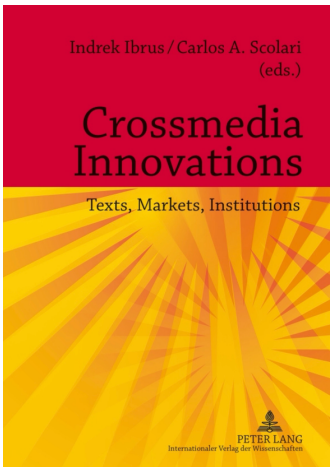
THE TRIPLETS AND THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING NARRATIVE.
Playing in the borderland between transmedia storytelling and adaptation.

Carlos A. Scolari

Published in:
Scolari, Carlos A. (2012). The Triplets and the Incredible Shrinking Narrative. In: Ibrus, I. y Scolari, C.A. (eds.) *Crossmedia Innovation. Texts, Markets, Institutions.* Frankfurt/New York: Peter Lang, pp. 45-60.



Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the narrative world of *The Triplets*[1], one of the most internationally acclaimed Catalan audio-visual productions. In addition to the cultural and commercial significance of this narrative world, during almost three decades the adventures of these three sisters have unfolded across different media, giving birth to one of the richest transmedia experiences in Spain. *The Triplets* brand is so well known by children and respected by families that companies like Danone have developed marketing campaigns with the characters.

From among the many possible gateways to the world of transmedia narratives, in this text I chose to analyse a portion of this extensive textual universe from a perspective that integrates semiotics and narratology. This study is part of a larger research project that covers other types of stories – parodies, reality shows, late night shows, advertising campaigns, etc. – produced in Catalonia, some of which are also broadcast on Spanish and international channels (Scolari et al., 2011).

The research was exploratory in nature due to the characteristics of the study object and its relative novelty in the Spanish media landscape. The main objective, in addition to a first recognition of a set of transmedia works, was to test a series of analytical and theoretical tools by applying them to different narratives. While building the *corpus* of the analysis, and considering the exploratory nature of the study, it was decided to 'probe' the Catalan audio-visual production territory and identify a set of texts that, at first glance, appeared as the most interesting from a transmedia perspective.

1. Origin and evolution of a narrative world

The Triplets are three characters created by Roser Capdevila and their adventures have been published as illustrated children's books since 1983. Mercè Company wrote the first nine books, while the following nine were written by Enric Larreula.

The creator's three daughters (Teresa, Anna and Helen) inspired the characters. The earlier books were about the everyday life of the three sisters, but they gradually generated hybrid stories with characters from traditional children's literature (*the Three Little Pigs, the Pied Piper of Hamelin, Little Red Riding Hood, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Pinocchio, the Ugly Duckling and characters from The Jungle Book and Treasure Island*). It could be said that the fictional universe of *The Triplets* has a strong intertextual DNA that extends from one end of the children's fairy tale territory to the other. The Bored Witch arrived in 1985, a central character in the narrative device because she became the main adversary of the three sisters.

The narrative scheme of these stories fits perfectly into Vladimir Propp's traditional folk tale model (Propp, 1968 [1928]). The three sisters must always fulfil a task – help a character, build something, etc. – and the Bored Witch appears and attempts to stop them from achieving their objective. Other characters or circumstances act as the three sisters' helpers.

In 1994 Roser Capdevila began her collaboration with Televisió de Catalunya (the Catalan public television channel) and the production company Cromosoma to create cartoons of *The Triplets*. The stories of the cartoons were not based on the books, and followed completely original screenplays. *The Triplets* first appeared on Catalan television in 1995[2]. The TV series finished in 2004 after 104 episodes; it has been translated into 35 languages and broadcast in

[1] *Les Tres Bessones* in Catalan / *Las Tres Mellizas* in Spanish.
[2] The Spanish version was broadcast in 1997, first on Canal + and then on *La 2* (RTVE: Radio y Televisión de España).

over 150 countries (data from 2010). Each episode lasts for 26 minutes. Two special stories dedicated to the architect Antoni Gaudí (2002) and the book Don Quixote (2005) have two parts and are therefore twice as long.

The great success of *The Triplets* has led to huge textual production, such as spin-off cartoons like *The Bored Witch* and *Once Upon The Triplets*, a work intended to introduce the English language to young audiences. Another production of note is *The Baby Triplets* (3BB), a spin-off of the original series that targets very small children. *The Baby Triplets* has 56 episodes and six book collections and many merchandising items, such as toys, bedding, baby clothes, jewellery and stationery. These expansions have been complemented with different book collections (*La Gran Biblioteca de Las Tres Mellizas, Los Cuentos Contados/Inglés Fácil, En la Cocina con las Tres Mellizas*, etc.), music CDs (*Las Canciones de Las Tres Mellizas*, etc.) and a website www.lestresbessones.com appeared in 1998. Over the years Cromosoma has coproduced contents with different institutions, such as the cartoon *Com és Catalunya* – targeting immigrants – and *Catalonia, Terra de Tots*, the first 3D production of the series. Cromosoma is currently developing a feature film of *The Triplets*.

In terms of user-generated content, as the audience is made up of young children most of the contributions are limited pictures that are sent to the magazine and short stories for the *Year of the Book and Reading* (2005). During the research, I did not find any blogs dedicated to *The Triplets.* There were some parody videos on YouTube, but these were produced by adult users.

Finally, during the research process a new content appeared: *The Baby Triplets: A Day at the Farm*. This iPhone application in Spanish, Catalan and English lets young users take part in simulated rural activities. Users can record their voice and become the narrator of the story. As spin-offs, the Bored Witch had her own television series (52 episodes) and some books in which she was the central character. It is interesting that there aren't any cross-overs between *The Triplets* and other characters also produced by Cromosoma, such as *Juanito Jones* or *Miniman*.

In this chapter I will focus on a small part of this vast narrative world: the works produced in relation to the architect Antoni Gaudí and the Modernist movement (2002 was proclaimed the *Year of Gaudí* by the City of Barcelona)[3]. Taking advantage of the synergies with this cultural event, Cromosoma produced a couple of books (*Las Tres Mellizas y Gaudí, La Gran Biblioteca – El Taller de Gaudí*), a theatre play (*Les Tres Bessones i l'Enigmàtic Senyor Gaudí*), two television episodes (*El Taller de Gaudí* and *Los Fantasmas de la Pedrera*) and three interactive productions (three simple videogames on the web), resulting in an initial coordinated exercise in transmedia storytelling in the world of *The Triplets*. Eight years after this first series of works, Antoni Gaudí is still present in the narrative world of *The Triplets*: in September 2010 a new version of *El Taller de Gaudí* was published in *The Triplets* magazine *(La Revista de Les Tres Bessones)*. As I will show in the following sections, many of these productions created for the Year of Gaudí are located midway between narrative expansion strategies (transmedia storytelling) and adaptations, understood as 'intersemiotic translations' (Jakobson, 1985, Eco, 2003).

2. The semiotic-narratologic approach

Semiotics, whether the model developed by Greimas (1987) or by Eco (1979), and narratology, from the foundational works of Propp (1998) to the works of Genette (1989) and Ball (1987), deal with narratives expressed in different languages and media (literature, cinema, comics, television, etc.). The phenomena of meaning production at the crossroads of two or more

[3] Antoni Gaudí (1852-1926) was a Catalan architect and the figurehead of Catalan Modernism. Gaudí's works reflect his highly individual and distinctive style and are largely concentrated in Barcelona, for example the Sagrada Familia church, La Pedrera (Casa Milà) and the Güell Palace.

significance systems, subsumed under the concept of *syncretism* by Greimas and Courtes (1982) and *multimodal semiotics* by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) and Kress (2009), have always been of interest. However, this semiotics of hybrid communications has never been fully combined with the narratological perspectives. Some pioneering works (such as Ryan, 2004) have prepared the way for the next step: a semiotic-narratological view of transmedia narratives (Scolari, 2009).

For the investigation the research team developed a comprehensive analysis model that integrated the main narratologic and semiotic tools. The analysis included questions and categories like the following:

- Characteristics of the narrative world and the transmedia expansion process: What is the extent of the narrative universe? In which medium did it start? How did the story arrive to the other media? How are expansive processes expressed in the different genres? What expansion strategies have been implemented? Is it possible to classify these strategies?
- If there are different narrative lines or arcs: How do they manifest in different media? How do transmedia expansion processes affect the actants[4] and the narrative programs (NP)[5]? How do actantial roles change from one medium to another? Are there any spin-offs?
- Construction of the model reader: How do transmedia sets of texts construct a model reader? Can a transmedia text build several model readers, one for each medium? What skills should a receiver bring into play to reconstruct and interpret a transmedia narrative world? Does the interpretation contract change from one medium to another?
- Processes of interpretation, re-appropriation, narrative compression and expansion by prosumers: What happens to the construction of possible worlds (Eco, 1979) when they are developed collaboratively in social networks? What kinds of texts are generated by prosumers? What is the narrative connection like between the realm of fandom and the official canon? Is it possible to classify user-generated contents?

The development of transmedia strategies and the intense activity of fan communities – which do not hesitate to appropriate characters/narrative worlds and expand, remix and redistribute them in collaborative platforms like YouTube, LiveJournal and Fanfiction – gave rise to several challenges that the 'monomedia' theories could not respond to. In this context a semiotic-narratological perspective allows the researcher to bring to light many aspects of these productions and to progress in constructing a solid theoretical discourse. Obviously, the questions presented above go far beyond the scope of this chapter, but they serve as a demonstration of the potential hidden in this bi-disciplinary approach. In the case of *The Triplets*, I will focus on the narrative expansion strategies, the addition of new characters and the ever present conflict between expansion and adaptation strategies.

3. *The Triplets* and Gaudí

Table 1 below sets out the TV episodes, books, short stories, videogames and the theatre play included in the analysis.

---

[4] 'The actantial model, developed by A.J. Greimas, allows us to break an action down into six facets, or actants: (1) The subject (for example, the Prince) is what wants or does not want to be joined to (2) an object (the rescued Princess, for example). (3) The sender (for example, the King) is what instigates the action, while the (4) receiver (for example, the King, the Princess, the Prince) is what benefits from it. Lastly, (5) a helper (for example, the magic sword, the horse, the Prince's courage) helps to accomplish the action, while (6) an opponent (the witch, the dragon, the Prince's fatigue or a suspicion of terror) hinders it' (Hébert, 2006a).

[5] 'The narrative program (NP), developed by Greimas, is an abstract formula used to represent an action. An utterance of doing (an action) consists of a temporal succession from one state to the opposite state, effected by an agent of some kind' (Hébert, 2006b).

TV episodes	N. 70: *El Taller de Gaudí* (2002)	These two episodes are included in the feature film *Les Tres Bessones i Gaudí* (2002) - Cromosoma/TV3 coproduction
	N. 71: *Los Fantasmas de la Pedrera* (2002)	
	N. 104: *La Fiesta* (2004)	Antoni Gaudí briefly appears in one scene (cameo) of this episode of the television series - Cromosoma/TV3 coproduction
Books	*Las Tres Mellizas y Gaudí* (2002)	Cromosoma/Planeta coproduction (Spanish) - Cromosoma/Destino (Catalan)
	La Gran biblioteca – El Taller de Gaudí (2006)	Cromosoma/TV3 coproduction
Magazine	*El Taller de Gaudí*	Illustrated short story in *La Revista de Les Tres Bessones*, N. 12, September 2010 (pp. 25-29)
Theatre	*Les Tres Bessones i l'Enigmàtic Senyor Gaudí* (2002)	Cromosoma/Per Poc coproduction
Videogames	*Construeix la Casa Batlló*	www.lestresbessones.com www.lastresmellizas.com
	Els colors de Gaudí	
	Trencaclosques	

Table 1 –*The Triplets* and Gaudí: transmedia production

In this section I will briefly describe the narrative based on two television episodes (*El Taller de Gaudí* - Episode 70 - *Los Fantasmas de la Pedrera* - Episode 71). Researchers often refer to this type of production as a 'tent pole', as it is the economic and narrative support of a transmedia universe. From a narrative point of view the plot of the two episodes contains all the elements that characterize traditional folk tales: the three sisters break a rule and they are punished by the Bored Witch, who sends them to the year 1908. To amend for what they have done the three sisters must help Gaudí and, at the same time, they must pass the tests imposed by the Bored Witch. On this trip back in time the three sisters get to know Gaudí in person, they participate in his daily life and share the fantasies of the misunderstood architect. Gaudí finally exorcises his ghosts and creates one of his most emblematic buildings, La Pedrera, while the three sisters punish the Bored Witch and return to the present.

The plot is straightforward with limited complexity, for example, each episode features flashbacks to Gaudí's youth and there are occasionally intertextual references to films like *Mission: Impossible* (for example when Tom Cruise enters the heavily fortified CIA headquarters and steals a document by hanging from the ceiling) and *E.T.* (the classic scene of the child riding his bike across the sky silhouetted against the moon). The second episode is enriched with a musical set in the Sagrada Familia church.

The two episodes fall into the classic children's story genre with touches of fantasy (time travel) and documentary (description of Barcelona in 1908, information on the life of Antoni Gaudí). The tone of the episodes combines dramatic situations (Gaudí's frustrated love, fear of not being accepted, the destruction of his drawings, the ghosts that haunt him, etc.) and comedy (the conflict between the Bored Witch and the three sisters).

The picture book *Las Tres Mellizas y Gaudí*, a work inspired directly by the two television episodes, also appeared in 2002. This book presents a classic illustrated tale that includes some drawings and original sketches by Roser Capdevila in the last pages. From a narrative perspective the book *Las Tres Mellizas y Gaudí* is an adaptation of the television story.

The book *El Taller de Gaudí* was published in 2006 and belongs to *La Gran Biblioteca de Las Tres Mellizas*, a collection that includes this short story, additional texts about Gaudí, the Modernist movement and the production of cartoons (making-of), and a DVD with the corresponding episodes. Finally a third printed version of *El Taller de Gaudí*, an adaption, was published in 2010 in the *The Triplets* magazine (*La Revista de Les Tres Bessones).*

The adaptation of the two television episodes to the printed media can be described as a double movement: as the story spread to other media it underwent a narrative compression. The book *Las Tres Mellizas y Gaudí* presented the original video story but with a series of absences, for example, it did not explain why the three sisters had been punished and sent back in time and skipped the flashbacks to young Gaudí's frustrated love.

This first narrative condensation was further compressed in the second printed version of the story published in the *La Gran Biblioteca* collection. In this version there are still some references to young Gaudí and his ill-fated love, but other scenes – like the dance of the Bored Witch at the Liceu Theatre – only appear as illustrations without references in the written text. This presence can lead to interpretation problems: the readers may recognize that the dancer is the Bored Witch, but the text does not explain why she is there on stage.

This dual process of media expansion/narrative compression intensified with *El Taller de Gaudí*, an illustrated short story based on the first television episode that appeared in *La Revista de Les Tres Bessones* (*The Triplets* magazine). This new version was even more condensed than the previous one as it was only five pages long. This time the three sisters appear directly in the past (the transfer to the year 1908 is not explained) and, like the version published in *La Gran Biblioteca*, the story does not justify the presence of the Bored Witch on the theatre stage. In this version the sisters do not come back to the present and the Bored Witch plays a completely marginal role.

Of all these texts, the play *Les Tres Bessones i l'Enigmatic Senyor Gaudí* (2002) is the most interesting to analyse from the transmedia storytelling perspective. This adaptation proposed a true narrative expansion, including new situations and characters (the three sisters' mother, the ox called Manolete, a skeleton, etc.) that carried the story far beyond the television episodes and the different printed versions.

To end this quick overview, I need to mention that the three videogames included on the *The Triplets* website – *Construeix Casa Batlló, Els Colors de Gaudí* and *Trencaclosques* – are very simple and do not add anything to the narrative universe. The user-generated contents are limited to pictures and some short stories submitted to the magazine or web.

3. Transmedia storytelling and adaptation

As we have seen in the previous section, the illustrated stories should be considered adaptations or intersemiotic translations of the original television episodes: from an original audio-visual text the company created several printed adaptations of the same story but removed some of the original components. According to some researchers, these productions should not be included in the transmedia storytelling analysis.

Let’s briefly reconstruct this theoretical debate. According to Jenkins

> A transmedia story unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole. In the ideal form of transmedia storytelling each medium does what it does best—so that a story might be introduced in a film, expanded through television, novels, and comics…Each franchise entry needs to be self-contained so you don’t need to have seen the film to enjoy the game or viceversa (Jenkins, 2006: 95-96).

In this context the differences between *adaptation* and *transmedia storytelling* become essential:

> *Transmedia*, used by itself, simply means "across media." Transmedia, at this level, is one way of talking about convergence as a set of cultural practices (…) *Transmedia storytelling* describes one logic for thinking about the flow of content across media (…) I have sometimes talked about a distinction between *adaptation* and *extension* as fundamental to understanding these shifts. Basically, an adaptation takes the same story from one medium and retells it in another. An extension seeks to add something to the existing story as it moves from one medium to another (Jenkins, 2011).

In other words, only the expansive narrative practices should be included within the transmedia storytelling field. Other researchers like Long (2007) reinforced this conception:

> When the topic of transmediation is first breached in conversation, often the initial response is something along the lines of, "Oh, like the *Lord of the Rings* films!" Well, no. Not quite. Retelling a story in a different media type is *adaptation*, while using multiple media types to craft a single story is *transmediation*. For example, Peter Jackson's film versions of *The Lord of the Rings* are adaptations of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* novels. While this shares some of the same benefits as transmedia storytelling, primarily the creation of new 'access points' to a narrative world through alternative media types, it differs from transmedia storytelling due to the lack of one of the key components in Jenkins' definition: distinction (Long, 2007: 22).

Researchers like Dena have questioned the fact that 'adaptations are automatically redundant' (2009: 148). After analysing a long series of examples in her doctoral thesis, Dena concluded that

> […] adaptation is not always (or ever) redundant. It is a practice that can have many functions and has been practiced to varying degrees of success for centuries. The argument of this thesis is that the transmedia phenomenon is not best understood by an end-product trait such as expansion, but by the knowledge and skills necessary to create (and experience) a transmedia project. Those knowledge and skills involve the employment of a variety of distinct media (and environments), in a variety of ways. One of those ways is adaptation (Dena, 2009: 163).

Obviously, both Jenkins and Long have recognized that an adaptation can never be a perfect and linear intersemiotic translation:

> Before I go too far, let me first concede that adaptations of a work are never identical to the original work. Jackson's Lord of the Rings trilogy, for example, had many fans screaming *"There were no elves at Helm's Deep!"* Tom Bombadil never graced the screen in Jackson's film, and the ghost army never fought at Minas Tirith in Tolkien's book. These changes often reflect both the benefits and disadvantages inherent in particular media types – Tom Bombadil was excised from the film due to time constraints, whereas the battles with the elves and ghost army were most likely added to take advantage of the opportunity for spectacle provided by the film medium (and a healthy budget for special effects) (Long, 2007:22).

> Every adaption makes additions – minor or otherwise – and reinterpretations of the original which in theory expands our understanding of the core story. These changes can be read as "infidelities" by purists but they may also represent what I describe in *Convergence Culture* as "additive comprehension" – they may significantly reshape our understanding of what's happening in the original work. Still, I think there is a

> distinction to be made between "extensions" to the core narrative or the fictional universe and adaptations which simply move content from one medium to another (Jenkins, 2009).
>
> Adaptations may be highly literal or deeply transformative. Any adaptation represents an interpretation of the work in question and not simply a reproduction, so all adaptions to some degree add to the range of meanings attached to a story. And as Dena notes, the shifts between media mean that we have new experiences and learn new things. To translate *Harry Potter* from a book to a movie series means thinking through much more deeply what Hogwarts looks like and thus the art director/production designer has significantly expanded and extended the story in the process (Jenkins, 2011).

From my perspective, I prefer Dena's proposal: the concept of transmedia storytelling should be flexible enough to (at least) incorporate adaptations that somehow enrich and expand a narrative world. Researchers should not draw rigid boundaries around textual sets that in reality are fluid and undergo constant transformations. According to Jenkins, it is more useful to consider 'adaptation and extension as part of a continuum in which both poles are only theoretical possibilities and most of the action takes place somewhere in the middle' (Jenkins, 2011)[6].

If we move away from the narratologic approach and embrace these textual sets from the producer's perspective, it is obvious that the distances between narrative expansion and adaptation become shorter. For Hollywood studios transmedia storytelling and adaptation are nothing more than two different textual strategies that share the same goal: to increase the commercial exploitation of a character or a fictional universe, either through a prequel, a mobisode or an adaptation to another medium. Something similar happens if we put ourselves in the place of the consumers, who are just interested in 'living' within a particular narrative world.

Finally, another argument in favour of a broad conception of transmedia storytelling is the following: all of these texts – from adaptations to transmedia extensions – work as a gateway to the narrative universe. Many consumers entered the world of *The Lord of the Ring* through the original books or the adapted films, while others may have joined the fictional universe through online videogames like *The Lord of the Rings Online: Shadows of Angmar* or unofficial movies like *The Hunt for Gollum*. The same can be said for the *Harry Potter* and *Indiana Jones* brands. Even the compressed texts – like trailers, recaps and adaptations that remove characters or situations (like in *The Triplets*) – operate as gateways to a narrative universe.

Now that my position in this debate has been clarified, we can return to the three sisters and go further in our exploration of the grey zone that lies between the adaptations and the narrative extensions. As I said before, the researcher on transmedia storytelling should make the effort to incorporate into their analysis the adjustments made to a story that somehow enrich and expand it or even compress it. Now let's look at how the creator can adapt and expand a story at the same time.

4. Playing in the borderland between transmedia storytelling and adaptation

The most interesting fact that emerges from the analysis of *The Triplets* and Gaudí is that the expansion of the story across media implied a concurrent compression of the narrative, which was expressed in a loss of secondary narrative programs (such as Gaudí's frustrated love flashback) or situations (the Bored Witch dancing in the Liceu Theatre). In this context the play

---

[6] Other researchers have proposed the concept of 'accretive adaptation' to refer to the 'adaptation versions or meant to be that are seen in conjunction with or as additions to previous versions, rather than stand in place of them. As such, they often add additional narrative or reframe the existing development in various ways that narrative rather than simply expand repeat the story' (Li, 2009).

Les Tres Bessones i l'Enigmatic Senyor Gaudí is the only text that actually expanded the story and added new characters and situations. These texts are characterized by this double and contradictory movement of media expansion and narrative compression.

As we have seen, most investigators have considered the expansion of the story a *sine qua non* condition of transmedia storytelling. This double movement (expansion/compression) in the works of *The Triplets* and Gaudí challenges our conception of transmedia storytelling and confirms that there is still a long way to go in the narratological research of these productions.

To go a step further in our exploration of the 'grey area' that separates expansions from adaptations, I will now propose a taxonomy of the different approaches to adaptation. On one side we can place the *faithful intersemiotic translations* and on the other side the *unfaithful intersemiotic translations*. If we describe this continuum in semiotic-narratological terms, for example focusing on the characters that occupy the actantial roles and the narrative programs (NP), we can identify the following situations:

- Adaptations that maintain the same actantial structure: This intersemiotic translation does not usually bring major changes to the original story. From the perspective of transmedia narratives these are perhaps the least interesting for the researcher. For example the cinema adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* directed by Peter Jackson did not incorporate new characters or NPs.
- Adaptations that include actantial changes: These intersemiotic translations are the most interesting from the perspective of transmedia storytelling since they allow the expansion/compression movements to be identified. In *The Triplets* I found the following possibilities:
    - Expansion of the NP by incorporating new characters and secondary NPs (for example the appearance of the ox Manolete or the skeleton in the play *Les Tres Bessones i l'Enigmatic Senyor Gaudí*).
    - Expansion of the NP by incorporating new tests (for example in the play the three sisters must save the ox Manolete and stop the Bored Witch from turning him into 'steaks')[7].
    - Compression of the NP by removing characters and the secondary NP (for example the flashbacks about young Gaudí's frustrated love).
    - Compression of the NP by eliminating tests (for example, in the story published in *La Revista de Les Tres Bessones* the three sisters do not have to pass all the tests that are in the television version).

The taxonomy of *faithful/unfaithful adaptations* we have just proposed can be represented in a table. For the researcher of transmedia storytelling the expansions of the NP – evidenced in the table – should be considered as a high priority research object because they include the extensions of the story: new tests that lengthen the NP, new sequences of events that affect the characters (prequels, sequels, parallel stories, etc.), new characters, and so on. However, the study of adaptations from the perspective of transmedia storytelling should not be reduced solely to these textual expansions: we believe that it is worth incorporating adaptations that compress the story, such as those that emerged in this study.

These compressed texts – like trailers or sneak peeks – are also part of *The Triplets* fictional narrative world and should be incorporated into the textual corpus investigated by the transmediologist. Finally, *faithful adaptations* add little to the study of transmedia storytelling; however, before we throw them away with the rubbish, we should determine whether they provide new visions of the narrative world. In other words, the researcher should determine whether compressions, as argued by Jenkins, include any kind of 'additive comprehension' before discarding them (see Table 2).

[7] According to Propp, after leaving home the hero is tested/questioned. The hero reacts and receives a magical agent/object that helps in the quest.

Faithful adaptations	May have minimal variations but do not include changes in the actantial structure or NP		
Unfaithful adaptations	Include changes in the actantial structure and NP	NP expansion	Incorporation of secondary NPs
			Incorporation of new tests
		NP compression	Elimination of secondary NPs
			Elimination of tests

Table 2 – Expansion/compression strategies in intersemiotic translations

In conclusion: transmedia storytelling may include a large set of texts that, as Jenkins argues, unfold 'across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole'. The 'unfolding' process includes expansive strategies that generate richer narrative experiences for consumers (and researchers), but it may also include compression strategies that the researcher should not disregard. Can we put aside the adaptations that eliminate secondary narrative programs when, from the producer's economic perspective or the consumer's cultural perspective, they are part of the narrative universe? Is it necessary to perform a textual purge and reduce the research object to just a handful of chemically pure expansions? On another level: Can we eradicate the analysis of short compressed texts – like trailers or recaps – from transmedia storytelling research?

A theory of transmedia storytelling, currently a work in progress, should promote the creation of textual and narrative taxonomies while preserving the different components of the fictional worlds. In this context both the narrative compression strategies – for example the productions of *The Triplets* and Gaudí – and the compressed texts – such as trailers, recaps, synchronizations and other paratextual formats – should also be part of the *corpus* to be analysed by the transmediologist[8].

The following figure represents a synthesis of the relationships between adaptation and transmedia storytelling that we have outlined in this chapter. Given the embryonic state of transmedia storytelling theory, other researchers might propose, and they would be totally within their rights, other types of relationships between the two areas, moving the circles horizontally or vertically (see Figure 1).

[8] See for example the case of *Lost* in Scolari (2011, 2012).

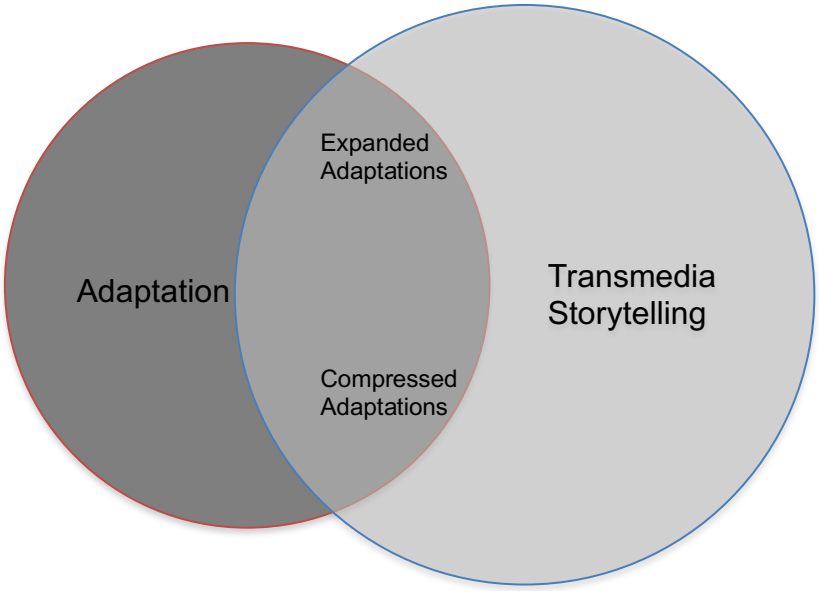


Figure 1 – Relationships between adaptations and transmedia storytelling

We can see that the analysis of just a small area of a larger transmedia narrative universe – in this case the works of *The Triplets* and Gaudí – has given us the opportunity to refine some concepts and think of new taxonomies. Why is this conceptual and classificatory work so important? According to Greimas (1991) the definition of concepts and the creation of taxonomies are the foundational components of any theoretical discourse. In other words, if we want to develop a solid theory of transmedia storytelling, we must begin by clearly defining the concepts and proposing basic taxonomies to develop a scientific discourse. We hope that this chapter has made this a little clearer as well as contributed to the theoretical construction.

References

Ball, Mieke (1987). *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press

Dena, Christy (2009). *Transmedia Practice: Theorising the Practice of Expressing a Fictional World across Distinct Media and Environments,* PhD Thesis, University of Sydney. URL: http://www.stevepeters.org/2011/05/18/what-the-hell-is-transmedia/ (Accessed January 10, 2012).

Eco, Umberto (1979). *Lector in Fabula*. Milan: Bompiani [English translation: *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979].

Eco, Umberto (2003). *Dire la stessa cosa*. Milan: Bompiani (English edition: *Experiences in Translation.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

Genette, Gérard (1997). *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. Lincoln (NE): University of Nebraska Press.

Greimas, Algirdas (1987). *On Meaning: Selected Writings in Semiotic Theory*. London: Frances Pinter.

Greimas, Algirdas (1991). *Semiotica e Scienze Sociali*. Turin: Centro Scientifico Editore.

Greimas, Algirdas y Courtés, Joseph (1983). *Semiotics and Language: An Analytical Dictionary,* Bloomington (IN): Indiana University Press.

Hébert, Louis (2006a). The Actantial Model, in Louis Hébert (dir.), *Signo* [online], Rimouski (Quebec), http://www.signosemio.com (Accessed January 10, 2012).

Hébert, Louis (2006b). The Narrative Program, in Louis Hébert (dir.), *Signo* [online], Rimouski (Quebec), http://www.signosemio.com (Accessed January 10, 2012).

Jakobson, Roman (2000). On linguistic Aspects of Translation, in Lawrence Venuti (ed.) *The Translation Studies Reader*, London & New York: Routledge, 113-118.

Jenkins, Henry (2006). *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press.

Jenkins (2009). The Aesthetics of Transmedia: In Response to David Bordwell (Part One), *Confessions of an Aca-Fan,* September 10. URL: http://henryjenkins.org/2009/09/the_aesthetics_of_transmedia_i.html (Accessed January 10, 2012).

Jenkins (2011). Transmedia 202: Further Reflections, *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*, August 1. URL: http://www.henryjenkins.org/2011/08/defining_transmedia_further_re.html (Accessed January 10, 2012).

Kress, Gunther (2009). *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*. London: Routledge.

Kress, Gunther & Van Leeuwen, Theo (2001). *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication*. London: Arnold.

Li, Xiaochang (2009). Thinking on Transmedia: accretive adaptation and narrative resonance, *canarytrap.net,* May 28. URL: http://canarytrap.net/2009/05/thinking-on-transmedia-accretive-adaptation-and-narrative-resonance/ (Accessed January 10, 2012).

Long, Geoffrey (2007). *Transmedia Storytelling: Business, Aesthetics, and Production at the Jim Henson Company.* Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Master's Thesis.

Ryan, Marie-Laure (2004). *Narrative Across Media.* Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Scolari, Carlos A. (2009). Transmedia Storytelling. Implicit Consumers, Narrative Worlds and Branding in Contemporary Media Production, *International Journal of Communication*, 3, 586 – 606. URL: http://ijoc.org/ojs/index.php/ijoc/article/view/477 (Accessed January 10, 2012).

Scolari, Carlos A. (2011). Narrativa transmediática, estrategias cross-media e hipertelevisión, in A. Piscitelli, C.A. Scolari & C. Maguregui (eds.) *Lostología. Estrategias para entrar y salir de la isla*. Buenos Aires: Ed. Cinema.

Scolari, Carlos A. (2012). Lostology: Transmedia storytelling and expansion/compression strategies, *Semiotica,* forthcoming.

Scolari Carlos A. (coordinator); Fernández de Azcárate, Sara; Garín, Manuel; Guerrero, Mar; Jiménez, Manel; Martos, Aitor; Obradors, Matilde; Oliva, Mercè; Pérez, Óliver; Pujadas, Eva (2011). *Narratives transmediàtiques, convergència audiovisual i noves estratègies de comunicación.* Barcelona: Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya (CAC), forthcoming (online version).

Propp, Vladimir (1968). *Morphology of the Folk Tale*. Austin: University of Texas Press.