DIMENSIONAL EXPANSIONS AND SHIFTINGS: FAN FICTION AND TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING THE FRINGEVERSE

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KEYWORDS

Transmedia storytelling; fan fiction; user-generated content; narrative strategies; Fringe.

ABSTRACT

This article explores the characteristics of user-generated texts in fictional transmedia storytelling based on the fan fiction originating from FOX's television series *Fringe*

(2008-2013). A fan fiction (also known as fanfic or fic) is a piece of writing in which the author recreates the setting, events and characters of a source text or canon. After reviewing fan theories and practices, the article focuses on three examples examples of *Fringe* fan fiction analysing them with a double-edged methodology that combines narrative semiotics and narratology. Based on the results we update a set of transmedia narrative strategies by adding *dimensional expansion* and *shifting*, and also redefine the different areas of the storyworld where fan fiction is set with special emphasis on alternate universe (AU) scenarios.

DOI 10.6092/issn.2421-454X/6593 ISSN 2421-454X Conceived by Bad Robot, the same production company responsible for ABC's *Lost*—one of the biggest television phenomena in the last decade—and ambitiously marketed by the FOX network as one of their new shows for the 2008 season, it would have been strange that Fringe had not been equally as ambitious as the island-based series in pushing the boundaries of narrative beyond the box. A similar multimedia and multiplatform effort can be seen in this sci-fi tale, created by J.J. Abrams, Roberto Orci and Alex Kurtzman, about a brilliant but reckless and arrogant scientist who caused a rift between parallel universes in order to save his dying son and thus set into motion a myriad of consequences. Despite winning critical acclaim, Fringe's five-year run on FOX was not smooth as the show always had to fight against the threat of cancellation due to low ratings (Cochran et al., 2014). It was the passionate fanbase that literally saved the series by buying the DVDs and tuning their DVR recorders in. At the same time fans also produced a wide range of user-generated content and took action through live events organised on social media in a compelling example of a transmedia experience powered by grassroots. Although there has been wide media coverage of the show, there has been little scholastic production on it apart from some narrative (Clarke Stuart, 2011; Garín, 2013), science fiction (Grazier, 2011) and multidisciplinary (Cochran et al., 2014) approaches and some contributions from the transmedia storytelling field (Belsunces Gonçalves, 2011, 2013). This article will add more to the latter, focusing this time on the fan fiction inspired by Fringe.

As an introduction, we will explore the specific fan practices and genres and present them under a general classification of transmedia fan practices. We will then analyse three examples of the fan fiction practice based on a methodology that merges semiotics and narratology to show how fans add new input to our understanding of transmedia narrative strategies.

1. TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING AND USER-GENERATED CONTENT IN FRINGE

More than ten years since Henry Jenkins coined the term in his well-known article in MIT's Technology Review (2003), we can define *transmedia storytelling* as "a process in which the discourse of a story can be spread through different media, platforms and languages" (Guerrero, 2012: 76). Jenkins (2006, 2009) identified narrative expansion and user-generated content (UGC) as the two main features attached to the concept of transmedia storytelling. Narrative expansion can be carried out through books, comics, movies and webisodes, among many other possibilities. Examples are the TV series 24, Lost (Scolari, 2009, 2013a) and Battlestar Galactica (Hernández and Grandío 2011) and Doctor Who (Perryman, 2008), which have all grown into complex storyworlds through narrative expansion across different media, platforms and languages.

1.1. The origin of transmedia contents

User-generated contents are the prime testimony of the idea of "participatory culture" that Jenkins (1992) initially linked only to the cultural production and social interaction that occurs in fan communities (Jenkins et al., 2013). UGC also contributes to the expansion of the storyworld; therefore, initially there is a double stream when it comes to classifying the origin of the contents created in transmedia storytelling: top-down and bottom-up contents (Scolari, 2009). Top-down content is official comics, books, videogames or any other product made by cultural industries or owners of intellectual property for the consumption of users or audiences. Bottomup content is UGC like fan fiction. Occasionally the latter can follow the opposite path and become a profitable, top-down product despite starting out as a fanwork¹. However, as we will see in this article, UGC falls into a third stream of content that we categorise as bottom-to-bottom content. That is, works made by fans for fans inspired in bottom-up content rather than top-down content, thus expanding the narrative of the fan-made product instead of the official content.

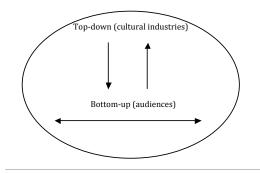


FIGURE 1. ORIGIN OF TRANSMEDIA CONTENTS

¹ In this sense, Scolari (2013) highlights the case of *Pardillos*, a parodic webcomic based on *Lost* created by the Spanish student Carlos Azaustre,which, in 2009, made its way from a fan website to the main bookshops in Spain.

While research on transmedia storytelling still gravitates heavily towards top-down scenarios, Scolari et al. (2012) and Scolari (2013a), from a semio-narratologic perspective, have already thrown some transmedial light onto a few of the common texts and formats developed at the core of fandom. Scolari's analysis of *Lost's* video recapitulations (2013a), which are a concise and summarised paratextual format, challenges the idea of transmedia storytelling being exclusively expansive as the story can also be compressed.

In this work, we will adopt this integrated vision of transmedia storytelling and explore UGC with the aim of discovering a meeting point between semiotics, narratology and Fan Studies. It is impossible to make a textual study of UGC in relation to transmedia storytelling without examining the full range of possible fan activities and some of the basic concepts developed over years of fan tradition. However, assuming that it would be impossible to cram an ever-changing object of study like this one² into just a few pages, in this article we will look at a small portion of the fan production around Fringe, specifically three works of fan fiction: lullebel's Synaptic, spy_barbie's This Charming Man and Chichuri's Choke Chain 'verse. The goal here is to provide some practical tools to give an overview of UGC, particularly fan fiction, without getting caught up in a tangle of transient terminologies.

1.2. The complexity of fandom

What can a fan do with top-down contents? Moreover, what does a fan do at all? Classic research on media fans (Fiske, 1992; Jenkins, 1992; Bacon Smith, 1992) has often tackled these questions from the angle of productivity, especially because fan fiction—or any kind of fanwork for that matter—is one of the most visible and iconic fan products (Hellekson and Busse, 2006). But as Sandvoss remarks "fan fiction itself accounts for only a part of fan performance and productivity" (2005: 29). He adds:

> Fiske's work (1992) again provides a useful starting point, as he distinguishes between three different forms of fan productivity: *semiotic, enunciative* and *textual* [emphasis mine]. Semiotic productivity refers to the creation of meaning in the process of reading and therefore takes place on an intraper-

sonal level. Enunciative productivity, by contrast, describes the forms of social interaction that are cultivated through fan consumption. A key dimension of such productivity is the regular verbal exchange between fans [...] in the form of fan talk or gossip, which, according to Fiske (1992: 38) accounts for 'much of the pleasure of fandom'. Enunciative productivity also includes pleasurable forms of non-verbal communication, such as replicating a star's appearance or wearing shirts or buttons to display affection for one's favourite team or television programme. Textual productivity, finally, refers to materials and texts created by fans which are manifest concretely, in that they are either written, edited or recorded, such as fanzines, fan fiction, self-produced videotapes or 'filk' songs (see Jenkins 1992). (Sandvoss, 2005: 29)

Enunciative productivity—for example, through a Fringe online fan forum³ or meeting at Comic-Con—and, above all, textual productivity-through the Fringe fan fiction archives at ArchiveOfOurOwn.org⁴ and FanFiction.net ⁵ or at one of the many LiveJournal communities⁶—have often been used to differentiate between fans and the general audience (Sandvoss, 2005). Fans are seen as an advanced critical mass where subversive and resistant meanings are moulded through passionate consumption of mass media products and who actively participate in communities in a process that leads to the construction of a combined social identity (Jenkins and Tulloch, 1995). General audiences are seen as being viewers who do not go beyond the mere act of consumption, whereas fans are "consumers who also produce, readers who also write, spectators who also participate" (Jenkins, 1992: 208). Fans can be considered as the epitome of the prosumer figure. However, Hills suggests that there are fans who don't produce at all, and feels that such stress on productivity in fan research encapsulates a tension between the 'consumption' and 'production' aspects of fandom in which the former is devaluated and the latter over valued so that fandom "is salvaged for academic study by removing the taint of consumption and consumerism" (2002: 5-6). In a similar fashion, Sandvoss states that

5 https://www.fanfiction.net/tv/Fringe/ (accessed 18 December 2015).

^{2 &}quot;The notion of a work in progress is thus central to fandom and the study of fandom" (Hellekson and Busse, 2006: 7).

³ http://fringe-forum.com/forums/index.php (accessed 18 December 2015).

⁴ https://archiveofourown.org/tags/Fringe/works (accessed 18 December 2015).

⁶ http://www.livejournal.com/interests.bml?int=fringe (accessed 18 December 2015).

fans who do not actively participate in communities or have no textual productivity "derive a distinct sense of self and social identity from their fan consumption" and advocates for taxonomies that include "the varying degrees of productivity and social organization in fandom" (2005: 30).

1.3. The fandom sphere

In this scenario the area of semiotics of interpretation (Eco, 1979) has been proven useful for identifying the various fan types that can come into play (or not) in a fandom. Observing the model reader inside the different parts and contents of a television website, Guerrero (2014: 261–262) elaborated a list of participation models with their corresponding user roles to address the question of non-productive fans:

- Observational model lurker role: although they do not leave verbal traces on the website, simply the presence of this quiet user affects the development of the web (i.e. most read contents or gaps between pages viewed and messages on a forum).
- Discursive/argumentative model chatter role: a user that gives their opinion in the spaces the website provides for comments on news articles or forum threads.
- Creative/informative model creator role: unlike the chatter role, this user contributes with contents that expand or compress the narrative or help new users to approach it.
- Ludic model player role: a user that integrates the previous models of participation through the ludic applications and contents offered by the television website.

These models and roles can be transferred from a TV website to the whole range of activities a fan might perform regardless of the media environment. Going back to the *Fringe* online forum example, at this site we find two user roles: the chatters who post opinions and theories and the lurkers who just read what the others say. The lurkers, while not being (in Fiske's words) enunciatively productive, are still *Fringe* fans that keep coming back over and over again to the forum and are, in fact, consuming the show's content through the website. Likewise, creators are the fan authors who upload their fan fiction based on *Fringe* to fiction archives; the fan artists that share their fan art inspired by the show at platforms like deviantART.com⁷ and Tumblr⁸; or even the fan contributors that generate new entries at wikis like *Fringepedia*. *net*⁹. Creators contribute to the expansion or compression of the storyworld with creativity-driven works or products that serve as "orienting paratexts" (Mittell 2012–2013) targeted at spreading knowledge about the narrative universe and providing easier access to it. Finally, we can spot players in *Search for the Pattern*, one of *Fringe*'s official Alternate Reality Games (ARGs), which serves as prequel to the first season.

These models can be taken further, from the single fan to the entire extent of fandom as a representative group, highlighting at the same time another important side of fan performance that connects directly with the most resistant and anti-commercial stances outlined by Jenkins (1992): fandom's capacity to influence the decisions made by media executives. For instance, this organised activism lies underneath many of the ventures that Fringe fans set up to save the show from cancellation (Belsunces Gonçalves, 2011) between the third and the fifth season¹⁰. So, from passionate consumption to activism, fans travel through a number of activities and performances that have come to be referred to as the fandom sphere. This sphere is constituted by the following areas: consumption, discussion and argumentation, creation of transmedia contents, performance and influence and vindication. While consumption is the necessary starting point, a fan is not obligated to engage in all these activities to be considered a fan. All fans watch Fringe episodes religiously—consumption—but some fans may focus on forum or social network debates-discussion and argumentationand totally disregard fan fiction writing-creation of transmedia contents-whereas others may want to dress like The Observers--performance--or may launch Twitter events to create buzz about the show in the media—influence and vindication. And others may just stick to revisiting the episodes several times and re-reading the comics and not do any of the other possible activities—consumption.

2. TRANSMEDIA USER-GENERATED CONTENTS (TUGC) IN FICTION

Out of all these activities, we will focus on the creation of transmedia contents. As we have seen above, UGC is a key part of the definition of transmedia storytelling. However,

⁷ http://www.deviantart.com/?q=fringe (accessed 18 December 2015).

⁸ http://www.tumblr.com/search/fringefox (accessed 18 December 2015).

⁹ http://www.fringepedia.net (accessed 18 December 2015).

¹⁰ http://morethanoneofeverything.net/2011/10/27/not-neilsen-how-toovercome-invisibility/ (accessed 18 December 2015)

the breadth of the very term UGC implies at the same time some conceptual issues when it is presented in the context of transmedia narrative. These problems can be summarised under the following question: could any instance of UGC or bottom-up content be automatically considered transmedia storytelling? Let's take, for example, a paratext like an opinion posted in a Fringe forum or a social media account about the character of Peter Bishop. Unlike a regular piece of fan fiction it would be necessary to look closely at the opinion itself to determine if it bears some of the inner characteristics that make storytelling transmedial. In other words, we should observe if the opinion transforms the original source, either by expanding or compressing it. Therefore, to prevent any confusion on the idea of bottom-up and bottom-to-bottom productions regarding transmedia storytelling, from here on we am referring to transmedia user-generated content (TUGC) as introduced elsewhere (Guerrero, 2012, 2014). Likewise, as transmedia storytelling is not confined to the realms of fiction (Scolari 2013b), it is equally relevant to specify that TUGC derived from fictional stories—or fanworks—are just a portion of all the TUGC.

We can understand TUGC in fiction as "the textual, graphic or audiovisual manifestations made by the fans of a particular product of mass culture based on it" (Guerrero, 2014: 250). After examining this concept in several works (Guerrero, 2012, 2014), we propose here an updated classification of TUGC in fiction divided into two basic forms of expression or practices: creative—with a primarily recreational or playful purpose—and informative—with a primarily informative purpose. In these two categories we can find two subgroups, practices that emerged before the digitalisation process and practices that emerged after the digitalisation process¹¹, taking the 1980s as the chronological reference point of the development of this process. Digitalisation played a key role in fostering the new practices that came later on¹². In addition, we have refined the categories of fanworks, providing further detail in some of them and adding specific key practices¹³—as may be the case for *filk*, *audiofic*, *cosplay*, *machinima* and *podfic*—that were not included in previous definitions. Thus, using examples from *Fringe* and, where necessary, other franchises for each practice, the TUGC taxonomy proposal is revised as follows:

Creative practices

Before the digitalisation process

- Fan fiction (also known as *fanfic* or *fic*): written stories.
- Fan vid: music videos edited by fans using the source footage and an already existing song (called vids), and also short videos with fan-made footage (e.g., Peter/ Olivia – Listen to your heart by Estelle5¹⁴; Why you should watch Fringe? by Denis Bezard¹⁵).
- Fan film: films and short films made by fans editing the source footage or shooting new material (e.g., *Star Wars Revelations* -2005- by Shane Felux¹⁶).
- Fan art: drawings, paintings, graphic art, and diverse crafts (e.g., *Fringe in progress* by jasonpal¹⁷; *Fringe Seasons Compilation* by mustafaakara¹⁸).
- Fancomic: comics and graphic novels (e.g., *The Genosha Sequence* by Ardatli & Rich Morris, a comic that combines *Stargate S1* and *The Avengers* storyworls¹⁹).
- Filk: science-fiction or fantasy-inspired music by fans

15 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rtp8ZrNA020 (accessed 20 December 2015).

¹¹ In previous works (Guerrero, 2012, 2014), the distinction between practices after and *before digitalisation* referred mainly to the creative practices with the exception of recaps in the informative practices. The disposition in the present article gives a clearer and more precise overview of the origin of fanworks regarding digitalisation.

^{12 &}quot;But media fans are making more kinds of art than ever before. Not only are they still writing fan fiction, but image manipulation software has also allowed for ever more sophisticated visual art. Digital editing software has taken the fannish art of creating music videos, or vidding [...], to a whole new level" (Coppa, 2006: 59).

¹³ There is not an actual consensus either in the academic or the fan community on the different types of fanworks as they are objects of constant transformation. For instance, fandom wikis like Fanlore.org provide an exhaustive list with banners, icons, character shrines, doujinshis, archives and fansites among other very specific fan productions (http://fanlore.org/wiki/Fanwork). However, for informative reasons, we have opted to integrate many of these practices under a significant and well-known term that unites acquainted productions, for example in the case of fan art, which brings together icons, banners and doujinshis; or fan vid that goes beyond the creation of music videos using source footage and also extends to fannish short videos. At the same time, archives would fall into the fan fiction category as they function as storage for fanfic works. As for fansites they can serve as publishing platforms for other fan practices, either creative or informative. Wikis are considered a type of fansite in Fanlore's classification but here they appear as an independent practice because of their high informative characteristics and the unique degree of fan collaboration they enable.

¹⁴ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mUgxfd7-pr4 (accessed 20 December 2015).

¹⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4oIDc3rQfU (accessed 20 December 2015).

¹⁷ http://www.deviantart.com/art/Fringe-in-progress-142704324 (accessed 20 December 2015).

¹⁸ http://www.deviantart.com/art/Fringe-Seasons-Compilation-259649674 (accessed 20 December 2015).

¹⁹ http://comics.shipsinker.com/archives/ (accessed 20 December 2015).

(e.g., *Banned from Argo* by Leslie Fish, a parodic filk song of *Star Trek*²⁰).

- Audiofic: collage of sounds and dialogues retrieved from the original source to tell a new story (e.g., Spork! An Erotic Love Story by cirrocumulus and jiaren_shadow²¹, an erotic audiofic created using extracts from the Star Trek movie audiobook).
- Cosplay: activity in which fans wear costumes of mass-culture characters or stories and impersonate them (e.g., fans cosplaying The Observers from *Fringe*²²).

After the digitalisation process

- a. Practices linked to videogames:
- MOD: fan-made extension for a videogame (e.g., Grand Theft Auto IV – Superman Script (MOD) Official Trailer by taltigolt ²³).
- Machinima: videos or films made by manipulating game engines (e.g., *Red vs. Blue*²⁴, a machinima web series based on *Halo*).
- Glitch
- b. Practices linked to the Web 2.0.:
- Characters' blogs and social profiles: online role playing games (e.g., *El Twitter de Peterfantas²⁵ y Olivia Dunham²⁶*, parodic Twitter accounts for *Fringe*'s Peter Bishop and Olivia Dunham's Spanish soppy alter egos).
- Podfic: recording of a fan fiction read by one or several fans (e.g., *Help Wanted* by reahanna27, read by nickel-mountain²⁷, a *Fringe* podfic).

- 23 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2yEUZr4VRqc (accessed 20 December 2015).
- 24 http://roosterteeth.com/archive/?id=88&v=more&s=1 (accessed 20 December 2015).
- 25 http://www.twitter.com/peterfantas (accessed 20 December 2015).
- 26 http://www.twitter.com/oliviadunham1 (accessed 20 December 2015).
- 27 http://www.mediafire.com/listen/3obm4azj82ajilf/Help+Wanted.mp3 (accessed 20 December 2015).

Informative practices

Before the digitalisation process

- Recapitulations (shortened as *recaps*): textual, graphic or audiovisual summaries (i.e., *Fringe seasons 1-3 recap (fanmade)* by Megatrix96²⁸, a video recap; *Fringe Timeline Infographic* by anderssondavid1²⁹, an infographic recap).
- Fanzines: fan-made magazines featuring discussions of fannish topics and recaps of fan fiction anthologies.
- Subbing: translating and making subtitles (i.e., Fringe – Promo 5x02 "In Absentia" [Subtítulos en Español] by Fringe Latino³⁰, a promo clip subbed in Spanish).

After the digitalisation process

- Wikis: collaborative encyclopaedias (i.e., Fringepedia.net³¹).
- Transmedia narrative strategies applied to fanworks

After having reviewed the main TUGC in fiction or fanworks, let's start the proper textual analysis of one of these productions. If semiotics and narratology have proven to be reliable tools for understanding transmedia narrative universes (Scolari et al., 2012, 2013a), it's time to apply them to the study of fan fiction. To elaborate the theoretical basis of the study, on a first level, we followed the work of Greimas and Courtés (1982) and Eco (1979) from semiotics and the work of Genette (1997) and Chatman (1978) from narratology. On a second level, these classic contributions were afterwards complemented with the approaches developed in Osservatorio sulla fiction smart serials (2010) and Scolari (2013a) and to build an eight-part analysis model adapted to any kind of fanwork. Among the aspects observed in this model are: general identification of the fanwork (title, author, type, fandom...); area of the storyworld where the fanwork operates; transmedia format; characters; evolution of the narrative programmes in the fanwork compared to the source; genre fidelity, hybridisation or substitution between the fanwork and the source; featured themes; and transmedia narrative strategies. This model was tested on a representative sample of 94 Fringe fan fictions, written in English and posted

- 30 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJDJxn1lwUo (accessed 20 December 2015).
- 31 See note 10.

²⁰ Full recording (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJjQGfqoDqM) and lyrics (http://www.ovff.org/pegasus/songs/banned-from-argo.html) to Leslie Fisher's *Banned from Argo* (accessed 20 December 2015).

²¹ http://ontd-startrek.livejournal.com/1043908.html (accessed 20 December 2015).

²² http://bakerhood.tumblr.com/post/81302542152/fringe-observer-cosplay-atemerald-city-comicon (accessed 20 December 2015).

²⁸ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2HDclRqMCRs (accessed 20 December 2015).

²⁹ http://anderssondavid1.deviantart.com/art/Fringe-Timeline-

Infographic-350541948 (accessed 20 December 2015).

on ArchiveOfOurOwn.org between 1 September 2009 and 31 May 2013. In order to select them, a twelve-month participant observation in six *Fringe* forums and fan fiction communities was conducted between 1 June 2012 and 31 May 2013³².

For reasons of space and relevance, out of all the mentioned aspects and sample of fan fiction works, we will focus just on transmedia strategies and the area of the storyworld applied to three fanfics: *Synaptic, This Charming Man* and *Choke Chain 'verse*. Additionally, the main motive for focusing the in-depth analysis on fan fiction and not on other TUGC was, on one hand, its status as the oldest fan practice studied from a transmedia storytelling perspective and, on the other hand, the apparent lack of creative and technical barriers fan fiction provides to the potential fan writer.

3.1. On how fandom reshapes transmedia narrative strategies

3.1.1. Dimensional expansion and shifting

Scolari (2013a) has already discussed the issue of transmedia narrative strategies drawing on classical rhetorical operations—see Table 1. For example, we could say that *Fringe seasons* 1-3 *recap* (*fanmade*) is an *omission* that the fan Megatrix96 performed on the first three seasons of the main text, the TV series, whereas a prequel like *The Zodiac Paradox* novel is an example of *addition* to the main text.

Addition	Operation based on the expansion of elements in a text.
Omission	Operation in which items are removed from a text.
Transposition	Operation based on changing the order of elements in a text.
Permutation	Operation in which items are substituted in a text.

△ **TABLE 1.** TRANSMEDIA STRATEGIES BASED ON CLASSICAL RHETORICAL OPERATIONS (ADAPTED FROM SCOLARI 2013A)

32 http://fringe-forum.com, http://fringe-olivia.livejournal.com, http:// fringefiction.livejournal.com, http://fringe-tv.livejournal.com, http://cortexifans. livejournal.com, http://fringetv-at-dw.dreamwidth.org (accessed 14 September 2016). At first sight lullebel's fan fiction, *Synaptic*³³, can also be considered as an addition if we stick to this rhetorical approach. In fact, the fanfic's summary reads:

Future-fic. Peter's got Olivia back from Mr. Secretary. She's back in the right half of the universe and the side effects of interdimensional travel are hitting her a little harder and faster than they did before.

However, if we look inside this fanfic, we realise that the issue is a bit more complex than adding a new chapter to the main story. In its form it is indeed an addition to the narrative as it is located in time after the Fringe season 2 finale; thus it expands the timeline, although the events told in the fanfic do not entirely fit with the timeline and facts of the official storyworld depicted in the series. By the time season 3 premiered, the death of Olivia Dunham in Synaptic had already contradicted the events of the main text—Olivia obviously survives. In this apparently paradoxical narrative scenario it is necessary to go back to Scolari's first proposal of strategies (expansion, compression and parody) based on the manipulation of the basic narrative elements of time, space and characters (2013a: 15) to find some answers. Based on this model rooted in Greimas' discursive structures (temporalisation, spatialisation and actorialisation) (1982), I have retrieved the Greimasian concept of actor³⁴ instead of character, added more explanation to the strategies, and substituted the strategy of parody with *shifting* because not all the fanworks end up being parodic after permutation is applied. Parody, therefore, it is a consequence of the strategy, not the strategy itself.

As shifting always involves a change of the original genre in the end, *Synaptic* would not fall into this category because it is still sci-fi like the source text or hypotext. Moreover, it stills adheres to the *Fringe* storyworld and expands its timeline. However, it does alter the fate of a main character. So, could it be an example of shifting after all? Yes and no. In fact, we can see a genuine fandom-bred hybrid strategy here. On one hand, there is an actorial shifting that does not affect the genre of the resulting hypertext, and on the other hand, there is a temporal expansion. TUGCs like *Synaptic* are a prime ex-

³³ http://archiveofourown.org/works/109773 (accessed 20 December 2015).

^{34 &}quot;An actor may be **individual** (for example, Peter), or **collective** (for example, a crowd), **figurative** (anthropomorphic or zoomorphic), or **non-figurative** (for example, fate)" (Greimas and Courtés 1982: 7).

PARATEXTS, FANDOMS AND THE PERSISTENCE OF TWIN PEAKS

NARRATIVE / AESTHETIC / CRITICISM > MAR GUERRERO-PICO

DIMENSIONAL EXPANSIONS AND SHIFTINGS: FAN FICTION AND TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING THE FRINGEVERSE

	Temporal	Strategy in which there is an extension of the timeline of a hypotext by adding past, ongoing and future events.
Expansion	Spatial	Strategy based on increasing the locations where a hypotext takes place.
	Actorial	Strategy in which there is an expansion in the current actors' narrative programmes, an introduction of new actors, or an upgrade in the secondary actors' narrative programmes.
Compression	Temporal	Strategy in which there is a contraction in the timeline, or an alternative reorganization of the events presented by a hypotext.
	Spatial	Strategy based on decreasing the locations where a hypotext takes place.
	Actorial	Strategy in which there is a decrease in the number of actors featured in a hypotext or their narrative relevance is decreased.
Shifting	Temporal	Strategy based on the transformation or mix of the timeline within an hypotext–or several–in order to accomplish a hypertext than can be associated with a genre tradition distinct from the source material.
	Spatial	Strategy in which there is an alteration or mix of the locations within a hypotext–or several–so that the hypertext cannot be categorised in the same genre tradition as the source material.
	Actorial	Strategy based on the shift or mix of the actors' narrative programmes within a hypotext–or several–in order to obtain a hypotext that can be associated with a genre tradition distinct from the source material.

△ TABLE 2. TRANSMEDIA STRATEGIES BASED ON EXPANSION, COMPRESSION AND SHIFTING OF DISCURSIVE STRUCTURES (TIME, SPACE AND ACTORS)

ample of dimensional expansion (shifting + expansion): a hybrid transmedia narrative strategy based on the moderate alteration or mix of some of the elements (time, space and actors) that constitute the diegetic world in a hypotext—or several—or of the events depicted in it, but at the same time expanding the hypotext timeline and keeping its diegesis and genre tradition recognisable. Dimensional expansions lead to the creation of fanworks based on contextualised alternate universes (see Section 3.2) or crossovers that make up the diegesis of two or more different hypotexts aligning with the original genre of at least one of the diegetic worlds in the mix, as seen in The Red Balloon by syllogismos³⁵ who builds a bridge between Sherlock (BBC One, 2010-) and Fringe. Genre is completely unaltered in this piece where the FOX series provides the setting to Sherlock's expansion as Holmes and Watson join the Fringe Division in New York to help them solve the case featured in the episode "Bad Dreams" (1.17).

3.1.2. Genette fandomised

So far the textual study of TUGC has allowed us to enhance the transmedia narrative strategies adding two hybrid possibilities, but there is still more room to identify more ways transmedia storytelling, in general, and TUGC, in particular, might unfold. In this sense, Genette's comprehensive insight into hypertextuality through literary transformations³⁶ (1997) becomes an indispensable reference. Although they are thought for a monomedia environment, many of Genette's categories can be applied to transmedia hypertextual relations like the ones between Fringe, its extensions and the fanworks related to the franchise. However, this does not mean that these categories are definitive and don't admit any sort of revision, summarisation or further development when confronted either with the mutable transmedia textualities or other theoretical approaches on the same matter—see Table 3. For instance, it would be appropriate to extend the Genettian concept of transmodalisation (one of the called formal transpositions) to something beyond the transition between the narrative and dramatic mode to include any transformation in terms of medium, language or platform. Any transmedia product derived from a previous one is, by default, a product of transmodalisation.

As it is not the purpose of this article to make a complete study of Genette's categories, I would like to draw attention to *supplement*, *diegetic transposition*, *parody*, *travesty*

³⁵ http://www.archiveofourown.org/works/808562 (accessed the 29 March 2015)

³⁶ In Genette (1997) hypertextuality can adopt two basic types, *imitation* and *transformation*, which take place on three different functional levels or regimes: *playful, satiric* and *serious*. This article is focused on transformations.

PARATEXTS, FANDOMS AND THE PERSISTENCE OF TWIN PEAKS

NARRATIVE / AESTHETIC / CRITICISM > MAR GUERRERO-PICO

DIMENSIONAL EXPANSIONS AND SHIFTINGS: FAN FICTION AND TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING THE FRINGEVERSE

Diegetic transposition	Transformation that impacts the diegesis-"the world wherein the story occurs"-presented by a hypotext; therefore, basic aspects of the story may change, such as its original "spatiotemporal framework" and characters' nationalities, genders or sociocultural backgrounds. At the same time, these kinds of diegetic conversions can also modify the action that occurs in the hypotext (1997: 294-296).	
Transmotivation	Transformation that consists of the substitution of a motive, either by adding a new one that didn't exist in the hypotext (<i>vation</i>) or removing an existing one (<i>demotivation</i>).	
Transvaluation	Transformation of "an axiological nature bearing on the value that is implicitly or explicitly assigned to () the sequence of actions, attitudes and feelings that constitute a "character"" (1997: 343). This can be achieved through two different operations: <i>revaluation</i> - making a character more "attractive" in the value system of the hypertext than in the hypotext, or just boosting its narrative relevance – and <i>devaluation</i> – the opposite movement.	
Supplement	"Transposition in the shape of a continuation" (1997: 377). The hypotext is just the starting point of "an extrapolation disguised as an interpolation" (1997: 202).	
Parody	"Distortion" of a hypotext through a minimal and semantic transformation (1997: 25-27).	
Travesty	Stylistic transformation "whose function is to debase" a hypotext (1997: 25).	

△ TABLE 3. HYPERTEXTUAL TRANSFORMATIONS (EXCERPT ADAPTED FROM GENETTE 1997)

and *transmotivation* and *transvaluation*³⁷ –-see Table 3--to discover the traces of these categories found in a good number of bottom-up contents. Firstly, supplement is very commonly found in fan fiction: for example *Synaptic*, which is written in the aftermath of a *Fringe* episode and resolves the cliffhanger; or fan art in the form of comics unravelling the next instalment of a story during times of production hiatus. Following Genette's lead, these productions appear to be examples of *continuation*³⁸, but even if they succeed in being faithful to the hypotext's canon³⁹, either by maintaining characters' traits or the original atmosphere, they eventually turn out to be essentially pragmatic⁴⁰, or even diegetic, transpositions because the hypotext follows its own course or the fan has deliberately changed some key facts. Supplement, thus, mirrors the dimensional expansion strategy described in Section 3.1.

Secondly, Genette provides a quite broad definition for diegetic transpositions which might involve operations of time, space or actor shifting or, conversely, operations that respect the hypotext diegetic coordinates and apply the changes only to formal or motivational aspects, but he does not specifically comment on genre. For example, This Charming Man by spy barbie⁴¹ features an explicit sexual relationship between Fringe's Peter Bishop and Alternate Lincoln Lee, who meet at a bar after a tough day working at the Fringe Division. The diegetic world of this slash one shot is located in canon-as it expands the hypotext's timeline and its diegetic setting--, but the writer introduces a change in the actors' motives-a homosexual attraction-, in other words, there is an actorial shift affecting the narrative programmes and actantial rolesthe subject Peter wants the object Lincoln, and vice versa—, which, at the same time, triggers a shift in the thematic hierarchy of the diegesis, degrading a canonical theme, like the existence of a parallel universe within the canonical diegesis,

³⁷ Transformation of "an axiological nature bearing on the value that is implicitly or explicitly assigned to [...] the sequence of actions, attitudes and feelings that constitute a DcharacterD" (1997: 343). This can be achieved through two different operations: *revaluation* - making a character more "attractive" in the value system of the hypertext than in the hypotext, or just boosting its narrative relevance – and *devaluation* – the opposite movement.

³⁸ Genette makes a distinction between the concepts of *continuation* and *sequel* based on two aspects. First, on the authorship of the work drawing from D'Alambert's *Dictionnaire des synonymes*: "One may write the continuation of someone else's work and the sequel to one's own" (1997: 161). Second, on the motivations bringing about the work: "When a work is left unfinished for reasons of the death of its author or any other cause of final abandonment, *continuation* consists in finishing the work in the author's stead, and can only be the work of another. The *sequel* performs an entirely different function, which in general consists in exploiting the success of a work (...), and in setting it into motion again with new episodes" (1997: 162).

³⁹ As mentioned in Hellekson and Busse (2006) on fan fiction, fans value the fan creators' skill in capturing the essence of the object of fandom and transmitting it in their works.

⁴⁰ A pragmatic transposition is a transformation that alters the course of events and action in an original plot. It is an "unavoidable consequence" of transdiegetisation, so its autonomy can be considered as "much more restricted" than that of the former (1997: 311).

⁴¹ http://archiveofourown.org/works/214773?view_adult=true **(accessed 21 December 2015)**.

and promoting a new theme such as homosexual desire. Thus, a substitution of the hypotext's original genre is generated, as science fiction is replaced by erotica in the fic's hypertext. In light of *This Charming Man*'s example, we must remark that the issue of genre transformation in the Genette's work is framed from the beginning in a clear distinction between serious and non-serious texts, which is attached to Aristotle's views on poetics⁴². So, the only generic transformations acknowledged here, *parody* and *travesty*, are related to non-serious genres. Even in this case, the semantic differences between them are blurry, and they can come to be used as synonyms over the course of time (Fernández Bueno, 2002).

Thirdly, and keeping *This Charming Man*'s example, we have just seen how transmotivation (motivation and demotivation) is implicit in operations of actorial shifting, so that any permutation in narrative programmes may alter the actor' motives to perform a specific action. Finally, transvaluation (revaluation and devaluation) lies behind examples of actorial expansion and compression such as spin-off-like fanfics about a specific character (e.g., *The Things I See Before Me* by crazylittleelf⁴³, centred on the alternate version of Astrid Fainsworth, Walter Bishop's assistant) or, stepping onto fan vid territory, a recap consisting only of Olivia and Peter's romantic narrative arc (e.g., *Peter & Olivia – The Kisses [Up to Season 3]* by AngelMoonGirl⁴⁴).

3.2. Canon and fanon: areas of a storyworld

Keeping in mind the origin of transmedia content discussed in Section 1.1., it's easier to understand the area of the *Fringe* storyworld a fan would choose as a reference point for their creations, establishing a transfictional link (Sant-Gelais cited in Ryan, 2008) with it ⁴⁵. Top-down contents equal *canon*, the

44 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yiwVi4gqjYo (accessed 21 December 2015).

official narrative universe formed by the television series and all its transmedia extensions. A fan may choose to set their work in this context and expand it without introducing any contradictory elements to the canonical events, settings or characterisations. So, bottom-up contents may align with the canon, but there is still much more to it than that. Drawing on the canon, a fan could also opt to create their own possible world (Eco, 1979), what if scenario, or alternate universe (AU) of Fringe, dimensionally expanding or shifting time, locations and characters. Let's go further. Instead of taking the canon as a reference, a fan might pick another fan's AU version and start from there, definitively leaving the canon behind. This is the case of work by the Fringe fans Chichuri and crazylittleelf. Chichuri created a seven-part alternate universe fan fiction called *Choke Chain 'verse*⁴⁶ in which Olivia, Peter and Nick Lane (a recurrent character in the canon related to Olivia's childhood) work as soldiers for the ZFT (the terrorist organisation responsible for The Pattern events in the first season of the series), which had recruited them when they were little. Crazylittleeelf expanded and enriched Chichuri's AU with Ways and Means⁴⁷, a collection of 29 fanfics set in the Choke Chain 'verse. Therefore, AU versions can produce hypertextual relations that, put together, form a *shared universe*. Shared universes are made of bottom-to-bottom contents and constitute the best example of how fanon evolves. Busse and Hellekson (2006: 9) define fanon as "the events created by the fan community in a particular fandom and repeated pervasively throughout the fantext. Fanon often creates particular details or character readings even though canon does not fully support it". Thus, we can affirm that fanon is born in AUs and spreads through shared universes.

To address the origin of fanon and shared universes with as much detail as possible, during the analysis we propose differentiating between a *contextualised alternate universe (CAU)* and a *pure alternate universe (PAU)*—see Figure 2. CAUs set divergent narrative possibilities starting at a specific point in the canon but without breaking free from the original diegetic world; for example, an alternate ending video to an episode or a fanfic that dismisses a pivotal fact in the canon, such as the death of a main character. In this sense, CAUs are intimately linked to the use of dimensional expansion strategies. PAUs, on the other hand, work as the complete opposite, placing the characters and their basic canonical characterisation in a diegesis that has nothing to do

^{42 &}quot;Aristotle, who defined poetry as a representation in verse of human actions, immediately opposed two types of actions, distinguished by the level of their moral and/or social dignity as high and low, and by two modes of representation as narrative and dramatic. The intersection of those two oppositions determines a four-part grid that constitutes the Aristotelian system of poetic genres properly speaking: high action in the dramatic mode—tragedy; high action in the narrative mode—the epic; low action in the dramatic mode—the comedy. As for low action in the narrative mode, that is illustrated only by allusive references to works that are more or less directly designated under the term *parodia*" (Genette, 1997: 10).

⁴³ http://archiveofourown.org/works/101943 (accessed 21 December 2015).

⁴⁵ As Saint-Gelais (cited in Ryan 2008, p. 386) notes, "the concept of transfictionality covers those practices that expand fiction beyond the boundaries of the work: sequels and continuations, return of the protagonists, biographies of characters, cycles and series, "shared universes", etc".

⁴⁶ http://archiveofourown.org/series/851 (accessed 21 December 2015)

⁴⁷ http://archiveofourown.org/series/617 (accessed 21 December 2015)



FIGURE 2. AREAS OF THE STORYWORLD

with the original one. Though it is by no means a fanwork, the episode "Brown Betty" (2.19) could be considered, in its steampunk setting and musical script, an allegoric PAU of Walter and Olivia's search for Peter, who'd run away in the previous episode after learning Walter stole him from the parallel universe when he was eight years old. The application of *shifting* strategies is probably behind the creation of many PAU stories in fandom.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Should transmedia user-generated contents (TUGC) in fiction or in any other context continue to be left to themselves when it comes to transmedia storytelling research? TUGC are recognised as a basic component of any transmedia narrative universe but because of their transformative nature— a circumstance that greatly hinders the task of categorising them—they tend to be neglected in the researchers' agenda. TUGC appears to be a big black-hole category next to the always more detailed top-down systems, but if we dare to look into them maybe we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of how transmedia storytelling works and, in this sense, how the fans/users/readers' interpretations of texts become something so tangible that they affect the original narratives they come from—with increasing consent from the cultural industries as they jump onto the bandwagon of transmedia production. After all, transmedia storytelling, with its emphasis on user participation and, therefore, co-creation, is the vehicle that has made Eco's idea of "open text" (1979) more open than ever: "the authority of the canon has steadily diminished in today's participatory media climate, and transmediality puts additional layers between the original work and the writing fan" (Leavenworth, 2011). Or as Busse and Hellekson (2006: 6) put it: "the open-text source in particular invites fan fiction as an expansion to the source universe and as interpretative fan engagement where the fan not only analyzes the text but also must constantly renegotiate her analyses".

Aware that the taxonomies we have presented in this article are not irrefutable, the use of a combined perspective in the case study of the fanworks from the *Fringe* franchise has permitted, on one level, to continue to test the reliability of classic methods for analysing transmedia narrative systems, building bridges to fan texts; and, on another level, to enhance the set of transmedia narrative strategies by adding *dimensional expansion*. With this hybrid type of expansion and *shifting* we have cleared up the mechanisms of a big part of fannish derivative works, split between fidelity to *canon* and *fanon*, which could have been generated in a *contextualised* or *pure alternate universe* version of the same storyworld.

In this work, fan fiction has taken central stage as object of analysis from among fictional TUGC; however, as we've seen above there are more practices waiting for further investigation that may help to broaden academic scope. For example, fan vid offers an interesting research playground because of the transformations the practice has undergone over recent years with the emergence of a solid remix culture (Russo and Coppa, 2012) able to mash up *Fringe* with the cheerful opening credits of the sitcom *Friends*⁴⁸. Remix formats like these are proof of how shifting strategies operate regardless of generic affiliations and styles.

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⁴⁸ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81nWbGibtYg (accessed 17 January 2015)

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