CHAPTER 6

TRANSMEDIA FOR GOOD AND EDUCATION

O ne of the earliest prejudices on transmedial narratives is the proliferation of content that stems from transforming a story into narrative fragments spread over different media. Another is the short life of the works and consumer experiences consumed by users. Finally there are those who accuse transmedia narratives of being a form of merchandising and a mere promotion technique rather than a revolution of traditional storytelling.

In these pages we have already experimented with practical theories and examples to what extent those objections are anachronistic and unsupported. Nonetheless, I decided to focus the present chapter on demonstrating the last of those three prejudices wrong, investigating how transmedia can contribute today to better the world that we live in.

For example, working for the service of non-governmental agencies or non-profit associations. Or inventing independent projects related to issues such as environmental protection, collective well-being, cohesion and social emergencies, international peace. Or even contributing to education or research, always by means of communication and storytelling, technology and information. Analyzing the transmedia way under this perspective substantially changes some of the

"environmental" conditions investigated and described in the previous chapters. For example, transmedia for good or for education:

- continuously alters the times and the operating modes of the communication system, especially in the presence of crisis situations;

- puts the "theme" of the tale at the center of the project and reveals it instead of masking it;

- focuses on the *emotional contagion* as a major feature of the project;

- concentrates economic and strategic efforts in developing or adapting truly effective delivery platforms rather than lingering on the esthetics of content;

- immediately puts experience and its sharing on the same level;

- researches simple and rapid mechanisms of economic reward;

- tends to maximize the outstandingness of events at all times.

An example? Let's start from a serious international humanitarian crisis. On the occasion of the Haitian earthquake in January 2010, the American Red Cross managed to raise 22 million dollars by the Monday following the disaster, thanks to a huge transmedia campaign in which The White House and the Corporation for National and Community Services took part. The main asset of this omnivorous system was mobile, with a text-to-give campaign whose testimonials included, among others, Michelle Obama. The message was very simple: "Send A Message & Save A Life, Donate $ 10 To Red Cross Haiti Relief, Text Haiti To 90999", yet a rich network of broadcasters and media companies all over the world joined in in support. In Chicago, just to mention a case, eleven TV networks, nine radio

stations and two newspapers got involved within a few days. In the first 24 hours of the event on the Red Cross official website and on its social network profiles, millions of users and companies set themselves in action in order to raise funds, giving their contribution in the form of messages, short articles and comments gained the project further donations.

On the American Red Cross YouTube channel the first video on the condition of the island – five hours after the earthquake – was published. In the following days, more reports and in-depth analyzes from all over the world were uploaded. Fear and love, joy and sadness, anger and shame… emotional contagion pervaded all the media outcomes of the project and turned into immediate volunteer experiences in the emergency, as Gloria Huang, social media specialist for ARC, said. "On Facebook we had tons of fans, and there were a lot of discussions and forums where volunteers from previous campaigns were offering tips and advice to answering the questions of those interested in volunteering for the Haiti relief efforts; the Twitter account, instead, remained a source of news, links to donation pages, and updates from the ground. And on the Red Cross' main blog, first hand accounts, photos, and videos have been posted with unerring regularity"[1]. A vast amount of agile content in a blessed network, sharing web, mobile and social network content as never before seen in the humanitarian field.

Different, more programmatic, and more oriented to the ability to influence social issues through media-based storytelling was the transmedia project *He named me Malala* created by the American agency Campfire for National Geographic. Theme of the campaign: give voice to the 60 million women who have no access to education in different countries of the world, according to what was also reported in the 2016 homonymous documentary *He Named Me Malala* dedicated to young Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Prize Peace in 2014. The project created for the occasion had as primary asset the creation of

1. http://nonprofit.about.com

animated avatars that users and supporters could upload to their Facebook profile, inspired by the school book's model. Each one of us could have been in that book and at the same time one of the women who could never be in there. Accessible via smartphone and reintroduced by a TV documentary, billboard screens mounted in several American cities and influencers online, the campaign produced 50,000 dollars in 4 days in the US market alone to support female access to education.

Img. 6.1 He named me Malala (2016). Visuals and platforms of the transmedia project.

The example of *He named me Malala* is representative of the *paradigm shift* needed in "Transmedia for Good" for the representation of the reality that is to be changed. This is done through two fundamental techniques:

- *reimagining*, or the formulation of a "middle" world between the real and the represented. Not a filter but an

original *story angle* transforming perception and collective knowledge into microcosms that can be viralized according to a particular reading key;

- the finalization of content to actual *crowd-driven changes*, that is massive change processes obtained through the sharing of more meaningful narrative and communicative forms than the traditional ones, widely shared and totally interoperative.

In this sense, as Lina Srivastava, transmedia storyteller and international consultant, as it: the power of transmedia storytelling is to inspire *crowd driven changes* through different media that consists of six aspects:

- co-creation;
- collaboration;
- layered storytelling;
- an ecosystems approach to narrative design and social action;
- the ability to experiment with narrative and take risks;
- rapid interconnections.

The combination of these aspects makes transmedia storytelling an innovative avenue to inspire action, by combining community-driven, bottom-up, grassroots solutions with shared resources and capacities, and connecting crowds and their collective power through stories and art that create a global culture of collaboration.

What about the authors? Again Lina Srivastava: "a good transmedia activism project drives authors to be strategic, not reactionary or rushed to create their story architecture. Authors who are creating stories that deal with affected communities or social issues to understand they are members of a collective group of people – whether through formal or informal networks

– that have already been working on these issues, and stories and engagement channels which are part of the fabric of the movement or a larger system of projects. A good project which drives authors to create entry points for multiple stakeholders to co-create and participate through the multiple channels that carry the story, to create a more layered, nuanced, and human experience".[2]

TRANSMEDIA ACTIVISM AND MOBILIZATION

Implemented worldwide for political, social, environmental and educational urgencies, transmedia is already able to inspire, stir up and promote epochal changes. One of its strongest and most persuasive powers relies in fact in its great ability to suddenly reduce the distance between perception and imagination in the public and to amplify messages on a global scale, triggering mechanisms of self-appropriation of themes and calls to action whose extent is difficult to define. By creating a kind of *artificial imagination*, transmedial communication originates interpretative models of the engaging and absolute reality. At the same time, the contagion between languages, imagines and platforms overwhelms the use of oppositional interpretative pairs such as outer space and inner space, real and virtual world, propaganda and extremism, creativity and critical meaning, impulse and retrospection, ethos and brand… messages, content and news to be transmitted both in the real world and digital ones.

The most impressive example in this regard is that of *transmedia activism* and *transmedia mobilization,* tools that start from the *Narrative Design for Social Change* to create dramatic modes that can amplify public participation reality, digital and virtual contexts to raise awareness of it influencing their collective perception and structuring communities around issues of global importance.

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2. Srivastava, L., Ref. to: Giovagnoli, M., *Transmedia Storytelling e Comunicazione*, 2013, p. 190-91.

Transmedia activism asks audience to walk in the shoes of the people depicted in the stories. Asks audiences to explore three things while traveling though a transmedia world related to a social issue: empathy, a broadened perspective, and action. Asks them to engage with the characters and situations in a number of ways, through a number of entry points, to create a layered perspective. In other words, it asks audiences to immerse themselves in the circumstances and situations faced by others, and commit to culturally and strategically appropriate actions in concert with the transmedia storytellers and the depicted community, to create a shift toward positive, livable, and sustainable conditions. — *Lina Srivastava – digital strategist, activist and consultant (UNESCO, the World Bank, UNICEF, Donor Direct Action)*

Again, the keyword is public engagement, but it is also a matter of raising awareness on a theme *(issue awareness)* by means of real-world documents and contents created *ad hoc (actionable content story universe)* to provoke the audience into triggering spontaneous actions that can really make a difference *(change creation)*.

From a transmedia point of view, it is curious to note how this path resumes by means of induction the narrative paradigms we have dealt with in the second chapter of this book. For example, it is likewise interesting to remark how issue awareness corresponds in this case the hero's call of adventure, his or her entry into the extraordinary world acts as an access to the actionable content story of a humanitarian project and the change creation is our return with the elixir at the end of the story, or the transformational moment reached thanks to the narration. More in general, all these storytelling tools found in this book *(two narrative goals, twin narratives, non-linear / parallel / asyncronic / simultaneous narratives etc.)* are powerful ways to foster a story and its change into "transmedia for goods".
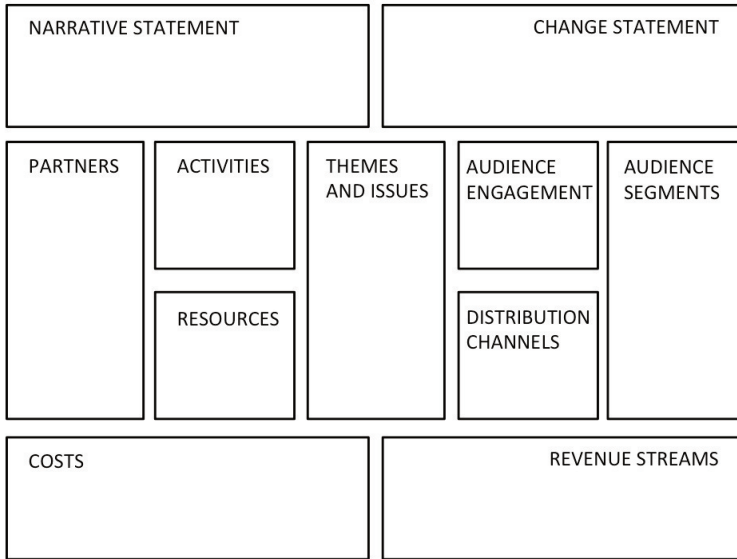
What are on the other hand the necessary and sufficient conditions to make a real social impact happen through transmedia? First of all, answering questions about the context and the actors with whom you are working. How does this

project move beyond awareness? How does it use its platforms to connect audiences to commit to a particular worldview, advocacy or action? How does the project invest in community-centered participation? Does it have at its core the use of local voices, in direct partnership with platform creators? How does the project use "local" stories, stories that come directly from the communities themselves? How do all the inhabitants of the story world (audiences, authors, stakeholders, influencers, affected communities) navigate that world? Do platforms match access? Are the stories, technologies and solution appropriate to the culture and the community? Is the standard of relevance, resonance, and respect met?[3]

Then it is important to disseminate the story with targets to be achieved through progressive calls to action and forms of inner hierarchies (*audience segments)* present in the different assets of the communicative system. In transmedia activism, the "theme" of the story also identifies the mission of the audience that will have to evolve in the simplest way from "clicktavism" and the casualty of consumption within the communication system to activism and narrative volunteering. An example?

Localized and centered on the narrative of the social microcosm of social problems we can find the transmedia project *Women for Sale* (2016-Present) created by the interdisciplinary team of the Multimedia Communication Department (DCM) of the National University of Rosario, coordinated by Fernando Irigaray, and devoted to the topic of women coming from all over South America used for sexual slavery in Argentina. The theme, again, is the message: the crime of human trafficking involves different stages with specific characteristics, each of which acts and operates actors with specific roles, shaping a framework that allows the sexual exploitation of women in Argentina. *Women for Sale* aims to expose some stories narrated by the protagonists themselves, who are the POV of the tale. Women victims,

3. On the rule of the three "R" (respect, relevance, resonance) in creating a more effective social impact through transmedia see: http://linasrivastava.blogspot.it/

NARRATIVE STATEMENT			CHANGE STATEMENT	
PARTNERS	ACTIVITIES	THEMES AND ISSUES	AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT	AUDIENCE SEGMENTS
	RESOURCES		DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS	
COSTS			REVENUE STREAMS	

Img. 6.2 The Mission Media Engagement Strategy Canvas, created by Lina Srivastava. On the left side of the diagram are the actors of the communication; on the right, the strategies and the spaces available to the public; above, the contribution of the authors and actors of the project, below, that of the public.

relatives, members of organizations fighting to clarify the different cases, judicial officials, legislators, members of the security forces and specialists are the voices of the orchestra focusing on the four steps of the phenomenon: *recruitment*, *trafficking*, *sexual exploitation* and *rescue*. The transmedia bouquet is based on a supportive communicative system and consists in:

- graphics augmented reality installations;
- comics online (in 5 chapters, revealing the real story of one young victim);
- LED short videos to be projected in commercial malls and in public spaces;

- TV documentaries (focusing on the story of three victims);

- webisodes (on the case of Marita Veron, emblem of the fight against human trafficking in Argentina);

- a website and a collaborative map which presents a series of geo-referenced data, organized into three categories: *missing women* (to indicate location and date when each woman was last seen), *rescued women* (for the set of procedures performed to rescue women in situations of sexual exploitation. Each case marked on the map allows the user to explore data on the case, directly through the information source) and *places of exploitation* (which shows places denounced by sexual exploitation such as whorehouses, cabarets, whiskey bars and private apartments).

A brilliant case of transmedia journalism aiming at what Maya Zuckerman says on the use of transmedia as a concrete communication tool for social changes: "to embrace the positive social movements of the world […] ending environmental destruction, and elevating the marginalized among us to the equal status of 'full human being' regardless of gender, sexual preference, or ethnic background".[4]

Quite different and more global is another example of transmedia denunciation project. *Kony 2012* is a short film which became a worldwide success by no-profit association Invisible Children to promote a campaign to raise awareness on war crimes against humanity committed in Uganda by Lord Kony, leader of the local Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The video, which was seen online by more than 100 million people, was transformed into a project of transmedia activism that initially contaminated the media with the *Make Him Famous* campaign (issue awareness of the project) dedicated to showing the world who Joseph Kony really was. He was in fact guilty of kidnappings,

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4. Zuckerman, M., *The Collective Journey*... cit.

Img. 6.3 Women for Sale (2016). Transmedia project: online site, TV documentaries, graphics, comics online and interactive maps of the project.

sexual slavery, forced soldier enrollments and mass murders perpetrated above all on children. Then the video entered the real world with events and collective initiatives with the *Stop At Nothing* campaign, also carried out through a kit of gadgets and aimed at active proselytism. Finally with the event called *Cover the night* (a call to action) some cities all over the world were invaded by posters and information to introduce the release of a new movie: *Move*, inviting the anti-Kony people to a world-wide round-up of the White House during the days of the American Presidential Elections, to provide a final media boost to the project before its conclusion in December 2012 (date by which,

according to the goals of its creators, the criminal should have been arrested).

Img. 6.4 Visuals from the various campaigns of the Kony 2012 project.

SOCIAL BENEFIT TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING

What happens when the narrative component grows to equal the importance of the theme, within the transmedia for good? Keeping intact the beneficial role of the project, transmedia gets closer to communication and entertainment and find its expression with the creation of its story worlds: real / digital environments which recreate the original world using different

story angles or innovative reading keys, with a strong capacity to involve and awaken in the public the will to participate actively, rather than to the problem, to its dissemination and resolution. An example?

The first official case of *social benefit transmedia storytelling* was that experimented by US producer Tim Kring in 2010, the year when the aforementioned creator of the *Heroes* television series was the author of the *Conspiracy for Good* project, a social game organized with the Swedish media factory The company P for Nokia. The narrative was structured on the actions taken by the public to support the legal battle of Nadirah X, a singer and elementary teacher in Chataika, East Zambia, against the Blackwell Briggs multinational corporation accused of having stopped the creation of a library for its village students to build an oil pipeline. A fictional initiative aimed at experimenting with the possibilities of inspiring social change through the transmedial tale rather than with active testimony, as in the case of *Kony 2012.* This was a three months alternate reality game, diffused by users via Twitter, YouTube, SMS, online puzzles and three mobile videogames, and then developed in a second phase of the project in a real world game play in London for one month.

A very successful and particularly effective social benefit storytelling case that is directly linked to fundraising for a charitable association is that of the *Every Beat Matters,* project created by James Kuckinski in 2012 for Save The Children. Stressing once again the importance of the 'theme' in transmedia for good, the original concept of the story was made this time by the simple heartbeat of a child recorded in Guatemala, which became the symbol of all children suffering from indigence, illness or crime all over the world. It became the true soul of storytelling, communication system and project design:

- because it was mixed in the base of a song sung by One

Img. 6.5 Conspiracy for Good (2010). Official site and pictures from the action held in London.

> Republic (*Feel again*, with over 1 million downloads*)*, the band testimonial of the project;

- because it was on posters reproducing portraits of people working with children; portraits drawn by the echocardiograms of children whom the audience itself was helping to save;

- because it was recorded by users through an iphone app and shared via social networks to make the community of the project wider;

- because it was displayed in interactive installations in

exhibitions organized to raise money for Save The Children.

Media sensing and the metaphorical connection to the pain experienced by children thus reaffirmed the concept on all the media platforms involved in the project: Every beat matters> Every donation matters, with the result of one million dollar worth of PR and earned media and an increase of 700% of donations compared to the previous year.

Img. 6.6 Every Beat Matters (2013). Transmedia project realized by Save the Children with the contribution of One Republic and international partners.

More oriented to narrative and on the active exploration of the microcosms represented by the communication system and the narrative, again are the two examples of transmedia projects that I am about to deal with.

The first is titled *The Last Hijack* and was produced in 2014 by transmedia producer Bruno Felix and the Dutch Submarine channel with The Match Factory, directed by Femke Wolting and Tom Pallotta. *The Last Hijack* is a feature-length film combining documentary footage and animation, and an online transmedia experience allowing viewers a unique and original way to

explore the story of Somali piracy from different perspectives. An example of transcoded concept and merging of two different audio visual (live action and animation), the project allows audiences to explore the story world in the interactive part by means of graphics, photo galleries and audio that trace the trails and the general coordinates of the piracy phenomenon, while in the documentary film we can find the personal story of an exceptional boy facing the ultimate mission of his life, the one that allowed him to leave forever with the country and his family. The narrative space is all devoted to an in-depths investigation on the theme and context, yet limiting the space for the active intervention of the public, who is not called to contribute in any way to the change.

The second example of transmedia storytelling for social change proposed below is totally different from this point of view. Again a case drawn from personal experience and still in progress as I write is that of a transmedial project through which it was possible to enhance individual characteristics and weaknesses and promote a shared social improvement in small or large groups of young people at the same time. Its name is *MU*, like that of the mysterious continent that fought against Atlantis before disappearing. The focus of the narrative is set on the life of three young orphans messing around in Rome. Their need for freedom and independence is a restless challenge but MU, the strange orphanage where they live, built in the basement of the artificial lake of EUR, a 1930s' futuristic quarter of Rome, is their microcosmos and protect them, and save them from the brutality of their own destiny. But the audience will work with them and for them, to help them survive and succeed in their fight for a better life. The Transmedia bouquet of *MU* consists in:

- a docuseries;
- an Indie Brand Franchise (Clothing, Accessorize, Schoolkit);
- 2 Novels;

Img. 6.7 The Last Hijack (2013). Official website. Animation/live action screenshot from the documentary, and interactive gallery online.

- 3 Comic books;
- a Web Community;
- real world activities (urban Game, Mudom, Road show in Bookshop and Museums);
- game app.

The docuseries will show the three real guys (not actors) in their daily (mostly legal) activities, with a detection subplot and italian atmospheres. The game app asks the audience to play as one of the three characters. The comic book will tell the backstory of the characters and the origin of each particular talent. The two novels is the only media allowed to transform reality into fiction, playing with two different genres: drama and fantasy. Finally, the social network and the community building activities gives space to an "artistic, underground subculture" (MUISMO) creating *MU*'s identity and reason-why. The aim of the project? To stress the audience attention on the importance of creativity in education and in problematic and borderline teens' life. The three guys experience creativity and handcrafting every day since they are a cosplay, a fashion designer and a youtuber looking restlessly for expressing themselves somehow. The final social goal of the project, at the same time, is to keep part of the earnings to build a real *MU* in Rome: an orphanage and a fablab where to teach creative disciplines to small groups of vulnerable boys and girls, and where to create and customize *MU*'s products (clothes, gadgets, artworks) to be sold to make MU's maintenance and Muers' access to schools and universities in the future easier.
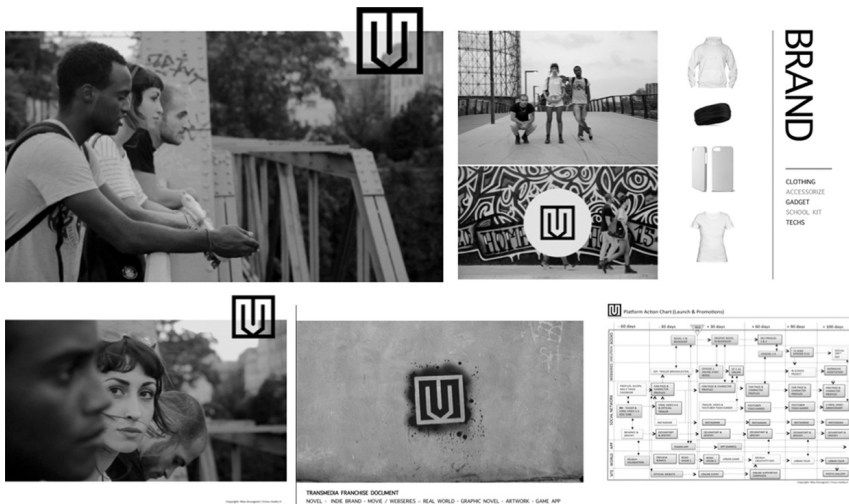
Img. 6.8 MU (2017). Transmedia project for social changes.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSERVATION CAMPAIGN

In the second half of the last century organizations and international movements for the defense and the protection of the environment have used mass media in a very effective way; now they are starting to look at transmedial narratives with inventive and an aware technological experimentalism. Today's associations and movements have abandoned the adventurous logic of the tale and the political or verbal attack to shift the battlefield of their mission more and more often toward information and legal defense, international partnerships, funding and interactive support.

The communication systems that they create are more often supportive, focusing on low cost Web and social networks, using videos and with a more and more reduced use of print and paper. Journalism and the creation of professional quality materials are now being developed within the group, and the content it produced are often sold or given to the majors in exchange for visibility or contribution to the activities, which in recent years have also changed their definition from "campaigns" to "operations".

An example? The environmental association Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, founded by activist Paul Watson (one of the creators of Greenpeace), frequently on the front side of the media for his very determined actions aimed at the defense of the oceans and the hydrosphere. Among the most celebrated operations is certainly the fight that Sea Shepherd annually engages against Japanese whalers *(Zero Tolerance)*.

Mostly active on the Web, the communication system created by Sea Shepherd for this activity opened in 2008 an interesting transmedia support project based on the *Whale Wars* TV documentary series. Self-produced and completing its sixth season on the Animal Planet channel in 2015, in time, following a ball curve and a supportive communication system, *Whale Wars* offered TV viewers a linear and synchronous fruition, while on

the Web the story preferred non-linear and asynchronous consumption (e.g. with mini-shows distributed on YouTube or with live streaming directly from the ships involved in operations). The narrative forms were similar (with video documentaries, interviews and historical reconstructions) as well as the language of the tale (frank, suggestive, motivating) and the rhythm (tight, syncopated and a rich bridge narrative) made of 'footage' filmed on board and updates from around the world published during the different operations. With an ever-growing and sectorial audience, the project still represents one of the few examples of success of the 'winning team never change' formula in transmedia storytelling worldwide.

Boardings, ramming, reckless zigzags on the Zodiacs in front of the Nipponese 'lab ship' prows… The project created by Sea Shepherd emulated directly the determined and monolithic philosophy of its 'media battles' based on active participation, divulgation by means of communication and on world support more and more often through the Web.

In other cases, media assets of traditional communication campaigns are deconstructed by transmedia mechanisms indirectly and voluntarily fuelled by the public, according to what Henry Jenkins defines "grassroots dynamics" of contemporary convergence culture[5]. This is the case, for example, of *The Last Selfie*, winner of the 2015 Webby Awards for Snapchat campaigns, organized by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), produced by Danish agency Uncle Grey and Turkish 41?29!. The original project developed the idea of the 'short life' of selfies that in social media rapidly disappear, particularly on Snapchat after 10 seconds, turning it into a symbol of the idea of the disappearance looming over some animal species at risk on the planet. The awareness of the younger audience was such, however, that discussions and initiatives on such topic got out of the Web to be materialized in the real world, independently

5. Jenkins, H., Ford. S., Green, J., *Spreadable Media. Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture*, 2013.

Img. 6.9 Official site, Whale Wars series poster and screenshot of Sea Shepherd Conservative Society's Battleship Antarctica documentary.

moulded by the users who also organized micro-events that provided unexpected resonances on sites and actions of publicity carried out independent, reaching 120 million users on Twitter alone.

THE COLLECTIVE JOURNEY

Studies on what some transmedia producers call *collective journey* have not completed their own course yet, but the theoretical
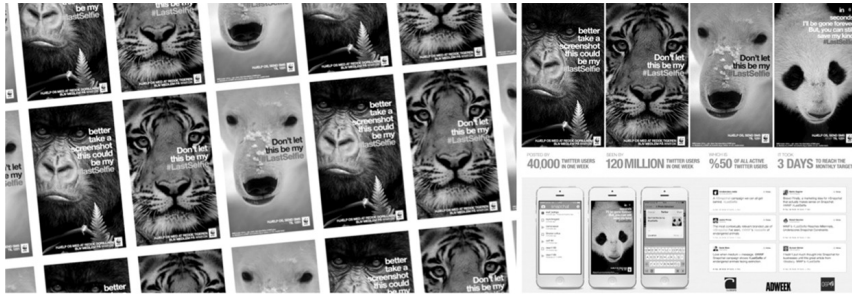
Img. 6.10 #LastSelfie (2015) – WWF. From traditional to transmedia campaign. Visuals on snapchat and general stats.

view and the ultimate goal of their use are already defined. In transmedia environments the collective journey aims at overcoming the narrative paradigm of The Hero's Journey. Its habitat is the contemporary media ecosystem, liquid and with less and less reference points. Collective journey is seen from someone as an evolution of transmedial storytelling; from transmedia it draws the ability to make the narrative more striking at a social level and the force required to drive audiences and communities to actively work. Like The Hero's Journey and other narrative paradigms, the collective journey is part of the metanarrative of all the humanity and is theorized by Maya Zuckerman on the basis that today we are at the beginning of a new era of knowledge, both from the human, political, philosophical point of view and on global and individual point of view.

> The Collective Journey is a non-linear, multiplatform, physical and digital experience and/or story of several diverse people, groups, tribes, cultures, networks, coming together for a higher purpose and a common cause. In their journeys, they move beyond their own individual experiences to a cohesive collective that is both the sum of all individuals and also a new entity entirely. They move between physical interactions in real space, to online digital interactions in cyberspace. Our journeys into outer space, technological advancement, mobile and urban lives, and the Internet, have all created the circumstances for the rise of the

Collective Journey. […] The Collective Journey can become a tool for social movements, climate change groups, and empower groups to change political narratives in geographical areas. […] It cannot be a singular narrative, but a convergence of many voices of different genders, ethnicities, ages, and opinions coming together in a non-linear fashion. […] Most current Collective Journey narratives start with a basis in The Hero's Journey and then jump into a collective narrative. The Hero's Journey is still a linear one. For a true collective narrative experience we need to integrate other platforms, other media that can break the linear pattern and create non-linear, interactive, engaging and immersive experiences. Virtual worlds, augmented worlds, massively multiplayer online games, and other immersive spaces and technologies will hail an era where more collective experiences can emerge.[6] — *Maya Zuckerman – transmedia producer and media consultant*

Finally, even if the rules of the collective journey are still unpredictable, the mechanism of the use of the paradigm are defined from Maya Zuckerman with this "8 Steps How-to scheme":

- *Decision*: individuals/archetypes on different levels of self-awareness making a conscious, or at times, unconscious choice to do something together: a journey, a project, or an adventure.

- *Planning*: without planning, individuals cannot come to agreements about what they are doing together.

- *Crossing*: crossing the collective threshold is an event or decision that throws the individuals into the shared experience.

- *Conflicts*: internal and external multifaceted conflicts arise within each individual and in the collective as a group working towards cohesion.

- *Storming*: eye of the storm is the "place" where many individual voices hold to their own narratives, ego, behaviors needs and wants. This phase brings a lot of

6. Zuckerman, M., *The Collective Journey...* cit.

chaos, a lot of noise, but also brings that transition moment.

• *Cohesion*: each individual finds their voice, call and role within the collective.

• *Convergence*: a new fully cohesive group has emerged – the collective. All move as one, and still have space for each individual to be fully expressed.

• *The Gifts to the World*: the collective now working together, superpositioned and powerful, can serve a bigger cause or community.
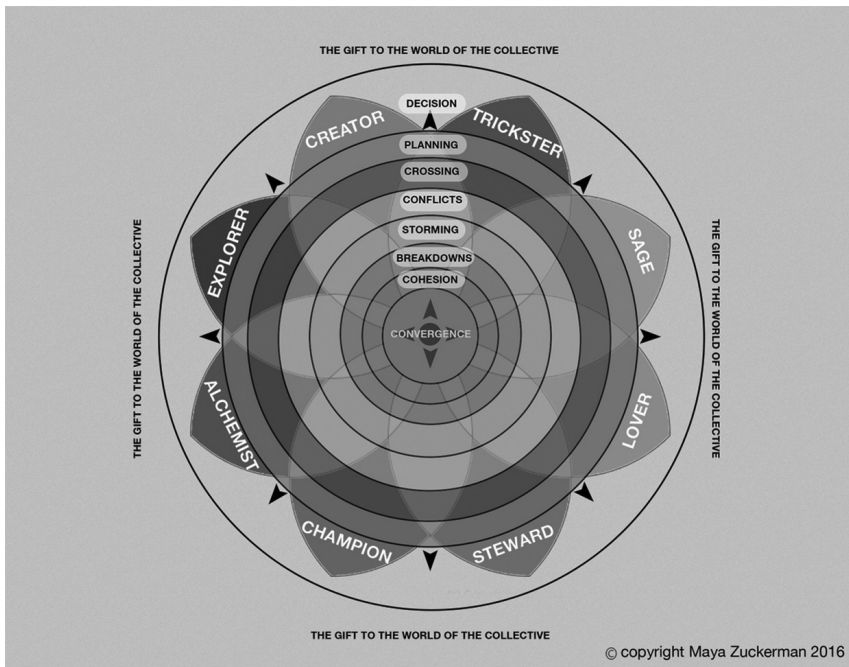
Img. 6.11 The scheme elaborated by transmedia producer Maya Zuckerman for The Collective Journey.

The range of action of collective journey is still to be calibrated and its ambitions are very strong. Its limit is still that of convincing important players into researching and developing in its field: numerous researchers and pioneers around the world

are exchanging information and case studies, good practices and design models[7] with the precise aim of accelerating on yet another important frontier of transmedia way in entertainment, in public communication, even in politics and in storytelling for global changes.

> If transmedia is the delivery method, then it is made for Collective Journey storytelling. This type of narrative is ideal, because Collective Journey tends to encompass rich story worlds, filled with interconnected people. This is why we are seeing Collective Journey play out so dramatically in real world scenarios, such as Arab Spring, Black Lives Matter, and Brexit. Examples of Collective Journey in entertainment include *Game of Thrones*, *The Walking Dead*, *Orange is the New Black*, and *Westworld*. Each of these is a sprawling story world, operating on a continuum of time (a rich past, a present much of which we are not privy to, and a future that is unpredictable). Each of these worlds involve a number of diverse characters (none of whom is truly a hero) who are challenged by a deeply flawed system. The narrative is driven by how they interact with one another in the face of this challenge. What the socio-political and entertainment-based Collective Journey narratives have in common is that we-the audience have now become participants in the story. In entertainment, clever producers are creating contents that extend across different media, allowing us to interact with these worlds, learn more about them, and share them with others. Social media allows us to speak directly to all of the stakeholders in the property, from the studios down to the actors. We can also speak with one another, complaining about what we don't like, and building big media buzz if we are very much enjoying the story. […] This is collective narrative in action. — *Jeff Gomez – transmedia Producer and CEO, Starlight Runner Entertainment*

TRANSMEDIA LITERACY AND EDUCATION

Like all the global revolutions in terms of storytelling, transmedia too has established itself in history thanks to experiences and projects before theorization and development of globally shared standards emerged. To what extent it can be

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7. https://blog.collectivejourney.com

useful to the learning processes of the future, as much as transmedia literacy can be beneficial to the affirmation of a new *digital humanitas*, it is too early to define.

According to Henry Jenkins, learning through transmedia narratives, students must go hunting their content by collecting information disseminated on different media platforms[8]. However, both interactivity in consultation and interactivity in conversation – topics we have dealt with in the fourth chapter of the book – when applied to storytelling transmedia in the educational and training processes are subject to two different dynamics:

- an *exogenous* one, in the name of which preexisting content is imported "from the outside" for some particular purposes in didactic fields;

- an *endogenous* one, through which the creation of original contributions is aimed at learning through the use of multiple media platforms.

In both cases, the use of Howard Gardner's "multiple intelligences" intersects pedagogical practice with the three intelligences theorized by Robert J. Sternberg[9] and Pierre Lévy's "cosmopedia" (the Knowledge Space), an open knowledge area for the collective intelligences of new digital generations. How can the transmedial narratives affect pedagogical processes, and in particular the methodologies and learning tools of schools, training centers and academia today? The first answer may come from the objectives set out in the *Confronting the Challenge of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21tst Century* report, commissioned in 2009 by the American McArthur Foundation[10], which defined, among the new skills of contemporary teaching:

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8. Jenkins, H., *Transmedia Education: the 7 principles Revisited*, in: http://henryjenkins.org.
9. Robert Sternberg entrusts human learning to three types of basic intelligences: analytical, practical and creative. In: Sternberg, R.J., *Theories of Intelligence*, 1987.
10. Jenkins, H., Purushotma, R., Weigel, M., Clinton, K., Robison, A. J. (ed.), *Confronting the Challenge of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21tst Century*, 2009.

- *play*, the capacity to experiment with one's surroundings as a form of problem-solving;

- *performance*, the ability to adopt alternative identities for the purpose of improvisation and discovery;

- *simulation*, the ability to interpret and construct dynamic models of real-world processes;

- *appropriation*, the ability to meaningfully sample and remix media content;

- *multitasking*, the ability to scan one's environment and shift focus as needed to salient details;

- *distributed cognition*, the ability to interact meaningfully with tools that expand mental capacities;

- *collective intelligence*, the ability to pool knowledge and compare notes with others toward a common goal;

- *judgement*, the ability to evaluate the reliability and credibility of different information sources;

- *transmedia navigation*, the ability to follow the flow of stories and information across multiple modalities;

- *networking*, the ability to search for, synthesize, and disseminate information;

- *negotiation*, the ability to travel across diverse communities, discerning and respecting multiple perspectives, receiving and following alternative norms.

An example? *La-Kolok* is a transmedia project aimed at improving the relationship between teenagers and teens through coexistence, nutrition, respect for social rules, road behavior, tolerance and valorization of diversity. Created by the Paris based Le Vent Tourne factory, *La-Kolok's* story (example of transcoded concept) follows the sequence of events following the first experience of living together by five youth. Launched in November 2012, its communication system provided:

- an interactive webseries in which the audience could influence the story by selecting characters and objects in the scenography;

- a board game on nutrition and healthy living in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and the French National Program for Food;

- an alternate reality game for smartphones;

- profiles on social networks where to find photos, videos, and curiosities about each character's philosophy of life (the salutist, the athlete, the "pilot" …);

- a web documentary that expanded the imaginary universe of the apartment to the entire La-Kolok.com building, with the possibility to change views to get a deeper insight on multiethnicity;

- a weekly web space showing interviews with experts on the issues raised in each episode;

- an online collaborative platform for educators and teachers, with a School Area where it is possible to download classroom contents that can be used for classroom lessons.

With *La-Kolok* learning was very natural, also thanks to the interaction with a transmedia communication systems rich with content, artwork, and experiences presented through 'affinity spaces', interpreted in a peer-to-peer view and an informal way[11]. In such environment literacy processes were developed, actions that should be considered in all respects social abilities in terms of interpersonal relationships as well as the voluntary expression of individuals and groups, both inside and outside the school, the institutions of study and of research. An example here too?

The first case of transmedia storytelling applied to the valorization of the didactic activity of a museum was that of

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11. Gee, J.P., *Semiotic Social Spaces…* cit., pp. 214-232.

Img. 6.12 La-Kolok.com (2012). Webseries, interviews with experts and transmedial communication system.

umigo (yoU Make It GO), a transmedia project created in 2012 by the *Ready to Learn* TV show with the supervision of the US State Department for Education and launched by the Children's Museum in Manhattan, New York. A project aimed at children aged 6 to 8, involved in playing experiences and actions, made easier by their most congenial languages (music, physical performance, play), in order to facilitate their approach to applied sciences and technologies through creating and sharing interactive content.

The virtual environment set up in the museum was enriched by an app, cartoons, books and board games. All activities were also geared directly to digital transfer and classroom use, creating an educational continuum that was later successfully adopted by the Children's Museum of various US states, from Maine to Tennessee, from Louisiana to California.

Img. 6.13 Umigo (2012). Character and session at the Children's Museum in Manhattan. Bottom, animated series at app.

The transmedia experiences aimed at the development of specific skills and activities in teaching and education are also based on:

- *spreadability* (to search out information across the broadest possible ground);

- *multiplicity* (which encourages us to think about multiple versions – possible alternatives to the established canon);

- *subjectivity* (to look at the same events from multiple points of view, and express individual opinions in groups of interests);

- *hypersociability*[12] (the ability to create relations based on relationships created and consolidated solely in digital worlds);

12. Ito, M., *Technologies of the Childhood Imagination: Yugioh, Media and Everyday Cultural Production*, in: Karaganis, J., Jeremijenko, N. (ed.), *Network/Netplay: Structures of Participation in Digital Culture*, 2005.

- *multimodality*[13] (the ability to decode texts and portions of content using multiple languages – textual, visual, musical, spatial, etc. – in the process of acquisition and sharing of knowledge).

A fitting example in this case is that of a network of museums transformed into a transmedia learning platform both in the real world and in digital environments by the Danish interaction designer Asta Wellejus in 2014. *ICE* (*Interactive Culture Explorers*) consisted of a series of interactive projects where different Funen cultural institutions worked together to create new learning experiences for children and youth focusing on arts and culture. Cultural Region Funen had set a framework where people from educational and game industry worked together to create digital art and culture projects targeting respectively the 7-10 year olds and 12-16 year olds. Ten municipalities on Funen and the Ministry of Culture asked The Asta Experience to involve eight arts and cultural institutions in creating three types of project and experience exists in *ICE*, including interactive formats for exhibition, indoor and outdoor. For example the grave of the *Viking King*, an augmented exploration experience about myth and facts of the Viking age, or *Pythagoras Key*, a game of architecture and mathematics. Or the *ArtMix* to work on the basic rules of composition, theory of color and perspective, or the *Artmobile*, a 6 meter long interactive installation where the audience experienced and experimented with the meeting of music words and visual art. 5 of the 6 projects are apps, and all had gaming elements and structures weaved into the cultural heritage experience. Plus, a collaboration between Odense Central Library, Odense Symphony Orchestra and BRANDTS with a portable installation which could be seen at institutions and go on tour in the whole county. The two goals of the project were:

- *flexible communication* (physical cultural experiences/ learning tools and tasks/individual immersion);

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13. Kress, G., *Literacy in the New Media Age*, 2003.

- *modern learning* (differentiated teaching/forms of expression that responds to different learning styles/ ability to manage learning, time and experience individually/ability to strengthening the students' digital imaging and media literacy).[14]

For similar purposes, even if with completely different modes, I shall describe a final personal project.

Looking for Walter has been the first *transmedia experiential learning project* realized in Italy. On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the italian Disney's Magazine "Topolino", we sent two hand-made dolls to students of two different classes in two different italian cities, one in the middle and one in the northern part of the country. In a hidden pocket on the back of the dolls we put a small piece of paper with a short message. A conundrum. Nothing more. What to do, and why. Who represented the dolls? Why were they there? And the students of each class didn't know anything about the other students… This was the rabbit hole of the project, and these the rules of its story world: 50 students, 10 teachers, 20 runners, 2 handmade dolls and 11.000 km to be covered in 20 days using digital media and real world experiences without spending a single euro. The concept was a transcodified one, mixing urban quests and alternate reality games. The goal? Find the mysterious owner of the two toys – representing Walt Disney and his daughter, Diane – and share creative artworks and educational contents. Carried out from April to May 2013, *Looking for Walter* asked students to solve tricky enigmas and explore their country managing six different disciplines (literature and fiction, maths, art history, media studies, english and sciences) in order to succeed. Human relationships, positive emotions, good skills and media activism were the crafts of the quest, shared online on the official website of the project. And since the students succeeded, at the end… Diane Disney entered the scene, receiving the dolls and keeping

14. http://www.dieasta.dk/

them for ever in the wonderful museum created in honor of her father: The Walt Disney Family Museum in San Francisco!

Img. 6.14 Looking for Walter (2013). The dolls, the website, the museum and the final goal of the experiential learning project.

Based on the multimodality and new creative, technical and processing skills of the first native transmedia generation, *Looking for Walter* was inspired by a 2012 educational project called *Robot Heart Stories*[15] produced by narrator Lance Weiler, director of the Digital Storytelling Lab at Columbia University, New York, who in 2016 created another example of educational transmedia storytelling entitled: *Sherlock Holmes & the Internet of Things*. An ongoing prototype that explored new forms and functions of storytelling in an open R&D space that experimented with shifts in authorship and ownership of stories. The experiment used a detective narrative to examine the policy and ethical issues surrounding the Internet of Things (IoT). The goal of *Sherlock Holmes & the Internet of Things* was to build a massive connected crime scene consisting of smart storytelling objects. Teams of participants from all over the world created,

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15. In *Robot Heart Stories* (2012), the goal of the project was to "get home" the Lyka robot, crashed by mistake in Canada, starting from the United States through the help of children and students. At the end of his adventure (2000 miles), Lyka would carry with her all the words (7.000) and the emotional experiences (800) shared with the kids during her stay on Earth (http://www.lanceweiler.com/).

designed, built and tested prototypes that were plugged into a number of crime scene locations. At the heart of the experience was the *MOOC – massive online/offline collaboration*. Storytellers, game designers, makers, hackers and Sherlock Holmes fans came together to reimagine the work of Arthur C. Doyle. And over 1.200 people applied for the MOOC from 60 different countries.[16]

If these last two examples, along with all other small or big projects, independent or at an industrial level, will be the stepping stones of a worldwide pedagogical revolution or of the first steps humanity is making towards a new transmedial teaching, time will tell. In the meantime, there are many new collaborative storytelling projects emerging in universities, schools, events and museums all over the world, ready to experiment and over time to state new transmedial modes in learning and public and private teaching. And that is a fact.

WORKSHOP 6 – TRANSMEDIA FOR SOCIAL CHANGES

Choose one of the techniques described in this chapter and adapt it to the transmedia project you have in mind, in a charity or humanitarian context. Carefully evaluate the theme and make it the center of your story. Analyze the social and technological context in which to apply it and attempt to adapt it to the canvas elaborated by Lina Srivastava. Then try it with a focus group of at least 50 people and over 5 days in order to assess its impact, even if in a simple simulation. At the end, check the mechanisms you put in place and reconsider them by making adjustments in terms of communication and the strategies activated.

16. http://2016.sherlockholmes.io

Img. 6.15 Sherlock Holmes and the Internet of Things (2016). The website, the collaborative platforms and one of the crime scenes of the project.