

Adaptation and Transmedia, Parallel Universes or Complex System?

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Multimodal texts redefine some of Translation Studies key concepts, like the nature of source or target texts and their hierarchical relationship, the nature of translational units, and the structure of text itself (Gambier 2006). Moreover, since the end of the 1990s, the emergence of Internet and Social Media, and their “convergence” (Jenkins 2006) with other media have made sharing stories fast, easy, and participative and have provoked an exponential rise in stories extensions on multiple platforms.

Transmedia narratives (Jenkins 2006) are becoming a standard in storytelling and challenge traditional definitions and borders of authorship, readership and adaptation (Jenkins 2011, Hutcheon and O’Flynn 2013, 2016).

If these new narratives often have a lot in common with what Bastin calls a “necessary recreation” that takes places when the target context changes (Bastin 1993, 2012), Adaptation scholars cannot tackle them with a traditional book-to-film approach (Leitch 2008), because their media platform varies from book to cosplay and include –among others– fan fiction, video games, comics and interactive audiovisual products. Chaume advocates for an “integrated model of analysis”, still to be created, that would be common to Film and Translation (Chaume 2004), and Catrysse provides an insight on the use of Even-Zohar’s Polysystem Theory in Film Adaptation (Catrysse 2014). More recently, Catrysse offered to consider Translation and Adaptation Studies as sibling disciplines in a larger academic “family” called “intertextuality or influence studies” (Catrysse 2018).

In the case of Transmedia narratives and Adaptation Studies, is an interdisciplinary approach enough? If so, how many disciplines should be involved? We will explore the benefits for Adaptation Studies to give up their traditional borders to survive the explosion of Transmedia stories and stay visible. We will study, instead of asserting their differences and establishing their existence on parallel universes, how both disciplines could benefit from considering themselves as parts of a complex system.