Transmedia and Transliteracy in Nemetical Analysis

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INTRODUCTION

The increasing diversification of interconnected media platforms, which provide a complex discourse, demands an effective use of the space that is now called "transmedia." This article provides terms and definitions for transmedia and for the new set of personal skills and abilities required to participate in it: "transliteracy." It also presents the nemetic system, which facilitates analyzing, tracking, and visualizing communication interactions in virtual transmedia environments.

Since humans started to use both gestural and oral codes to communicate, messages have been elaborated and expressed differently when different communication channels were in use. In recent times, with the dawn of radio and television, that fragmentation of content has become of interest to researchers (Steinberg, 2012), and has been identified as a characteristic of mass media (McLuhan, 1994).

With social media, content is fragmented across multiple virtual and physical platforms, with varying degrees of interaction that add complexity to social communication. Interactivity among multiple authors and multiple audiences generates dynamic "cross-media" seriality, "transmedia narrative" that has been studied from educational, entertainment, and sociological points of view (Dena, 2009).

Learning to use these media requires skills beyond the traditional listening and reading, to be able to integrate multiple messages in multiple codes, as an essential skill both for personal and professional communication. This transliteracy is a complex ability of intertextual navigation, the strategy for coding and decoding the multidiscourse in the digital ecosystem.

These recursive communication experiences are the subject of recent research (Duarte, 2014) that explores cognitive patterns in narrative that can be represented through geometric models, consolidating the use of the term "fractal narrative" in the transmedia context. The aim of this multilevel analysis is to take into account individual discourse (micro level), collective interaction (meso level) and community knowledge building (macro level). Interested readers will find a practical example of this in the documentation of the co-creative process that led to Daniel Durrant's representation of a NEME (Figure 2 of this article) (Nemetics Institute, 2015).

In December 2010, Mark Frazier had explored the fractal essence of digital discourse, and debated with Spiro Spiliadis, Daniel Durrant, and Michael Josefowicz the possibilities of expressing its complexity using a symbolic language (Frazier, 2010). After this early work with Ebdish (Emergent by Design'ish), the nemetic system has emerged as a more elaborated code to express and visual-

ize interactive communication processes in the transmedia ecosystem (De, 2014).

BACKGROUND: TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Transmedia

The term "transmedia" is attributed to Marsha Kinder, who in 1991 used it to refer to an emerging entertainment supersystem, involving intertextuality and multiple sources with different levels of interaction (Kinder, 1991). It applied to tools, processes, and concepts, and opened the door to media that had not been invented then, such as wearables, implants, or augmented reality devices.

In 2003 Henry Jenkins described a process of "transmedia storytelling" in which "each medium does what it does best, so that a story might be introduced in a film, expanded through television, novels, and comics, and its world might be explored and experienced through game play." (Jenkins, 2003) Later, he defined transmedia storytelling as a process "where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience." (Jenkins, 2007)

Probably the best-known example of transmedia storytelling is the Star Wars franchise. The fictional universe of Luke Skywalker, Yoda, Han Solo, Darth Vader, and Lord Sith is created through the synergy of films, books, role playing games, comics, video games, toys, and animated shows, to create a collective imaginary world. But transmedia storytelling is not limited to the entertainment world.

The notion of multiplatform narrative is expanding now to encompass every type of human communication, including marketing (Tenderich, 2014), political debates (Costanza-Chock, 2014), or personal learning networks (Richardson & Mancabelli, 2011). There is a need to identify the skills required to use transmedia, the processes

for teaching and learning transmedia skills, and the techniques to analyze transmedia production and its metadata.

Transliteracy

The evolution from media to transmedia requires individuals to pass from personal linear communication skills and abilities (reading, writing, speaking, etc.) to intertextual skills. They include not only analogy, correlation, mental association, context awareness, or synthesis, but also empathy, engagement, and other emotional appreciations, essential to integrate and combine fragments of meaning into the holistic comprehension of a story.

The combination of these complex abilities can be understood as a new competency called transliteracy. Transliteracy has been defined as "the ability to read, write and interact across a range of platforms, tools and media from signing and orality through handwriting, print, TV, radio and film, to digital social networks." (Thomas, 2005)

In transliteracy, a coherent discourse is perceived through a series of transmedia fragments. It requires participants to move from discrete, perceptive skills to compound, intangible projective skills that can facilitate strategic thinking and collective problem solving. Interactions such as debating, negotiating, conciliating, or collaborating on social platforms are high value-added skills and become the energy for emerging collective creativity.

It would be impossible, for example, to understand the phenomenon of global warming and its varied impacts, without some comprehension of how the climate changes; the effect of human activity on the atmosphere; human migratory patterns; changes in food sources and food production due to changes in land, oceanic, and atmospheric conditions, and thus on refugee crises and terrorist activity, as well. No one medium or information source is capable of adequately presenting all these interrelationships, but if we are able, not only to "read" information from a variety of sources, platforms, and media, but to integrate it,

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