the characteristics of each media to obtain a message that complements and diffuses individually" (Martí, 2010: 141).

Within this new television model, the series *Lost* (2004-2010) stands out as one of the first dramas to provide viewers with spaces for the development of these new habits. Today this show is considered a television classic promoted by the filmmaker J.J. Abrams and produced by ABC television. It is one of the latest successes of the North American cultural panorama. Thus, Tous (2010: 89) considers that "*Lost* has become a matter of American popular culture". This series was characterised by presenting some complex plots that were difficult to follow. Likewise, it proposed an important hybridization of genres through a horizontal construction of the main story. This was supplemented with vertical plots

based on flashbacks or flash-forwards focused on the protagonists. The series "*Lost* is an innovative serial product because of the way it integrates several genres and because it presents an interesting variant on the diegetic temporal structure through the analepsis of the characters" (Tous, 2010: 89). Cascajosa (2005: 5) also sees how "*Lost* has shown that it is possible for formal experimentation to find a gap among the general public, thus encouraging chains and producers to opt for treatments that go beyond the norm". Therefore, it is in this regard that *Lost* is particularly relevant. This production becomes a reference for its generation and serves as a creative starting point for other creations. This series, in addition to an interesting narrative approach and a high level of production, is characterised by establishing the television consumption and narrative model of its generation thanks to the digital media. In fact, it is one of the first series to be promoted internationally on the Internet. Consequently, it takes advantage of this opportunity by offering transmedia content for the interaction of its viewers with the story. It proposes a new storytelling model focused on collective intelligence and fan communities. Scolari (2013: 160) observes, "*Lost* was born as a television work but soon expanded to other media and communication spaces to become one of the most interesting examples of transmedia narrative". On this occasion, the special protagonism of the virtual environment is demonstrated. It offers an easier access and functionality to the communities, and at the same time is respectful with the conventional viewer's continuous vision.

Considering this digital dimension acquired by the series, there were many transmedia actions that were carried out by the producers of the show. Thus, the narrative was expanded in an intangible way through different digital works:

Firstly, production of the so-called mobisodes, or webisodes, were produced. They were short episodes between two and four minutes originally aimed at mobile phones (Scolari, 2013a). These productions sought to complete plots of the series with the same characters and even continuing scenes. The idea was to offer unseen parts of the story using the new platforms.

Secondly, alternative reality games stand out. They are also known as ARGs (Alternative reality games). They required the participation of the audience and were an interesting complement to the series.

> An ARG is a hybrid game of immersive stories, the main objective of which is collaborative problem solving and participatory storytelling. The narrative context of an ARG is not limited by any communication platform or media type: its story fragments can be dispersed and hidden in websites, phone calls, text messages, or books (Bonsignore et al., 2012: 251).

These games sought the complicity between the viewer and the fictional work, generating enigmas and situations that only the usual viewer was able to recognise. Thus, it is a way of generating a participatory culture within the audience of the series that seeks to engage as much as possible with the plots of the series.

Finally, we find the videogames of the series to be an immersive way for the viewer to be able to come into the plot of the series in a digital way. The player experiences the story and cooperates in a virtual way with the characters and elements of the series in the first person. In fact, we are faced with one more of "the different ways of using video games to connect with consumers, ranking them from those who simply adapt pre-existing techniques and formats, to the newest and most experimental" (Selva, 2009: 146).

2. Objectives and methodology

This research began with the main objective of analysing the different transmedia strategies used with the series *Lost* through digital media. To this end, we have developed a series of specific objectives exploring the relationship and narrative construction adapted to different media. In short, the aim is to explore the unified construction of *Lost*'s narrative based on its expansion into digital media and platforms. Therefore, the importance and presence of the digital media is recognised as a fundamental part of the narrative construction of the series.

Considering the current context of consumption and communications designed for virtual worlds, this research focuses on the transmedia content created specifically for digital interaction media. However, it is understood that " recognizing the transmedia function in a medium means recognizing the set of relationships of the frame with the sub frames offered by the combination of articulations and aesthetics" (Quiroga, 2016: 294). Then, focusing the analysis on the digital media makes it possible to recognise the coherence, the transmedia narrative design, and final repercussions to the plot as a result of the use of this practice. Consequently, this study also delves into the convergent actions carried out by the online communities of the series.

Using a qualitative, narrative case study, this research examines in detail a sample of different and continuing creations with *Lost* plots. These have been strategically created for virtual contexts. This sample is composed of three units of analysis that are the result of the digital transmedia production designed for the series. These cases are the webisodes for mobiles, the ARG called *The Lost Experience,* and the multiplatform video game *Lost: Via Domus.*

The plot of *Lost* offers many opportunities for the continuation and expansion of its story through other media generating a transmedia universe. In addition, this series has a community of followers who can evaluate the different strategies. Likewise, these can become business opportunities for production companies.

> With the Internet, the mechanisms of information production, storage, dissemination, access and consumption have been modified, giving rise to new dynamics among producers, distributors and consumers (Rodríguez, Paíno and Jiménez, 2016: 306).

In order to develop the qualitative observation of the matter, it is necessary first of all to construct a quantitative study focused on the analysis of the content of the different cases that have opted for this practice. This has been carried out according to its narratology, transmedia conception and relationship with the audience. We have made an observation in each unit of analysis exploring the idiosyncrasy of the project and its feedback with the main story. Once this consideration has been carried out, it is possible to construct a global vision of the narrative structure of the series. Hence, we are paying special attention to the opportunities taken by the different virtual media analysed. As we have seen, these are three different digital creations that have generated their argument and offer in relation to the story of the series maintaining a strategic point of view. Therefore, an analysis classification has been developed taking into account those products directly related to television production and its transmedia character.

These results are considered as primary sources of information within the research as they assemble the object of study and explain the importance of a digital narrative project within a transmedia strategy. They all work separately but at

the same time provide the background to the story as a whole. This convergence "manifests itself in hybridizations that are expressed at the level of content and narratives" (Scolari, 2013a: 54). In this investigation, all the case studies involve a continuation and integration of the story in different digital media. This contributes in a convergent way to the main narration. Consequently, we can see how "new media technologies have made it possible for the same content to flow through very different channels and take on very different forms at the point of reception" (Jenkins, 2008: 22).

Firstly, through an analysis of the proposal and the content, the different episodes of *Lost: Missing pieces* have been studied. They are small audio-visual pieces starring the characters in the series and planned for online viewing. These complement scenes from the series by building the collective intelligence for fiction followers about these plots.

The second case study is the virtual experience called *The Lost Experience*. This is an ARG, which in the online context brought together thousands of spectators of the series to discover new details and secrets of the mythology. With this type of game, "the receivers and audiences of the digital age have greater tools to appropriate, question, discuss or negotiate the messages exposed by the media" (Corona, 2016: 33). This project functioned as an essential piece for the integrated understanding of some of the sub-plots. Thus, this case allows us to go more deeply into the participative culture of *Lost*'s followers.

The third and last creation for virtual worlds is the video game *Lost: Via Domus*. This is a game released for different platforms and has been developed as a parallel subplot of the series in which the main characters interact. This is a real complement designed especially for fans. This game offers new possibilities in the study of the collective intelligence generated around the television series exploring the narratology of its narrative conception and its connection with the viewer.

In a methodological sense, the analysis of the narrative discourse of these cases in virtual environments reaffirms, reconstructs and reflects on the unified construction of the story and its contributions. In fact, each proposal selected is one more piece in this story that composes the same plot. Also, this recognizes the analysis of the audience's behaviour. The series "*Lost* involves the spectators who try to analyse the reasons behind the narrative of the story" (Mittell, 126: 2009). Carrying out this method of analysis explores this parameter in the narrative conception and in communicative tools used. Consequently, the different cases proposed address the understanding of the current model of television series viewer. We have an audience able to participate in the communicative convergence of works of fiction and productions.

3. Analysis

This television series has been characterised as being one of the pioneers in developing the current consumption model of series. For the television media, "*Lost* was the relaunch of the ABC channel in 2004, and has become one of the most important series in the history of television with hundreds of fan communities" (Canovaca, 2011: 860). This new model includes activities such as international viewing in the original language on Internet, participatory consumption, and transmedia narrative construction using new technologies and different media. Seen from a distance, it seems that J. J. Abrams, creator of the series, "decided that *Lost* was going to transcend the medium itself and become the first series to make an openly transmedia proposal that completed the main fictional work" (De la Torre, 2015: 121). The narrative

structure of the series itself has already caused debate and requires the commitment of the audience (Cascajosa, 2005). In short, it seeks a participatory construction of the story that will be composed with each episode.

> We could define *Lost* as a series that gives us many answers and questions, which would be quite accurate, considering the number of forums dedicated to studying the mystery of the plot. But I prefer to define it as a series that stimulates the imagination, playing with elements that are never seen. Hidden messages, symbols, signs, clues, hiding the truth for the viewer to find (De la Torre, 2006: 12).

Under this premise, the theoretical research is justified. *Lost*'s transmedia construction not only completes the plot and takes the format to other media, but is also an intrinsic part of the plot itself. This kind of procedure has become the following:

> A common underlying trend that manifests itself both in television narratives and in many digital forms, such as video games and websites. It is the need for procedural literacy, a recognition by consumers that any mode of expression follows particular protocols and is fully committed to that form. (Mittell, 2006: 39)

Sometimes, the viewer cannot fully understand a plot unless he or she has previously known its transmedia component. For this reason, "*Lost* goes beyond television narrative. The series is one of the most impressive transmedia story-telling experiences ever" (Maguregui, Piscitelli and Scolari, 2011: 15). Simultaneously, the moment of expansion and communicative convergence exploited by Lost's fan phenomenon makes it ideal for establishing the first transmedia construction in a virtual world.

3.1. Narrative continuation in online episodes

In 2007, between the premiere of the third and fourth seasons, the creators of *Lost* decided to bet on transmedia content through different media and strategies. We can also say that these releases coincided with a reduction in the number of episodes in the following seasons that "was recovered with the creation of additional content and experiences of enjoyment in other media and platforms" (Guerrero-Pico and Scolari, 2016: 190). An example of these are the webisodes created for the virtual context. At first, these episodes were announced for the winter of 2006. They were halting the broadcast of the television series in the middle of the third season. Nevertheless, the different negotiations, the choice of the creative premise, and the mode of diffusion of these works delayed the launch.

> Difficulties during individual negotiations with *Lost* actors delayed the production of the mobisode series, which was finally distributed as *Lost: Missing Pieces* during the strike that paid $800 to each of the writers and directors for each of its 13 episodes (Menéndez, 2011: 723).

The chosen strategy for this transmedia action was developed in collaboration with the mobile phone company Verizon. On these devices, the episodes could be enjoyed exclusively six days in advance before appearing on the ABC website. They functioned as a gift for fans of the series. They offered small scenes that made it easier to wait for the new season. In addition, the action was posed as a game in which viewers had to discover where the plot of each webisode fit into the story.

> These mobisodes show the characters of the series interacting in situations that complement what has already been seen on the small screen. These interstitial contents complete narrative gaps that in the original story disappeared within the logical ellipsis of any narrative (Scolari, 2013a: 162).

This type of communicative practice based on the interaction between fiction and the viewer is perfect for a series of these characteristics. Burke (2007: 107) considers that "modern television is a medium of mass communication, and *Lost* is the focal point of a mass meditation that goes beyond the limits of that television," transcending different media, audiences, and narratives. If there were one thing that characterised the narrative of this series, it would be its complexity, including hybridization of genres and interconnection between plots and characters. The launch of these episodes on the Internet continues this premise by completing plots from different moments of the series. Likewise, it can be observed how not all of the main actors appear in these productions. The presence of important figures such as Evangeline Lilly, Josh Holloway or Terry O'Quinn is missing. On this occasion, the negotiation of agreements was decisive. However, the scriptwriters managed to compose questions and scenes that were appreciated by the followers of the show. In this way, the emotional relationship with the viewer is supported. These short films are providing small moments that complete scenes and dramatic moments from the fictional work. In fact, its narrative importance is recognised. All of them "were included as extras on the fourth season DVD" (Ramos and Lozano-Delmar, 2011: 426).

The mobisodes created by the screenwriters are not intended to solve mysteries or shed light on issues raised in the series. Probably the opposite. These short films complete events omitted from the plot, but at the same time play with the mystery and uncertainty of the viewer. They do not present new subplots. They support the main one based on the relationships between characters. This is the case of the episodes focused on Jack during his stay with The Others, or the daily life of the various castaways in the camp. All of these plots were ignored in the series due to insufficient time and plot priorities. This situation occurs with every webisode made, but the last of them deserves special mention as it starred Jack's father. It was an episode focused on events that took place at the same time as the beginning of the series, but it is the only one that offered clues for the future of the series and its final conclusion in the last season.

There are also different television genres in each episode. *Lost* "can be considered innovative, and at the same time paradigmatic of the multi-genre aspect that characterises television at the beginning of the 21st century" (Tous, 2009: 178). We can find mobisodes of comedy starring Hurley, mystery by Ben and Juliet, or manners by Jin, Sun and Michael. It is a way of making an interesting product and continuity with the series by offering in each episode an unexpected genre for the viewer related to the characters and maintaining the signs of identity of the whole.

From the transmedia construction point of view, these episodes manage to generate a consensual vision of the plot. This type of production that seeks communion with the audience and the faithful spectator allows the development of elements of participation that support the collective intelligence of the fictional universe of the series. The communities of followers organise, debate and consume these episodes as works to create the great puzzle, which is the plot. The interaction between them means the continuation and unique construction of the message. The online fan communities can be considered as "self-organised groups centred around collective production and debate, as well as the propagation of meanings, interpretations and fantasies in response to various artefacts of contemporary popular culture" (Jenkins,

2013: 165). Hence, we can recognise in these webisodes a great opportunity for producers to be closer to their public by providing valid information. In this case, these online episodes represent a new way of understanding television thanks to the new technologies.

> The restructuring of the traditional television industry through the production of specific audio-visual content for emerging media implies different ways of storytelling, short duration of programmes, and the design of multimedia products that can be profitable on different platforms and media (Carboni, 2014: 13).

Finally, we recognise a new model of international and accessible television that seeks an active and restless viewer. *Lost* was the first fictional work to launch this type of expansive content, but it was soon followed by *The Walking Dead* (2010-), *The Office* (2005-2013), and Battlestar *Galactica* (2004-2009), generating their own transmedia universe and having their own mobisodes.

3.2. Participatory culture in the virtual narrative through ARGs

Different ARGs were launched with *Lost*: *The Lost Experience* (2006), *Find 815* (2008), *Dharma Initiative Recruiting Project* (2008), and *Lost University* (2009). All of them were developed in collaboration with the broadcast of each series, taking advantage of the emission hiatuses. Actually, each ARG had a direct relationship with the plot of the season. Thus, they allowed the audience to discover more details about the upcoming episodes. However, the reaction from audiences was varied. Many ARGs like *Dharma Initiative Recruiting Project* (2008) required high commitment. They were a truly complex proposition that was difficult to follow. However, in this research, we will focus our analysis on the case of *The Lost Experience* (2006). This project revolutionised the transmedia and narrative construction of the series, becoming a seminal reference for the treatment of television ARGs.

From the beginning, this narrative piece was designed as a globalised strategy in which different countries participated. In fact, "it was co-developed by three television companies, ABC of the United States, Channel Seven of Australia, and Channel Four of the United Kingdom" (Pérez and Alba, 2010: 429). It was born with the idea of giving narrative background and context to fictitious and mysterious elements of the plot such as the Dharma Initiative or Oceanic Airlines. These are fictional brands created for the plot of the series. Due to its international success, between the second and third season this project was launched seeking loyalty and complicity with the audience. This game sought to add to the trend of convergent consumption on the Internet to explore the narrative construction of the story. Ramos (2011: 425) thinks, "*The Lost Experience* sees itself as a game for fans of the series that combines the fictitious and diegetic world of *Lost* with the real world of the viewer". This idea is also addressed by Scolari (2013: 266), who believes that the interaction of the "game between reality and fiction was permanent: users could buy flights on the website of Oceanic Airlines or send their resume to aspire to a job on the island". Thanks to this piece, the viewers of the series had the possibility of interacting directly with fictional elements. Then these and other actions could be combined with the participative culture of other users from different parts of the world. Together, besides having fun, they managed to discover the secrets of the plot and mysteries of the game itself. Among them were websites and fictitious advertising campaigns, short films, and specific promotional events that made special sense in this context. However, at the same

time, they worked in parallel with the narration of the series. Thus, *The Lost Experience* became another narrative vehicle for the plot. It completed it, and made the most loyal fans give more value to every detail. The fictional universe was expanded, and concepts such as the Dharma Initiative, the Hanso Foundation, or Oceanic Airlines were more defined for the viewer. Overall, two-way communication networks were promoted between the audience and the main product.

> The Lost Experience became Lost's first deliberate transmedia product. The first to include the reality of viewers within the narrative, and the first to be (almost) simultaneously launched internationally (Menéndez, 2011: 725).

With this strategy, the *Lost* fan community responded in a participative way to the transmedia construction of the story in the digital context of the ARG. Many of the trials or mysteries that players had to solve were extremely difficult and required a high degree of specialization, such as "advanced searches on the Internet, computer language programming, trigonometry, Photoshop, cryptology, Morse, mythology, and languages" (Menéndez, 2011: 726). Nevertheless, this really translated into a challenge that reinforced the verisimilitude of the action and the story. The success and participation in this experience is a great example of how to establish and communicate a transmedia narrative in these alternative reality games. It is an increasingly common type of project and is the result of "the proliferation of transmedia narratives that bet on the direct participation of the user in the content" (Ruiz and Alcalá, 2016: 97). Today, "*Lost*'s narrative engineering still works. Transmedia narrative teaches us what producers do not want, do not know, or cannot generate" (Scolari, 2013b: 416). At this point, the creative and distributive behaviour of the prosumers becomes essential. This is a globalised audience accessing specific virtual content on a voluntary basis. They get involved with the development, resolution and communication to extend and appreciate more details of a story.

3.3. The video game as a narrative supplement

In February 2008, the Canadian company Ubisoft launched the adaptation of the series to the world of video games with *Lost: Via Domus*. This product is made for computers, Xbox 360, and PlayStation 3 consoles. This is an increasingly frequent strategy. "The connection between fiction television series and video games is growing. The television screen and the game console are increasingly nourished by products that run from one medium to another" (Martínez, 2016: 289). In fact, this was not the only interpretation of *Lost* for a video game. In 2007, Gameloft also released its own version: *Lost: Mobile Game.* It was a game starring the characters of the series, which "collected the plot of the first two seasons and the first six episodes of the third season to offer an action game and puzzles" (Perez and Alba, 2010: 428). However, in order to develop this analysis, it is much more interesting to approach the creation made by Ubisoft due to its significance and narrative contribution within the transmedia construction of the plot.

The video game designed by this company in Montreal is composed of seven episodes that talk about "the first seventy days after the accident. Being in the first person, the user plays Elliott Maslow, a survivor of the Oceanic 815 flight never seen on the television screen" (Scolari, 2013a: 162). Its own plot is intertwined with the mysteries and key moments of the series making the player feel immersed in the original story. The game gives the viewer of the series the chance to control an anonymous survivor who is not one of the protagonists of the series. In addition, he can interact with them and go through the scenarios and plots until the third season. It is a new story parallel to the dramatic lines of the series that seeks to answer questions raised but not resolved in the original series in order to expand and revive the story. Some

examples are the case of the electromagnetic nucleus of the bunker, experiments with sharks from the Dharma initiative, or the fate of some characters. For the habitual follower of fiction, this game is an extra contribution of information thanks to the visual references, gameplay and experimentation offered. In fact, we can affirm that the video game is part of the collective intelligence of this universe of fiction. This sample also confirms that if "the digital revolution presumed that new media would displace old ones, the emerging paradigm of convergence assumes that old and new media will interact in increasingly complex ways" (Jenkins, 2008: 17). Therefore, the user manages to generate an integrated image of the plot through the resolution of ordeals, evolution of the story, and use of scenarios. The experience is expansive and immersive within fiction thanks to this virtual media that operates as a transmedia container.

The design and care of this game is demonstrated in each episode. We can detect the detail the company desired in order to launch a product aimed at the followers of the series. The detailed recreation of the stages is the best example. In contrast, many fans were disappointed with this creation. Authors such as Perez and Alba (2010: 428) state that it has "a ridiculous duration and models of poor characters. In addition, they are joined by a plot that with each step moves further away from the series". This is a statement made by the creative fiction staff. Directly, "they have declared that the video game cannot be considered a standard. Thus, it must be seen as an extended experience of the original program, since it offers a new point of view of the main plot on the island" (Ramos and Lozano-Delmar, 2011: 426). Therefore, it is clear that the creative control of the script of this piece was not the most measured and coordinated. Consequently, the video game can be defined as a marketing product aimed at followers. Thus, we can recognise it as the search for a business opportunity rather than the extension of the plot.

From a narrative point of view, this may be is the biggest problem of the project. Until now, we have been able to recognise the transmedia importance that the game offers with respect to the interaction and immersion of the spectator in the story and scenes. Nevertheless, there are many contradictions between the plot and the television story. The first is Locke's behaviour in the game. He helps the protagonist to leave the island. It's something radically opposed to the character's intentions in the series. Therefore, it is a serious narrative mistake according to the internal coherence of the plot. Another example is the geographical and temporal situation of different characters with respect to the main story. An example is when Jack and Kate are betrayed by Elliott in Black Rock at the end of the game. Following the chronological line of the series, at that moment the two protagonists are kidnapped by The Others. This makes the episode impossible. Finally, one more narrative incompatibility between the two stories is their outcome. The protagonist of the game again wakes up on the day of the crash in a time loop. This has nothing to do with the final conclusion of the series. Moreover, it is not explained and seems to be an ending that seeks to surprise the viewer, but without a well-founded justification.

However, we cannot rule out the importance of this video game within *Lost*'s transmedia universe. It is necessary to recognise that its script is committed to the main story, but manages to create a unique context experience. Actually, it is specially designed to move the viewer to the fictional island from its screen. For instance, the Spanish version had the same actors who did the dubbing for the series. It is an example that confirms the fidelity sought by the video game. Of all the transmedia products from *Lost*, Scolari (2013: 162) believes that "*Lost: Vida Domus* is the most important of all". He recognises this work as one of the most experiential possibilities for the viewer. Here you have the first-person option of being able to tour the stage and be the protagonist of your own adventure. At the same time, the player participates

from his or her own point of view in the events of the series. It is the most complete experience that the fan of *Lost* has available to participate within the original narrative. In other words, we recognise this game as an experiential marketing exercise within *Lost's* narrative universe. Hence, it is a phenomenon based on projects that "sell experiences and sensations linked to these products" (Martí, 2008: 115). The transmedia identity of *Lost: Via Domus* transports the player to a fictional universe in which the player becomes a narrative complement. Thanks to this virtual recreation of the drama, the viewer has the opportunity of being a castaway and understanding in a more personal way the situations and experiences lived by his favourite characters.

4. Conclusion

Transmedia narratives are communicative and brand-building phenomena that have experienced a great upswing during the last decade. The analysis carried out in this paper recognises *Lost* as a point of reference for this new television model. It is a pioneering work in the development of these techniques. In fact, this series deals with fantasy and science fiction plots and has become an example of transmedia narrative construction for the current audio-visual context. Many other series and cinematographic productions such as *Game of Thrones* (2011-2019), or Marvel's Cinematographic Universe, have continued this communicative pattern by constructing semantics of an intertextual narrative using different media. *Lost* is also one of the first series to promote the unique conception of storytelling in accordance with the digital world. In consequence, many of the transmedia creations studied in this research were developed to take advantage of the growing virtual communication environment and the changing consumption of the viewer. This audience is increasingly interested in these types of products and more accessibility to them thanks to the Internet. We have to accept that these narratives do not focus exclusively on composing a continuing discourse from an original narrative. As we have seen with *Lost,* the story is disseminated in different media, communicating the same message adapted to each of them.

According to the main objective of this study, we can observe how the resulting narrative repercussion of these creations enlarges the main story. Therefore, they compose a construction through different media that builds a narrative network. Thus, these digital transmedia actions work as narrative complements to the plot. They help to understand the fictional framework of the original work. Simultaneously, they extend and adapt the plot to new communication channels. This is the reason why the series began to deepen and expand its mythology from the third season onward in parallel with the launch of the transmedia initiative. There were more options for development. The creators took risks and structured many plots and subplots relying on the narrative of these works. For example, we find broad development of fictional endeavours and entities such as the Dharma Initiative, Widmore Corporation or the Hanso Foundation. Each of them has been treated in different transmedia proposals. This creative decision undoubtedly determined the future of the series. From then on, the audience was more active in the multimedia channels than in the traditional television format. Hence, we consider *Lost* to be a revolutionary series that decided to position itself as a new model of television.

With this idea in mind, special care can be seen in the design of the digital projects carried out and studied for the narrative of *Lost.* Looking at the dates, we also recognise an innovation in the development strategy of the story. Clearly,

we have also seen how the virtual environment does not impose physical barriers. It allows the user to interact directly with the content of the series. In the works analysed, we have been able to see how the relationships between fiction and reality are facilitated in the ARGs. Some plots are complemented thanks to webisodes. Moreover, the stage and narrative context are explored with the video game *Lost: Via Domus*. They all constitute a new form of transmedia interaction, extending the concept of television so that,

Lost stopped being just a television series, and became a complex and effective transmedia narrative, which among other things eliminated the problem of spectator identification. It made the spectator/player's reality part of their diegetic universe, allowed the launch of innovative viral marketing campaigns, and ultimately revalued the advertising breaks of the prime time broadcast itself (Menéndez, 2011: 727).

Consequently, it is also necessary to recognize the communicative and advertising capacity of the transmedia content around the main fictional brand. Therefore, "it is interesting to emphasise how a television series (*Lost* in this case), a cultural product that already implies entertainment in itself, uses these types of creative mechanism and applies them to self-promotion" (Ramos and Lozano-Delmar, 2011: 430). Each new content related to the main narrative communicates an identity and values characteristic of the fictional series. As a result, they must be considered advertising material of the series. They all help to generate a brand and are part of the same story thanks to their transmedia aspect. Therefore, it is understood that these works are part of the advertising strategy of the series that facilitate the connection with the target audience.

In a final conclusion, we can affirm that transmedia narratives like this one construct a universe of fiction that feeds itself, expands and constructs the story from a participative and convergent point of view. They become contemporary cultural products based on the relationship, interpretation and knowledge of the audience and the original narrative of the series. Certainly, the digital and virtual media generated in recent years has created an audio-visual consumer society completely connected to, and able to manage, collaborative products. This defines the current viewer. *Lost* is one of the first series to use these tools. Thus, thanks to the results of this study, we recognise these digital projects as narrative elements inherent in the main plot. They served to develop and strengthen the series among the public. Actually, a new way of constructing a plot has been born using different media, in this case digital, and the relationship with the target audience has been strengthened as well. In addition, there has been an innovation in the discourse among the generation of this television series. With these transmedia actions, it was possible to reach an avid public able to resolve and confront its fragmented narrative and idiosyncrasy in order to generate a unique and complex idea of the same narration. Consequently, the emotional relationship between content, spectator and production has been facilitated. This defines the identity of the series in the real world thanks to a strategy based on interaction with the viewer. Likewise, we can also observe how this television series has served as a reference in building other transmedia narratives. Hence, this series acquires its meaning thanks to the convergence of different media and languages. All of these elements manage to define a unified fictional product in a joint way, turning it into a guide and a starting point for transmedia creations of future audio-visual productions.

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