Transmedia Narrative Elements in the Universe of Batman, from Comics to Movies to Videogames; or How Intelligible and Interactive Narratives Create Convergence and Linear Narratives.

Jorge I. Mora Fernández

Senescyt’s Postdoctoral Prometheus Research Project, University of Cuenca, Ecuador.

Co-director of the CICNETART and SINAPSIS R&D Research Groups.

Funding

This research has been funded as part of the Prometheus Research Program by SENESCYT & the DIUC, at Universidad de Cuenca, Ecuador.
Title: Transmedia Narrative Elements in the Universe of Batman, from Comics to Videogames, or How Intelligible and Interactive Narratives Create Convergence and Linear Narratives.

Abstract: The term transmedia was initially used by Marsha Kinder (1991:40) to refer to the intertextuality among films, animation, TV series and toys for children. Henry Jenkins also participated with a chapter on that publication that he later on developed farther as the term “narrative transmedia” on Media Convergence (2006) and more recently on http://henryjenkins.org (2007, 2011,2013). The present research analyzes the application of narrative elements and media characteristics used for generating independent, edutainment transmedia products, and an analysis of the Batman’s universe generated by its comics, films, webs, fans video, and videogames. The goal was to develop a transmedia original model of analysis to study and conclude how the narrative elements of the actions, characters, spaces and times are converged with coherence and intelligibility to generate the Batman Universe; and how they engage the fans to generate emerging linear and circular interactive narratives.

Keywords: interactive linearity, transmedia narrative, convergence, digital culture and edutainment.
1. Introduction: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework of Transmedia Narrative

The current research analyzes the use of transmedia narratives focused on the successful media case: The Batman Universe. The motivation of this research is to study how the narrative actions, characters, spaces, and times have been developed at a transmedia level to apply these elements to the design and the creation of edutainment products.


The transmedia concept was initially used by Marsha Kinder (1991:40) referring to the transmediatic intertextuality. However, Henry Jenkins is the one who popularized the transmedia narrative term. He describes in his blog http://henryjenkins.org/ Transmedia Storytelling 202 (2011) as:

“Transmedia storytelling represents 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. Ideally, each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story.”

Previously, Jenkins described in his book Convergence Culture (2006) the concept of convergence as a paradigm for thinking about the present moment of the media change, defined by the stratification, diversification, and interconnection of the media in a converged way influencing decisions of the media producers, politicians, and citizens on the production and consumption of the digital culture.

Currently and because of the recent communicative and cultural practices, Jenkins evolves from the convergence concept to the transmedia term (2011):
“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. We might also think about transmedia branding, transmedia performance, transmedia ritual, transmedia play, transmedia activism, and transmedia spectacle, as other logics.”

In this regard, the transmedia narrative generates a universe of lineal and/or circular possibilities where the stories start and finish with a feedback, experimented at the same time. The linearity of the interactivity in this regard is understood as the coherent, communicative, immersive, and multilevel flow: aesthetic, narrative, and emotional, Mora (2013).

1.2. Concepts of Immersion, Types of Interaction, and Agency

The transmedia narratives are interactive because they need the participation of the spectator, compiling information from different medias. That is how immersion and agency are generated, because the narrative content must be attractive for the spectator to become a “read-author”, concept by Moreno (2002) to refer to the exchange of roles between reader and author, while he is looking for narrative spaces of disseminated contents in different media. According Mateas & Murray (2004): “Immersion is the feeling of being present in another place and engaged in the action therein. Immersion is related to Coleridge’s “willing suspension of disbelief” when a participant is immersed in an experience.”

While integrating a new concept with the types of interaction that Mora (2009) points out, immersion is described as:

“…the identification and responsibility that the user feels about the development of the narrative actions and the process that the character experiments when the user is able to intercede through an interface with the forms and narrative structures, thanks to the different kinds of interaction (selective, transformative, and constructive) that the hypermedia expression offers.”
In relation to the concept of Agency, Murray, J. (2012) remarks:

“Agency is defined as an aesthetic pleasure characteristic of digital environments, which results from the well-formed exploitation of the procedural and participatory properties. When the behavior of the computer is coherent and the results of participation are clear and well motivated, the person experiments the pleasure of agency” “…agency could be intensified through a dramatic effect”

1.3. Concepts related with “Narrative Paradox”: AAD, Narrative Intelligibility and Narrative Closure

The previous and present narrative concepts must be taken into consideration at the time of integrating the elements of a transmedia story. That is how the production of the phenomena can be analyzed to obtain the transmedia communicative immersion by the combination of narrative spaces, times, actions, characters, and the types of interaction that allow the access to the media in which they are diffused. The “narrative paradox” is described from the perspective of Bruni L.E (2013):

“With the advent of new media and its possibilities for interactivity in the generation and reception of narrative structures, the issue of "narrative paradox" arises, in which the relationship between authorship and interactivity is seen as being inversely proportional… ...The paradox arises in all its implications with the "empowering" possibilities of digital media and presupposes an ideal of "emancipating" the audience from the "tyranny" of the author.”

Regarding to the encyclopedic nature, comic series, TV and cinema, made by diverse authors in the Batman Universe, has the narrative paradox, since several authors create them. It also offers possibilities to the audience to have access to the contents, exchange information, and generate new ones, while experimenting the diverse worlds of the Batman Universe from different orders and perspectives.
Obviously, the access to the contents of the different media, through narrative strategies and digital marketing, also influences the audience experience. For example, if someone acquires a digital comic by Kindle it cannot be shared with other as a physical comic. If a person acquires a DVD with the complete TV show he will experience it without interruptions, it is not the same as the person that experiments every week the emission of the show episode and seeks to share his/her opinion about the experience and even influence future scripts through comments in blogs.

Another concept necessary to describe and observe to understand how the projects intend to solve the “narrative paradox” is the AAD. According to Bruni (2013):

“… Author-Audience Distance (AAD) is a function of “narrative intelligibility”… … We refer here to this interpretation gap as de AAD… … the continuum that goes from complete aberrant decoding to the perfect reception of the preferential decoding… … between author and audience”

Within the transmedia, the AAD is achieved because the author follows the narrative strategy of approaching the previously created universe and best known by the fans, through observing their inputs in the webs and creations, in order for his artwork to be full of recognizable narrative elements that contribute with new meanings to the already existent elements.

Another important concept is narrative intelligibility, Bruni y Baceviciute (2013): “…the process in which the audience receives or generate meaning in a way that is close to what is intended, desired or expected by the author… … i.e. the fidelity of the transmission, or how close the AAD.” In this regard, at the transmedia level, the handling of the elements of the narrative actions and the characteristics of the characters allows the authors and the audience to use the same codes and rules of the narrative structures.

Another important concept is the narrative closure, by Bruni and Baceviciute (2013): “...the process where the audience may construct its own meaning out of what is being mediated,
independent on whether that meaning corresponds or gets close to what is intended by the author...”

To provide an interactive dynamic between authors and audiences to the intelligibility and closure it’s also important the concept of emergent narratives taken from Jenkins’ definitions (2006) and described by Bevensee y Schoenay-Fog (2013) as: “… material through a rich environment and intelligent characters, with which the user is able to associate, interpret, and ultimately construct his/her own understanding of the story.”

2. Goals, Research Questions and Hypothesis

The present research analyzes how the transmedia narrative is generated by the use of narrative elements and successful media products to be used in independent communicative products in edutainment. The present article is concentrated in the transmedia narrative analysis of the universe created by the Batman comics, movies, and videogames. The main objective is the study of how the narrative elements of the actions, characters, spaces, and times converge coherently and intelligibly creating linear and circular interactive transmedia narratives.

The fundamental question of this research is: What are the processes of creating combinations and structures with the narrative characters, actions, spaces and times that generate more interaction and communicative participation in the receptors? Later on, other questions appeared such as: What narrative elements the creators and transmedia storytellers use, based on the pre-existent narratives, to generate new feedbacks to the previous ones?

The principal hypothesis is that the use of the secondary actions that denote extraordinary abilities, with complex and original main and secondary characters, that contribute to the
resolution of the main action in dramatic moments and in original, although recognizable, scenarios and that have a new mix of narrative elements, generates convergence and intelligibility in the transmedia narrative.

3. Methodology

3.1 Transmedia Narrative Characteristics and the Delimitation of the Object of Study

Intuitively, the Batman Universe is considered rich enough in its multimedia expression: comics, TV, animated shows, movies, videogames, toys, etc. First, it was confirmed that the Batman Universe meets the transmedia characteristics that Jenkins (2007) mentions:

1) “The elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels.” The Batman narrative Universe is materialized by the orbits of the: comic, TV, animated shows, movies, videogames, toys, etc.

2) Transmedia storytelling reflects the economics of media consolidation or what industry observers call “synergy.” Batman has several clear examples, such as the campaign http://www.whysoserious.com (2008) of alternative reality game and the release of the comic Batman Begins (2008), developed before the release of the movie The Dark Knight (2009). Both cases helped to feed the Batman Universe, one centered in the antagonist Joker through Internet and the participative game of alternative reality for the fans, and the other one based on a preview of the movie in the original comic media where Batman arouse.
http://www.whysoserious.com became a viral marketing campaign, see http://youtu.be/VpuC7HhCPWA.

3) Transmedia narratives are encyclopedic, they are not only based on individual characters or specific plots, but rather complex fictional worlds in which they can sustain multiple interrelated characters and their stories. This is the case of the Batman Universe where alternative Batmans, Robins, and Catwoman have their own comic series, animation series or movies while interacting between their narratives.

4) The different transmedia narratives can be extensions that may serve a variety of different communicative and marketing functions. The length can provide intuitive information about the characters and their motivations. The narrative length of videogames, comics based on movies, role games, toys, etc., helps the audience to feedback the release of a new adventure in another media. For example, the animated version of *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* (2012) in his final confrontation against Superman helps to feed the expectancy of the movie Superman-Batman at the time both comics proliferate, as well as the fan’s jokes. This is the case of the viral video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYpaL5CmDTM (2008), with 5,275,923 views. “Why so serious” an alternative reality game that had the participation of multiple fans in a multitudinous context of the Comic-Con, with 10 millions participants in 75 cities through webs, interactive games, cell phones, events, videos and collectibles. This innovative advertisement, plus the traditional one, hugely helped the selling of all tickets for *The Dark Knight* premiere, the highest box office of all times, and also the highest collector of that year.

5) Transmedia storytelling practices may expand the potential market for a property by creating different points of entry for different audience segments. In the Batman narrative Universe, the access to different audiences is facilitated, the movies conduct to the comics,
comics to videogames, and videogames to the generation of machinima movies made by fans that motivate the movies and vice versa. This research accessed to the Batman narrative Universe through the movies *The Dark Knight*, by Nolan, and the animated shows based on the comic *Batman: The Dark Knight Return* (1986) by Miller.

6) Jenkins (2007) continues saying that “Each individual episode must be accessible on its own terms even as it makes a unique contribution to the narrative system as a whole. Game designer Neil Young coined the term, “additive comprehension,” to refer to the ways that each new texts adds a new piece of information which forces us to revise our understanding of the fiction as a whole” Jenkins (2007). For example, the narrative of the story about the past of Taila and Bane is something that is shown originally in the movie *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012) that is not explicit in the previous media, giving them a new relationship and past, a new parallel world in the Batman Universe.

7) “Transmedia storytelling requires a high degree of coordination across the different media sectors, in projects where strong collaboration (or co-creation) is encouraged across the different divisions of the same company which involves conceiving the property in transmedia terms from the outset”. In this regard, important directors as Nolan, from the independent films, have succeeded in the Transmedia production. As well as the re-edition and remix of the narrative elements in his famous movie *Memento*, that is how he remixed pre-existent narratives to generate new and original ones in his Batman trilogy. The remix culture creates and feedbacks stories in other media.

8) Transmedia storytelling is the ideal aesthetic for an era of collective intelligence. Consumers become hunters and gatherers moving back across the various narratives trying to stitch together a coherent picture from the dispersed information.
The present research studies how transmedia narratives are generated in the Batman Universe for its exploration by the collective intelligence, in words of Hayles and highlighted by Kinder (2014), “…clarity about the functions of different media is now more crucial than ever.”

9) “A transmedia text does not simply disperse information: it provides a set of roles and goals which readers can assume as they enact aspects of the story through their everyday life,” Jenkins (2007). The Lego action figures of Batman have motivated the creation of popular videogames that are developed in several platforms such as Wii PS2, PS3, etc. Based on different videogames, first the fans, and later the Warner Bros Interactive, created a machinema movie, www.youtube.com/watch?v?=vyD70Huufco

10) “The encyclopedic ambitions of transmedia texts often results in what might be seen as gaps or excesses incentive to continue to elaborate on these story elements, working them over through their speculations, until they take on a life of their own” Jenkins (2007). Those fan videos in YouTube speculate about the plot of the currently filming Superman-Batman movie; comics influence those narrative proposals where Superman and Batman interact, as in *Absolute Power, Hush* and *The Dark Knight Returns*... The fans are included in the movie sequences of movies like *The Dark Knight* that include as characters the Batman cosplayers, with the bad luck of falling into the Joker’s hands who wouldn’t spare their lives until Batman reveals his real identity. This continuous dialogue and competence between Batman and Joker’s fans appeared in the previous interactive campaign, www.whysoserious.com. that generated a Joker-fans recruit. The denominated *cosplayers*, are fans dressed as their heroes that interact with others in festivals, releases, or related events, within the sub-culture of the role games. All these narrative interactions can be denominated as “interactive linearity”, where the accessible narrative Batman
worlds complement each other with thematic coherence and intelligibility, in addition to the premiere, Images 1, 3 and 4.

Image 1. The character and story is in the center no the media or technology. (Source: Concept by Jorge Mora with images from Warner Bros. and D.C Comics Copyrights)
3.2 Other Important Digital Culture Concepts for the Study and Analysis of Transmedia Narratives

Jenkins, in a current expansion of his transmedia narrative description, posted in his blog “Transmedia 202: Further Reflections” (2011), points out the importance of distinguishing between adaptation and extension. “The adaptation takes the same story from one medium and retells it in another. Most transmedia content serves one or more of the following functions: 1) Offers backstory 2) Maps the World 3) Offers us other character’s perspectives on the action 4) Deepens audience engagement.”

This research also takes the Remix Theory concept developed by Eduardo Navas in *Remix Culture* (2012), who argues that “Remix, as a form of discourse, affects culture in ways that go beyond the basic recombination of material.” The concept of remix is fundamental, because it integrates the convergence and the intelligibility concept, and describes how transmedia narratives and the interactive linearity are generated. So, the narrative extension becomes an original and innovative remix that emerges from the new media narrative that didn’t exist before.

The remix theory connects with the “collective intelligence” of Pierre Levy, with Kinder’s (2014) *database narratives*, and with Manovich’s *Soft Cinema* (2005), in the fact that there are studies about the functions of the different media and its historic-cultural combination about the dynamics in the transmedia networks. Moreover, the work of Steve Anderson (2011) *Technologies of History* underlines:

“One answer may be found in the movement toward recombinant or “database histories”- that is, histories comprised of not narratives that describe an experience of the
past but rather collections of infinitely retrievable fragments, situated within categories and
organized according to the predetermined associations. These collections in turn offer users,
whether they are artists, gamers, or geeks, both the materials and structures by which the
past may be conceived as fundamentally mutable and reconfigurable.”

Anderson’s observations are not applicable to the construction of fiction transmedia
narratives, because the recombination abilities are, Manovich in *The Language of New
Media* (2001), the ones that allow the dialogue and externalization of Levy’s media
“collective intelligence”. With all, the transmedia narrative reveals the ways of thinking of
the contemporary collective intelligence.

Because of the complexity of the object of study, it was decided to do a multimedia
content analysis of the transmedia narrative. So, the findings and conclusions serve to be
applied in educative transmedia narratives, and for the construction of logics for the new
generations reflection.

4. Model of Analysis for Transmedia Narratives

The model proposed is based and synthesized on some previous ones by the author
Mora (2009) and (2013), intending, in a technique way, to analyze the original aesthetic and
narrative elements that integrated generate immersion in the transmedia creations. It is
related with a de-constructivist model of creation within the organizational logics that the
authors and media companies developed in their artworks and productions, and that there
were used to transmit the transmedia narrative to the public. The model procures to describe
the relationship among the expressive, narrative, emotional, and values elements that
generate a multisensory immersion, emotional and (intellectual) narrative. The description of these logical narrative logarithms could help also to be integrated in future edutainment transmedia.

To go deeper into the logic about the transmedia combination of the narrative elements (spaces, times, actions, and characters), and the values communicated through diverse media, it was generated a model of transmedia comparative analysis of the Batman Universe, Figure 1. This observes and integrates the characteristics indicated by Jenkins (2006-2011), as well as the distinctive of each media, that Christine Weitbrecht pointed out in her presentation at the TEC of Monterrey, in 2013: computer=information; TV=LIVE/series; mobile systems=interaction; cinema=action; videogame=immersion; book=description, Image 2.

Image 2. The story is in the middle of the technological functions of each media at its service. Design by C. Weitrecht
5. Application of the Model of Analysis to the Object of Study

Because of the encyclopedic nature of the Batman Universe, it was necessary to select an access point and delimitation of the observation and analysis of some of its transmedia worlds, since Batman’s first appearance in *The Case of the Chemical Syndicate, Detective Comics n27*, May 1939. The *Detective Comics* Mega-Universe is expanded not only within its own universes, with the TV series as *Arrow, Smallville, Gotham City*… but also because the characters generate
other joint galaxies, as the one formed by the American Justice League (AJL) with Superman, Batman, Wonderwoman, Flash, Green Lantern, Aquaman, and Martian Manhunter. The fans expect through time the transmedia of the DC Comics’ AJL with the Avengers, part of the Marvel’s Mega-Universe.

With all, given the expectation of the Superman-Batman premiere, the research accessed to the Batman Universe through the movies: Batman Begins (2005), The Dark Knight (2009), and The Dark Knight Rises (2012) by Nolan, Image 3, because of his transmedia narrative that helped to inspire, to feedback, and to continue narratives at the level of comic, toys, TV series, and fan interactions through campaigns, machinemas, etc.

The relation among diverse narrative elements was observed through the type of interaction within the following comics: Batman Year 1 (1986), Batman: The Dark Knight Returns (1986), The Killing Joke (1988), The Man Who Falls (1989), Birth of the Demon (1992), The KnightFall (1993), Contagion (1996), The Long Halloween (1996), No Man’s Land (1999), Hush (2003), and Absolute Power (2005) see Image 4; as well as within the previously mentioned toys, videogames, publicity campaigns, and shows. The comparative analysis model was applied to the narrative moments where a transmedia narrative logic was produced, among one or several narrative elements, through a connection, link or convergent and intelligible remix that allow a clear, objective and coherent description of these relationships.
A complete Keynote presentation, with all the transmedia materials and elements that were compared and analyzed during this research, has been made available at http://www.cicnetart.org/lineas_investigacion.html. Given the great amount of information collected in the summary and discussion’s sections of findings and first general conclusions, an example of the model applied to some media is shown down below, Figure 2:
1. **Description of the Media Title and the Analyzed Narrative Sections:**


2. **Convergence, Intelligibility, and Logic of the Transmedia Narrative Remix:**

Within the climax there are three different resolutions in the meeting and love/hate relationship between Joker and Batman. In the comic *The Killing Joke*, Batman is worried about getting to the situation of killing each other, and he ends up discovering the human part of the Joker. In the comic *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* both are confronted until the death of the Joker and almost the death of Batman. In the movie *The Dark Knight*, located in the narrative time between the comics *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* y *The Killing Joke*, but, after their creation, the Joker loses the intellectual battle, started in *The Killing Joke*, where he defends the hypothesis that any person can end up as crazy as him if he/she is taken to a limit, such as the point of forcing a ship full of people to explode another to save him/herself. However, Joker wins another battle by breaking Harvey Dent’s spirit, the moral leader of the city. The animated movie *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* makes the mortal final battle more cruel than the original comic.
3. Narrative Elements Involved on the Narrative Construction:

3.1.1. Main Action: In the previously marked media 1, 2, 3 and 4 the common denominator is the final fight between Batman and Joker.

3.1.2. Secondary Actions and Resolutions: 1.0) The dialogue goes around the battle between reason and madness limits, between the destructive and constructive values, chaos and order. 1.1) The aggressive mortal fight between them is completed by Batman laughing because of the Joker’s final joke. It describes two lunatics trying to escape from a mental hospital and as one of them escapes, he encourages the other to do so helping him with his lantern light, but the other denies the help because he is afraid of the other will turn off the light in the middle of his way. 1.2) Previously the Joker intends to drive Gordon crazy by showing him pictures of his daughter fired and naked. 1.3) The elements that support the action are similar in the media 1 and 3, in both cases there is the crystal and a bar, in one case made of wood, and in the other one made of metal. 2.0) The Joker tries to make Batman to kill him through driving Batman into loosing his mind and his moral limit of not-killing. 2.1) The Joker slashes Batman several times, and he leaves the Joker paralytic to avoid his death, even if the Joker kills himself by twisting his neck completely and breaking it. 2.2) Batman is considered banned because of the Joker’s death. 2.3) Batman and Joker laugh with black humor, cynical and ironic, the first one while spiting and the second one while dying. 3.0) In the dialogue is recovered the conversation between the media 1, and the Joker affirms that they are condemn to be in that violent death dance, but he will not kill Batman because he is funny. 3.1) The Joker almost defeats Batman in the fight until the last minute. 3.2) The elements that help the secondary action of the Joker hitting Batman are similar in the media 1.3. In the case of the movie, Batman is pushed through the glass 3.3.)
The Joker laughs, frustrated because of the paradox of half winning the intellectual battle but being trapped. 3.4) At the end, Batman blames himself for killing Harvey Dent. 4.0) The Joker kills everybody in his way, even more than in the comic, forcing a violent intervention of Batman. In his dialogue, he’s thankful and expresses his love for Batman, counting all the deaths that the Joker has provoked and how he has permitted him continue living. 4.1) The situation is completed with the Joker dying by forcing his own death, twisting his neck and burst out laughing after slashing Batman several times, twisting the neck until leaving him paralytic. 4.2) Batman ends up as a banner for apparently breaking the limit of not killing, by killing the Joker.

In short, the following transmedia narrative are produced in the secondary actions of the different media 1.0), 2.0), 3.0) and 4.0) with variable tones from compassion to the psychological thriller, and violence. The 1.1), 2.1), 3.1), 4.1) are based on the aggressive fight between them, in crescendo, depending on each case, from a humoristic final to a violent, mortal one. In 1.2) and 2.2.) The Joker intends to madden and corrupt Gordon’s ethic, and in the other one, the Dent’s one. In 1.3) and 3.2) the tactics and objects of fights are similar. In 4.2) and 2.3) the secondary actions conduct to a similar resolution of leaving Batman as a banner, even if the characters dying, Joker and H.Dent on each case, are different. In all the media versions, the battle ends with the Joker’s laugh, but with variations in the tone: comedy, frustration, and cynicism.

3.2. Characters: Even if the characters are always Joker and Batman, their psychological profile of violence deepens from the media 1 to 4. Even in the case of The Dark Knight H.Dent dies by falling from a building, who survives in the comic The Knight Fall n14. In Tim Burton’s version the Joker dies by falling from the building.
3.3. **Spaces:** In the cases 1, 3 and 4, the final battle between Joker and Batman is in a fair, in *The Killing Joke* inside the tunnel or the horror train, and in the comic and animated versions of *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* the battle takes place in the tunnel of love, a metaphoric element of the passionate and violent death of the Joker. In the movie *The Dark Knight* the Joker is hanged from a building, and is rescued by Batman. This space is taken from the comic *The Knight Fall*, n14 titled *Two Faces*, in which he saves H. Dent from falling off a building, in the movie he dies in similar circumstances and is the Joker who survives.

3.4. **Times:** There is temporal continuity in 1, 2 y 3, and in number 4 there is an animated dramatic increase of the version 3. The creation of the movie *Dark Knight* is situated in the critic time between two popular comics, *The Killing Joke* that announces the death battle between Joker and Batman, with the Joker defeated and death in *Batman: The Dark Knight returns*. The confrontation is more intense in the media 1, but not as extreme as in the number 4. That is why it is a brilliant temporal placement, which invites the exploration of the different Joker-Batman relationships in their universe.

4. **Transmitted Values or Devalues:**

In all the climaxes of the analyzed media the values of chaos and order, reason and madness, innocence and corruption, life and death are communicated and in conflict. The limits between both antagonist values are narrowed from 1 to 4. Batman is increasingly closer of breaking his moral code of no killing, reinforcing the tension in a transmedia level of the comic, as well as of the animated movie.
The commitment and the sacrifice that Bruce Wayne does, as an individual and Batman, for the common welfare of the city is other of his constant values.

To honor justice, for the murder and the memory of his parents, is another value as well as the philanthropy of using his fortune to help the underprivileged of Gotham, and being technologically prepared against the crime.

5. Type of Interaction and/or Media of Access to the Narrative Universe and its Function:

The narrative interaction is transformative, because the context configuration of the relationship of the alter egos Joker/Batman widens in an emotionally complex universe. The access to the universe is in a cross-media level. Nolan places his story on the developed tensions by comic series that already have narrative logics, such as: *The Knight Fall, The Killing Joke* and *Batman: the Dark Knight Returns*. They are wisely jointed in the comic series by their creators Dixon, Nolan, Barreto, More and Miller. Finally they are taken to a superior transmedia remix by Nolan’s movies. At the same time, all the authors keep what Weaver (2012) recommends to involve even more within the transmedia narratives to the “absorptive audience”, the ones that will look for as much pieces of experience as they can absorb, in terms of temporal and time inversion, pointing out how as authors: “We have to give the audience a complete story within each medium so that they want to absorb more pieces of the story experience, not force them into a hunt for a complete story across media they may not normally use in their lives.”
6. Function that Performs within the Transmedia Narrative and How the Interactive Linearity is Generated:

Within Batman Universe the movies and comics complement each other linearity through time, giving a logic from the beginning of Batman until his retirement and reappearance. *The Killing Joke* announces a battle of life or death between Batman and Joker, but they end up laughing, in *The Dark Knight* the Joker wins the intellectual battle by breaking and madding an intact spirit, Harvey Dent, forcing Batman to be a banner in order to maintain Gotham’s hope, and in *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* the Joker’s death is confirmed, provoked by himself, what makes Batman a banner again.

Also, as Tyler suggested, the mentioned creations tell complete stories at the same time that they fulfill the function of feeding more complex contexts, such as the Joker-Batman relationship. This stratification allows the audiences to access through their easiest and most attractive media, in terms of time, money, and artistic language, and lately to invest more time and money in the story that they want to explore deeper. The new technologies, such as the computer, help to compile how an artwork from one media is related with other. In this research, the Batman movies were watched first and then the relationships of transmedia narratives were checked on the Internet to analyze the comics, videogames, publicity campaigns, *machinema*, and other materials related with Nolan’s movies. The comic and videogames’ fans can access to the Batman Universe, with a previous knowledge, and observe how the movies summarize the most interesting narrative aspects of the comics, and those give them another dimension.
6. Discussions and Summary of the Findings and First General Conclusions
(Confirmation of the Main Hypothesis and Objectives)

After the application of the analysis model to more than 25 narrative cases of the Batman Universe, it is summarized the narrative elements of spaces, times, actions, and characters that are managed at a cross-media level to articulate convergent and intelligible transmedia narratives.

In the main action of the sequence, that reveals the icon that Wayne will have to take to scare the Gotham’s criminals, there is a general coherence, both in comic series and the movies. In the comic *The Man Who Falls* by O’Neil and Giordano in *Batman Year 1* by Mazzychelli and Miller, or in *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* by Miller and his animated version, a huge bat crosses the window-glass with cruises at the Wayne’s mansion, becoming the Batman icon. There are refinements in the secondary actions, as in *Batman Year 1*, where it comes into his father’s bust, or in *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* where he hears telephonic messages, but always with the surprise effect of the bat breaking the window-glasses, breaking the human reflection, and joining his childhood’s fear with the illusion of being rescued by his father.

Similarly, in the main action of the fall inside the bats’ cave, when he’s a child, he faces his biggest fear again and again in all the transmedia narrative sequences: animation, movie, and comics. There are changes in the secondary actions, in *Batman Begins* the young Rachel character is introduced, the persecution, the fight for the arrowhead and the hiding game too, but always is included the fall in the deepest part of the cave, and the confrontation with the bats. In *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* by Miller, he follows a
rabbit and falls, seeing a gigantic bat; in the animation only the big bat’s face appears providing it with more drama. In any case, the respect of the main actions gives coherence, convergence and intelligibility to the transmedia narrative, and the secondary variations provide more innovative aspects to the fans. The parents’ death is always happening in an alleyway, but in *Batman Begins* it takes place when they leave the Opera, because Bruce exits altered by associating the play with the bat’s experiences, and he observes characters similar to Catwoman that will be part of his future. In *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* they leave after watching the movie “El Zorro” and Bruce feels cheerful while fighting with imaginary enemies, until they reach the murder alley. The murderer in the movie, as well as in *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* is an anonymous criminal, but in the movie the robbery is produced for the need, accidentally. Instead, in Burton’s movie, the murderer is a young Joker that already enjoys provoking death. In the TV show Gotham City, the main action and space, murder and alley are respected, but the secondary details are in expectancy to be revealed during the promotional campaign.

Characters as Catwoman and their love relationship, hate with eroticism, is developed in a lot of Batman comics, but in respect with the transmedia narrative analysis are *The Long Halloween*, by Loeb and Sale, and *The Knightfall: The Crusade, n503*, where the film *The Dark Knight Rise*, by Nolan, feedbacks as an original remix. In the movie Selina Kyle, Catwoman, steals the necklace of Wayne’s mother, a major romantic and dramatic secondary action, because the necklace was the reason she was murdered. Even more original is the fact that the confrontation of the theft in the movie is between their public identities, while *The Long Halloween* shows the confrontation bewteen their secret identities. In addition, the spaces are in the movie the Wayne’s house, and in the comic the
Falcone’s one. Another original secondary action that feeds the transmedia narrative is that both characters in *The Long Halloween* dance and kiss as Bruce and Selina, during the party before the theft and confrontation, while in the movie the dance takes place after in a charity party where Selina robbers the rich people and Bruce’s car after a passionate kiss. Finally, the actions of the joined fight, where Batman and Catwoman protect and seduce each other, are inspired in *The Long Halloween* and have its referents in *The Knight Fall*. In this comic Catwoman doesn't save Batman from Bane, although in the movie she does.

In *Batman Begins* the remarkable secondary actions that boosts the transmedia are: a) The use of an ultrasound artifact that attracts bats that Batman uses in *Batman Year1* by Mazzuchelli and Miller, to scape from the police special forces and avoid the day-light. This element is used in the movie to save Rachel from the Scarecrow’s panic poison, taking her to the Bat-cave and injecting her an antidote. In the movie Gordon enters in the building. In *Batman Begins*, the narrative resource that is followed is joining Batman’s antiheros and secondary actions that appear separately in the comics, as Nolan does with the Joker and Two Faces in *The Dark Knight*. In *Batman Begins* Scarecrow is included and he wants to poison with his panic gas the whole city, as in the comic *The Shadow of the Bat-God of Fear* by Grant, Blevinis and George, mixed with the complot of Ra’s Al Gul, chief of the League of Shadows, to destroy Gotham. Al Gul dies in a metro train, in the space of Bane’s final battle at the comic *The KnightFall n666*, this is a transference of spaces and characters. In the comic, Bane doesn’t die; Al Gul does in the movie, but is defeated by a new Batman, an action that metaphorically takes places in the movie *The Dark Knight Rises*. Also, Batman lets Al Gul die in the movie *Batman Begins* as well as he does in the comic *The KnightFall: Knight-quest*, n508 with the murdered Arnold Etchison, taking to the limit his
values of no killing. In the movie, Nolan justifies the action of letting Al Gul die with the fact that Wayne had saved his life previously in the middle of a mountain, action that is inspired in the comic *The Man Who Falls*, that narrates Batman’s origin. These transmedia dynamics produce curiosity and encourage fans to explore through several media series and dive into the different authorial parallel worlds.

On the level of transferring the time and action in the character’s life, the secondary action where Batman saves Gordon’s son, increases their friendship. It happens during the comic in *Batman Year1*, where a young Wayne jumps from a bridge to catch the baby kidnapped by Falcone’s racketeers; in the movie *The Dark Knight* Two Faces intends to kill his eldest son and Batman jumps to save him. These narrative transferences and paradoxes keep the narrative intelligibility, because they are emotionally recognizable by the spectators and generate empathy, inviting to the media convergence, since they encourage the exploration of what happens to whom and when in other media parallel worlds. Similarly, it generates a lineal interaction by allowing the experience of completing the storylines with an original meaning in each media.

Joining antagonists is something that happens in several comics that, taken into a transmedia level generates more expectation and motivates the audiences. Nolan integrates in the movie both characters, Two Faces and the Joker, playing with the narrative structures where a co-protagonist, Dent, becomes a co-antagonist, Two Faces, generating more tension. Similarly, the secondary action and the resolution change, in the comic *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* the Joker dies, in the movie Two Faces passes away. Moreover, the movie imports from the comic *The Killing Joke* the Joker and Batman’s conversation about how they are alter egos, in the movie Joker doesn’t die, but paradoxically the real
actor does by active addiction, getting a posthumous Oscar. With all, the transmedia narratives are feedback and Nolan tries to integrate the plots, subplots, characters, and actions with more success and worship in comic levels, as *Hush, The Knightfall, The Killing Joke, No Man’s Land, Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, to create something original from his Trilogy remix.

By remixing the main actions in the communicative immersion of the spectators is increased, at the same time the original comics get feedback and revalue, because it calls the attention of the fans to look for the comics where the movies are based on. This happens even more, if several actions are integrated from epic moments. For example, when Bane in *The Knight Fall* tries to generate chaos in Gotham by making the criminals of Arkham Asylum escape through explosions. Or even more, when the Scarecrow in the comic *The God of Fear* disperses his hallucinogenic poisonous gas, which boosts the deepest fear and panic to whom inhale it. This leads to the final climax of *Batman Begins*, where Ra’s Al Gul goes by train making the polluted water evaporate from the city’s drain, contaminating the water distributor and infecting the whole city, which is the *Contagion* comic argument.

With all, it is confirmed the main hypothesis that the attractive transmedia narratives use secondary actions that denote extraordinary abilities, with main and secondary characters of complex personalities and original aspect, adding to the resolution of the main action in dramatic moments and with original and recognizable scenarios, and creating a new remix of the narrative elements.

Finally, it is necessary to emphasize the acuity of C. Nolan generating transmedia narratives because: 1) Reaps the final Gilda’s phrase, Harvey Dent’s wife, “I believe in Harvey Dent”, at the end of the comic *The Long Halloween*, to use it in the publicity.
campaign www.whysoserious.com, where the Joker attracts members to his gang, and in I believe in Harvey Dent, web of its political promotion for the city, all created just before the premiere of The Dark Knight. 2) This Gilda’s phrase occurs after Dent surrenders to Batman and Gordon in the comic, maintaining the integrity of the space and the mise-en-escène similar to the one in the movie The Dark Knight, but in this one Dent looses his integrity by trying to kill Gordon’s son. 3) Marony is the prosecute in the movie and during Harvey’s trial instead of spraying acid to him, as in the comic, he tries to shoot him with a broken gun. With these remixes Nolan creates an intelligible transmedia narrative that originates alternative coherent worlds among different media.

7. Final Conclusions

One of the first collected conclusions is: The pre-existence of serial narratives and wide databases in a media, that includes modular narrative elements of certain recognizable characters, by their appearance, abilities or personality; and that perform familiar and/or new actions in original spaces and times, help as a potential narrative world to generate new transmedia narratives, through the application of the remix culture concept.

This is the case of the Batman Universe, that from the media world of comic where it was born and through the years, have serve as inspiration and creation source for series, videogames, and movies. All of these had different inspirations, the Burton’s Batman and Batman Returns, with a mix of artistic and commercial purposes, then the Schumacher’s Batman Forever and Batman & Robin, with more commercial motivations, until coming back to the integration and prioritization of the narrative value in the series in Nolan’s:
*Batman Begins*, *The Dark Knight* and *The Dark Knight Rises*. These Nolan’s movies integrate the best of the developed artistic sub-worlds of the comic series: *The Man Who Falls*, *The Long Halloween*, *Hush*, *The KnightFall*, *Birth of the Demon*, *Contagion*, *No Man’s Land*, *The Killing Joke*, and *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*; all with the narrative potential of developing with the cinema, web, mobile systems, and videogames diffusion. Nolan’s movies revaluated the comics for the fans motivating them to invest their valuable time and money in a richer universe in expansion full of new meanings, emotions and values.

All this is achieved thanks to Nolan’s remixes by giving other angles to the different narrative actions, characters, times and spaces from the comics, and making the other media deeper: cinema, videogames, webs, etc. Recently, this labor served to the TV show Gotham City from Fox Series, part of the companies consortium of Warner Bros. and D.C, to count with richer co-protagonists narratives in its stories: Gordon, Robin, Catwoman, Harvey Dent (later Two Faces), Alfred, Joker, Scarecrow, etc. Moreover, it introduces transmedia transferences of space-time continuity within the characters, with new treatments of space and time, providing the characters with other nuances and revealing origins, motivations or characteristics that the characters present within their new backgrounds.

As it has been presented through numerous examples it can be concluded that is a fact that the transmedia narrative motivates the **remix culture** practices to the authors and fans, in this case applied to **remix narratives**, the mix of the narratives elements from one media to another. Historically, within the comic world this has allowed that several comic artists reinterpret the Batman character and this experience has also motivated in recent years that the Warner Brothers lost the fear of letting the Batman figure, and its narrative universe, to
be directed by several directors. This opening to collaboration and discussion among fans, webs, and blogs about the diverse and best performances, and free adaptations of the directors, has generated a participative culture around the Batman character. This consolidation of the Batman Universe, in the cinema and other media, have support and provide feedback to the incursion of the fans in emergent narratives through the generation of machinema movies, based on videogames as Batman Arkham Archives (2009) or Injustice Gods Among Us (2013).


If the new generations are familiarized with the use of videogames, mobile systems, or comics compared with older generation and parents, that feel more attracted to movies or books; it is logical that the producer institutions of edutainment would try to design transmedia that allows avoiding the technological gap between adults and youngest. Thanks to that they will share information of the elements and narrative contents from the media that they feel more familiar with, within the main narrative and common themes. This will help to share intergenerational, familiar, scholar and university edutainment time. In order to do so, the edutainment products must include the use of secondary actions that denote the character’s extraordinary abilities and/or original aspects, recognizable for the intergenerational audience.
Now that the multi-heroes Superman-Batman film is going to be launched this year and honoring the strong influence of the comedian “Chespirito” in Latinamerica, a recently passed-away artist during the writing of this article, creator of the popular TV series the “Chavo del 8,” “Chapulin Colorado,” … a transmedia example for a new comic series Batman-Chapulín Colorado is presented, Image 5. In this comic, Chapulín supports Batman in the battle against Gotham’s crime, but when he meets Catwoman, she falls in love with him, leaving aside her passion for Batman. From this passionate relationship between Chapulín and Catwoman a new super-hero is born, Chapucat, Image 6, who’s existence inspires Batman to look for even more revenge because Chapucat is the result of his former lover and his new partner, because he didn’t count with his astuteness.

(Source: Concept by Jorge Mora. Illustration by Javier Carchipulla)
Image 6. Pictures of a tentative new Latin America Batman vs. Chapulín Colorado, where Chapulín Colorado using his guile conquers Catwoman giving birth to a new super-hero ChapuCat. (Source: Jorge Mora and Javier Carchipulla)

**Funding**

This research has been funded as part of the Prometheus Research Program by SENESCYT & the DIUC, at Universidad de Cuenca, Ecuador.
References


**Author Biography**

Jorge Mora Fernández (PhD, UCM & MFA in Interactive Media, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California) has obtained several international awards and grants as researcher and creator in interactive media. His passions are focused in developing multicultural interactive narratives: parallel, immersive, multilevel and structures. He is currently a SENESCYT Prometeo Researcher and co-director of the Interdisciplinary Research Group CICNETART, www.cicnetart.org. More info at www.drjorgemora.org