

Storytelling Revisited

2022

**Narrating Spaces. Literature,
Education, Gender, Geography,
and Tourism**

Núria Camps-Casals, Mireia Canals Botines, Núria Medina Casanovas (Eds.)



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This book is the result of work by the consolidated research group GLOSSA (Which includes the former research groups TEXTLICO, GRELL and GRAC) (2021 SGR 00813) of the University of Vic – Central University of Catalonia (UVic-UCC) (C. de la Laura, 13, 08500. Vic, Spain).



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Introduction

The art of narrating stories, *id est* storytelling, has been the central theme of the International Conference Storytelling Revisited held in Vic since 2018. The concept of storytelling covers a wide range of fields but is primarily focused on how it impacts on individuals and influences our way of life within society. This ongoing discussion has been the primary goal of the research presented at these meetings thus far.

This book is the result of the University of Vic-Central University of Catalonia (UVic-UCC) organising the Fifth International Conference entitled: “Storytelling Revisited: Narrating Spaces. Literature, Education, Gender, Geography, and Tourism”, held in Vic (Barcelona) on 22nd and 23rd November 2022. This Conference provided a forum for teachers, students, researchers and professionals to deepen into the analysis of storytelling in relation to narrating spaces and all the surrounding topics: literature, education, geography, and tourism. It was an interdisciplinary conference organised by several research groups across UVic-UCC: GLOSSA (Formed by former research groups TEXTLICO, GRELL and GRAC), GETLIHC and TRACTE, from the Faculty of Education, Translation, Sports and Psychology (FETEP), EMPREN, from the Faculty of Business and Communication Studies (FEC), and ISaMBeS, from the Faculty of Healthcare Sciences and Wellbeing.

As it has already been pointed out, this academic meeting revolved around the study of narrative structures and storytelling applied to narrating spaces, destination marketing, literature, geography, and their didactic implications. The three main lines of research were the following:

- **Spatializing narrative / Narrating space:** In the context of storytelling, it is essential to deepen our comprehension of how space is employed in narratology. Exploring the definition of space and its emotional associations requires a multidisciplinary approach in which geography and the study of narratives take up a leading role.

- **Storytelling & tourism / Storytelling in the context of destination marketing:** By creating marketing campaigns based on storytelling that emotionally resonate with travellers may lead to increased brand engagement. Storytelling has, in fact, the potential to create an emotional connection between the place and its target market.
- **Literature, Geography and didactic implications:** The fictional depiction of actual places in literature may have an impact on how we perceive those places, and it may reshape our conception of them. Those geographical spaces / places mediated through literature are a rich source of didactic materials.

This introduction has explained the elaborated on the structure of this volume and its origins and provided a thumbnail summary of the contents. However, the conclusion will be drawn on each of its chapters, which will serve as a proposal for next year's appointment in the sixth edition of the Conference. The main aim is always to find some common ground and further develop the construct of storytelling in the future. All these considerations are consistently held with a gender perspective in mind, recognizing it as a fundamental element for comprehending their implications within the domain of storytelling associated with destination marketing, literature, gender, and geography.

Núria Camps-Casals

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Feminine aspect of British travel literature and the benefits of travelogue technique for present education

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Introduction

Travelogue as a teaching technique broadens the students' worldview, imagination and visualisation, enhances their writing and reading skills, involves reflecting the reader's position in society and granting insight into the culture and language diversity.

Travelogue and travel literature also introduce gender interpretation of the way to explore the world and self. Throughout the history of traveling literature that dates back to the time of Homer and Hesiod, travelling was a source of exploring and interpreting the world. In the wide scope of the British literature the masculine and feminine views on traveling became vivid in the seventeenth century where among the male writers like John Donne, John Milton, the voices of Katherine Philips and Anne Bradstreet were also meaningful. More female writers and more female literature appeared in the nineteenth century British literature. During the early modern time in the British literature more power was given to the secular literature than it had been done before in order to transfer the moral values for the working class people, and at the same time the secular literature [Stevenson J. Davidson P., 2001].

The present matters of the country have been considered in the poetry of Katherine Philips when she travelled accompanied by her husband around Great Britain. In one of her poems she revealed the essence of the

mother tongue for the development of the country. In her poem “On the Welsh language”:

And as the Roman and the Grecian state,
 The British fell, the spoil of time and fate.
 But though the language hath the beauty lost,
 Yet she has still some great remains to boast.
 In this once Boadicca valour taught,
 And spoke more nobly than her soldiers fought:
 Tell me what hero could be more than she,
 Who fell at once for fame and liberty?
 Nor could a greater sacrifice belong,
 Or to her children's, or her country's wrong
 [Stevenson J., Davidson P. , 2001, 330].

Theoretical background

Travel literature is an umbrella term for the stories where travelling as a process and the author's impression on culture, history and present time of the country the traveler visits are depicted. Travelogue as a genre of storytelling and an instructional tool seems to be effective for the Ukrainian teachers nowadays to describe the students and teachers impressions as the displaced people during the time of the Russian war in Ukraine. Modern society gives a lot of challenges to a present teacher of foreign languages to deal with. The present situation in the country and world shows the significance of the face to face communication in socializing and keeping the feeling of being a part of society. Thus, the social skill as communication is a basic competence in curricula that constantly is under the main attention in primary to tertiary education. In the article “Perceived Impact of Cooperative Project-Based Learning in English for Academic Purposes for Primary Teacher Training Students” Núria Camps-Casals and Núria Medina-Casanovas (2020) state that nowadays there is the need of “setting aside traditional teaching-centered approaches that had been dominant until recent times in which learners had to copy and reproduce contents divided in subjects and there is the need of approaching schools to real life contexts” [Camps-Casals N. & Medina-Casanovas N., 2020, 60].

Storytelling and travelogue as its genre is one of the teaching methods which involves both creativity and deep knowledge of the subject, self-reflection and language immersion. In the journal article "Storytelling as an Instructional Method: Descriptions and Research Questions" by Dr. Dee Andrews, Thomas Hull, Jennifer Donahue (2009) the notion "story" is defined as a story which facilitates instruction directly through verbal or linguistic means and indirectly by aiding in the mental construction of a sequence of events enacted for or by the learner [Andrews, D. & Hull, Th., 2009, 7].

Using the stories as an instructional tool serves as a way of self-reflection as it is a less directive form of training, life-bound; significant part of participatory and interaction, at the same time storytelling is considered to be a way of language immersion, because the method of storytelling facilitates instruction directly through verbal means. Storytelling has become popular in the education process.

Travelogue can be like a macro and micro element in teaching process. Travelogue as a tool can be applied systematically to the whole course like a scenario and can be limited in its usage at the certain stage of a class like warming up or a problem-solving activity etc.

The student and lecture audience will acquire the learning material better when they experience *the scenario*. The landscape of actions is easier to remember and it is closer to the human nature. Thus, while teaching Country studies for undergraduate students, it is a good idea to create a "plot" of this course. Where you will start the travel and get its destination. So, it can be *the conceptual framework of using storytelling* in the learning process. In *the scenario-based instructions* the learning issue is fixed with the fixed solution and planned in details.

Problem-based instruction

Storytelling can be applied as a microelement in the teaching process. The example for storytelling use in the class can be an exercise similar to the story behind the picture. The objective of this exercise is to introduce a new vocabulary and the usage of new words to create their own stories.

Materials needed for this purpose are several pictures cut out from news magazines which evoke certain emotions and portray current events. Each picture has a list of 6 new words attached dealing with emotions related to the characters in the pictures. For example, for a picture of a refugee, these words can be *abandonment, despair, strife, longing, heartache, and helplessness*. Then, the student will take time to introduce the story where he describes what is happening in the picture. Alternatively, students will write a “journal entry” for the main character in their photo. While presenting the journal entries, students are to ask questions. The presenting students should answer all questions concerning the character.

Method

The present questionnaire on language situation at Poltava V.G. Korolenko Pedagogical University studies the issue of “Foreign Languages in the learning process” as a part of a survey within Erasmus+ “Foreign Language Teacher Training Capacity Development as a Way to Ukraine’s Multilingual Education and European Integration/MultiEd” (610427-EE-2019-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP) (15.11.2019 – 14.11. 2022). The project is implemented by 14 partners from Estonia, Germany, Great Britain and Ukraine, the main partner is the University of Tartu (Estonia), including 9 Ukrainian higher educational institutions. The total number of people who participated in the survey was 3500. The survey concentrates on attitudes to learning and use of foreign languages in the country; self-assessment of foreign language skills by the respondents and their openness to foreign languages; attitudes to the introduction of courses in foreign languages; the necessity of boosting international cooperation in education.

Block IV of the questionnaire reveals the issue of “Languages in the learning process”. At PNPU, 681 respondents were asked to rate the statement concerning the English leaning /teaching at the university like: I completely agree; I partially agree; neither agree nor disagree; partially disagree; I completely disagree.

The following statements were suggested as insufficient learning hours were dedicated to English study in the present curricula; teachers inspire and motivate; the use of modern books and teaching materials; teaching

methods are modern; low level of English proficiency among students who enter the university.

Undergraduate students (38.21%), graduates (31.91%), teaching staff (48, 78%) agree with the statement that teachers inspire and motivate. At the same time, 4.94% of undergraduate students, 8.54% of graduates, and 0% of scientific and pedagogical staff disagree with the above statement.

Undergraduate students (34.75%), graduates (26.60%), teaching staff (21.96%) agree with the statement that teaching methods are modern. But 4.75% of undergraduate students, 6.38% of graduates, 0% of scientific and pedagogical staff do not agree with this statement.

Undergraduate students (36.5%), graduates (37, 23%), teaching staff (17, 07%) agree with the statement about the low level of English language proficiency among students entering the university. At the same time, 3.80% of undergraduate students, 1.03% of graduates, 0% of scientific and pedagogical staff do not agree with this statement.

The obtained results give grounds to claim that there are many aspects of the learning process that need to be corrected, improved and updated. Motives for learning are not only a prerequisite for successful professional learning of the student, they are also its consequence. There should be a positive attitude to the educational material, the subject of learning should be interesting, and cognitive activity – aimed at professional development. Student responses indicate that teachers do not always inspire and motivate students. The motivation of students' learning is largely determined by the development of their educational activities in the process of professional training. Interested in his subjects, with a creative approach to their teaching, wide awareness and erudition, the teacher influences students by their own example. Therefore, teachers of the Faculty of Philology and Journalism, Faculty of Psychology and Pedagogy (specialty: primary school teacher) need to be in constant methodological search for the use of modern innovative methods and pedagogical techniques. Participants in the educational process mostly acknowledged that teaching methods are modern, but this percentage still needs to grow, teachers should properly and meaningfully organize independent work of students, actively using

distance technology, Internet resources and more. To introduce new methods, it is necessary to identify creativity and involve enterprising students to optimize the course (to conduct a survey among students to improve the disciplines of completion of each module).

The survey shows that the young generation understands the opportunities of foreign languages and ready to face new methods in teaching and learning (see Table 1).

	Totally disagree	Some-what disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somew hat agree	Totally agree
	%	%	%	%	%
Teaching is interactive	3,2	6,0	11,1	44,8	34,9
Teaching promotes creativity and critical thinking	5,8	8,8	11,5	37,4	36,5
The teacher adjust the material to suit the interest / level of the group	6,7	8,0	11,2	32,6	41,5
Teaching is student-centred	3,7	5,8	10,5	31,5	48,6
During practical classes students speak 80% of the time	6,0	9,2	13,0	36,7	35,1

Results

Observing the present state of the matters the travelogue is considered to be a teaching technique in order to involve students into personal interpretation and exploration the world. Based on the current survey on the “Language situation” at pedagogical universities of Ukraine in the framework of “MultiED” Erasmus+ KA 2 project. The result illustrated the relevance of language and culture situation from the point of view of

men and women, professors and students and the corelation of modern teaching methods and present linguistic picture of the world are observed.

Conclusions and discussions

Travelling literature, such as the British literature gives us good examples to learn about values and cultural traditions, challenges for the society which the writer reveals. The best samples of travel literature are considered to be "Robinson Crusoe" by Daniel Defoe (1709) and "Gulliver's Travels" (1726) by Jonathan Swift. Less known samples of novels about colonial culture of Great Britain were taken into consideration such as "Oroonoko" by Aphra Behn, whose stories were inspired by her travelling to Surinam as a young woman, together with her mother and siblings to the French colony of Surinam, modern Guiana, where she based her story. Also, the voyage of the seventeenth century writer Ann Bradstreet from England to the USA and who is considered to be a first female American poet as she became a resident of USA together with her husband and wrote a lot about her feelings as an eternally displaced person as well.

The obtained results based on the questionnaire give grounds to claim that there are many aspects of the learning process that need to be corrected, improved and updated. Motives for learning are not only a prerequisite for successful professional learning of the student, they are also its consequence. There should be a positive attitude to the educational material, the subject of learning should be interesting, and the cognitive activities need to be aimed at professional development. Student responses indicate that teachers do not always inspire and motivate students. The motivation of students' learning is largely determined by the development of their educational activities in the process of professional training. Interested in his subjects, with a creative approach to their teaching, wide awareness and erudition, the teacher influences students by their own example. Travelogue for present days for Ukrainian teachers and students can be used as a tool for describing the reflections on the country they have to stay during the time of the Russian war in Ukraine in 2022. At the present state of education in Ukraine, travelogue and its healing effect can be considered as a teaching tool for those who write and read.

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“Let’s See the Moroccans up Close!”. Constructing Otherness in Vasile Alecsandri’s *Travel in Africa*

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Is Really Travel Narrative a Literary Genre?

In his essay “The Travel Narrative as a (Literary) Genre” David Chirico deplores the lack of grounding theory and of specific analytical tools in this particular case. It is a fact that genres as such have lost, in part, their relevance, being often seen nowadays as relics “from an era of prescriptive literary criticism”¹. It is not surprising, then, that “travel narrative” tends to be, in its turn, if not relegated to the periphery of literary study, at least absorbed into the larger domain usually designated as “autobiographical writing”. The definition proposed by Paul Fussell may serve, among others, to illustrate this point: “Travel books are sub-species of memoir in which the autobiographical narrative arises from the speaker’s encounter with distant or unfamiliar data, and in which the narrative – unlike that of a novel or a romance – claims literal validity by constant reference to actuality”².

Besides, recent critical work on life narratives has drawn attention to the lack of specificity of the category we discuss. “However much interest in

1. David Chirico, “The Travel Narrative as a (Literary) Genre”, in Wendy Bracewell and Alex Drace-Francis (ed.), *Under Eastern Eyes. A Comparative Introduction to East European Travel Writing on Europe*, Central European University Press, Budapest-New York, 2008, pp. 27-59, p. 28.

2. Paul Fussell, *Abroad. British Literary Traveling Between the Wars*, Oxford University Press, Oxford-New York, 1980, p. 203.

travel texts – observes David Chirico – it is ultimately directed outwards from them”³. Precisely, this interest is focused on the information they provide about historical personalities, or about geographical facts, about the history of discourses or ideologies.

Phillipe Lejeune, in his turn, in a short essay included in his volume *Signes de vie. Le pacte autobiographique II*⁴, rightly notices that we can speak about “a travel diary” only when we are dealing with a text which is clearly marked by a departure date – written on the first page – and a return date – placed at its end –, in other words when the coherence of the text is given less by the topic of the personal self, and more by that of the journey (which makes it similar to the war diary and turns into somehow outdated enterprise). How else could one explain the fact that only travel diaries had been published up to the 19th century, only for the genre to become obsolete afterwards?

On the other hand, for a long time, the experience of discovering new lands was considered exemplary, therefore worthy to be shared with others mainly for its historical, sociological or anthropological relevance. All these are aspects that have decisively contributed to the “glory” of travel writings in the past: “*Moi seul*, writes Lejeune, *c’est nul et haïssable. Moi et l’Amérique, ça marche. Surtout si on l’a découverte*”⁵. On the contrary, the overwhelming majority of modern writers prefer to retrace the journey of an individual identity *quest*, deliberately leaving the territory of *simile* in order to explore, along with exotic spaces or independently of them, the unique configuration of the self, a “space” where travel experience is often reshaped according to predetermined psychological or social frames.

In the following pages I’ll explore a travelogue which can be placed in-between the above-mentioned tendencies: a nineteenth century account of Vasile Alecsandri’s *Travels in Africa*, a text published in the second half of the nineteenth century. I’ve made this choice for several reasons which I’ll explain later on.

3. David Chirico, “The Travel Narrative as a (Literary) Genre”,... p.29.

4. Philippe Lejeune, *Signes de vie. Le pacte autobiographique 2*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 2005, 161-167.

5. *Ibid.*, p.162.

A Moldavian Pilgrim

Vasile Alecsandri is regarded by Romanian literary critics as one of the significant Romantic writers. He was born in 1821 into one of Moldavia's aristocratic or "boyar" families. His mother, Elena (born Cozoni) was a distinguished lady of Greek origin. Despite belonging to a family with a tradition in private education, as a young gentleman he was enrolled in Victor Cuénim's French boarding school in Iași, and subsequently sent to Paris (between 1834-1839) to continue his studies.

The author played a significant role in the 1848 revolution, and attained high office several times during Romania's road to independence, acting as minister for foreign affairs (1859–1860) and as Romanian ambassador in France (1885-1890).

As a writer, Alecsandri has complemented his verses with prose writings, comedies and poetic dramas. Simultaneously, as a participant in the movement to modernize Romanian culture, he was active in the National Theatre in Iași and in the emerging Romanian press (as the editor of several literary and cultural journals).

Before 1853, the year when his African voyage began, Vasile Alecsandri travelled a lot in Europe. The impressions from some of his European travels had been gathered in two diaries written in French, one about his journey in Constantinople in 1845, the other as a result of his voyage in Italy (1846).

The "demon" of tourism

In 1853, driven once more by the "demon of tourism", Alecsandri departs from Paris to Biarritz, spending there a whole month and immensely enjoying his holidays, abundant in sea swimming escapades, humourously recalled in his travel accounts. It is in Biarritz that the idea to continue his periples in Morocco, accompanied by an Englishman with whom he had become friends in Biarritz, occurs to him. Not long after, the restless travellers get in the post-chaise in Bayonne, crossing in big rush Toulouse, Nîmes and Marseille, and finally embarking on September 23 on a ship heading towards Gibraltar. The distance from Gibraltar to Tangier is covered in

another week, and on October 1st Alecsandri lands on the North African shore. The first part of his *Travels in Africa* recounts all these preliminary events. Here it is an illustrative paragraph about the benefits of travelling in post-chaise:

Of all modes of transport, the post-chaise is without doubt the most pleasant and comfortable; and of all the journeys in Europe, that between Bayonne and Toulouse, in the department of Basses-Pyrenées, is one of the most beautiful. The post-chaise, being designed to carry letters at the utmost speed, takes no more than two travellers; it covers the whole journey at galloping pace, day and night, without stopping anywhere for more than five minutes. The travellers have to ensure they bring their own provisions, or else risk going unfed and unwatered for twenty-four hours on end, a serious predicament, and one highly likely to undermine their enthusiasm⁶.

Although Alecsandri wrote his travelogue almost two hundred years ago, his book seems not really obsolete or completely uninteresting for the contemporary reader. On the contrary, it provides a fresh and enthralling reading experience, and the exotic destination isn't, for sure, the only reason. It is a fact that not many Romanian travellers had explored the African continent and even fewer had written down their thoughts and impressions on this topic before the 1855 (the year when Alecsandri first publishes fragments of his travelogue in *România literară*, a Romantic literary journal) . As far as the nineteenth century Romanian travel literature is concerned, we can mention other two exceptions: Dimitrie Bolintineanu and Dimitrie Ghika-Comănești. The former was one of Alecsandri's generation fellows, a Wallakian Romantic poet, who travelled to Middle East, visiting Palestine și Egypt, in 1854. In the last decade of the nineteenth century (precisely in 1895), Dimitrie Ghika-Comănești, a hunter and amateur scientist, undertook a hunting expedition in the East of Africa, subsequently publishing his memoirs. Otherwise, the Romantic era abounds in travel narratives, in the Romanian Principalities as well as throughout the world, but Romanian travellers generally preferred to head

6. Vasile Alecsandri, *Călătorie în Africa* [A Travel in Africa], in *Opere IV*, Minerva, București, 1974, trans. in English by Alex. Drace-Francis, in *Anuarul Muzeului Literaturii Române*, Iași, VII/ 2014, p.140.

West, aware that the civilised Europe, and especially France, could provide inspiring cultural models.

As far as Vasile Alecsandri's African travelogue is concerned, it seems to me remarkable the way in which the writer dramatizes the relationship between identity and otherness, constantly oscillating between empathy and preconceived ideas. Apparently, in Herder's style of thinking, the Romantic traveller inclines to see variation as the norm, but at the same time he is not always prepared to examine or understand properly local peculiarities. Bewildered by the sordide reality encountered in Tangier he compares it to the European "civilized" world, on the one hand and to the "marvels of the Oriental tales", on the other, in the end being twice disappointed. His endeavour should not be regarded narrowly as a reductive effort, but rather as the overlapping of the mental image and reality. As Mihail Bakhtin has rightly observed in non-fictional accounts, more transparently as in travel novels, the author's homeland "serves as an organizing center for the points of view, the scales of comparison, the approaches and evaluations"⁷. But in this particular case the bibliographic knowledge also plays its part in forging unrealistic mental representations of reality, ironically revealed as such. An interesting remark made by the narrator in the beginning of the description of a Moroccan marketplace may serve to illustrate this point:

Accompanied by Hamed, we passed through a labyrinth of narrow streets to visit, not the grandiose and gilded serais, *nor the fanciful gardens with their marble fairytales, nor the marvels of the Oriental tales*, but a small square in the town centre which offered a lively prospect of Arab life.⁸
(my emphasis)

It is not a difficult task to discern here a subtle, self-ironical attempt to discredit stereotypes. As it is well known, European travellers considered the Maghreb either as a part of the Mediterranean, thus highlighting its

7. Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, Michael Holquist (ed.); trans. By Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, 1981, Austin, University of Texas 1990, p.103.

8. V. Alecsandri, *Călătorie în Africa* [A Travel in Africa], in *Opere IV*, Minerva, București, 1974, trans. in English by Alex. Drace-Francis, in *Anuarul Muzeului Literaturii Române*, Iași, VII/ 2014, p.146.

image as the territory of Hellenistic and Roman civilizations, or as part of an even more vague and conventionalised entity, the Orient. Especially in the course of the nineteenth century, many artists, writers and painters discovered in Maghreb an exotic space, representing in every way the opposite of the rational, austere and rather boring societies they had left behind. Especially the fascination with the Oriental tales from the collection of *A Thousand and One Nights* had played a central part in constructing this idealised and in some way distorted image. Not only Orientalist painting, that became very fashionable in this period, but also fictional or non-fictional narratives excelled in representations of opulent palaces, slave markets, scenes of oriental debauchery, barbaric executions and so on. By the same token, the sordidness of everyday life, the poverty of the indigenous people, their “drained faces”, “their straggle beards” and their rags would seem to shatter the Romantic traveller’s high expectations (real or pretended):

On this square there were two rows of shops, or rather little dens, hewn from stone, where the sellers sit cross-legged and with their agarwood rosary beads in hand. With their bronzed faces and their dried bodies, they appeared in the shade like unearthed mummies; their physiognomy preserved an absolute stillness, so long as nothing passes before them; but as soon as a customer appeared in the distance, their eyes would light up like glowing coals and their mouths, equipped with an armoury of long teeth begin to call out... *agiarel, agiarel!* Those machines covered over with weatherbeaten skin, became animated at the thought of profit, which set them in motion with such jerky, uncoordinated movements as would have you believe you were in a menagerie of orangutans. In the centre of the square a few reed mats were laid out, piled up with rotten dates, unripe watermelons, Indian figs and earth-black hazelnuts⁹.

At this point, the analysts of narrative modes will not miss out a crucial aspect, regarding the dichotomy between “showing” and “telling” (or between “mimetic” and “diegetic” modes). It has been pointed-out that travel narratives (as first person, non-fictional texts), generally combine

9. *Ibidem.*

these two modalities, in variable proportions. Vasile Alecsandri definitely privileges the direct to mediated presentation, manifesting an undeniable propensity for displaying abundant chromatic details, as well as for combining techniques and scenarios from fiction and drama, as in the following paragraph:

A crowd of Arabs, Berbers, Blacks and Jews were shoving and arguing over those ridiculous victuals, lying in a swarm of flies; while along the square there were two santuni running and jumping, threatening all the passers-by with the tips of their spears which they were holding in their hands. A third was standing in the sun trembling and bleating like a goat, a fourth was going head over heels, flagellating his body on the cobblestones in honour of Mohammed, and a fifth spent the entire day shouting out the words: Sahalik mlihi, his voice in unison with that of a two-stringed guitar, called the ghiumbrea. All this went on in a space enclosed by bare walls, with no windows, no doors and the African sun throwing down torrents of fire¹⁰.

Beyond the visual, the traveller's perception of the indigenous people seems to be indebted to the persistent bias according to which a huge chasm separates the European / Western civilisation from the African one.

On the other hand, Alecsandri indirectly undermines such eurocentric biases, since his travel account displays also the marks of a (self)ironic or (self) detached attitude. In other words, taking advantage of the flexibility allowed by the genre, the writer simultaneously portrays the discreetly parodied figure of the superficial European traveller, eager to experience extraordinary sensations, always in search of adventures and escapades in the multi-ethnic area of North Africa. Yet, this parodic-burlesque self-portrait functions rather as a mask or alibi in the author's endeavour to discredit the pretensions of superiority from the part of Western travelers in general.

On quite another level of rhetoric, the account of the narrator's interpersonal encounters is also an excellent occasion for telling stories, more or less

10. *Ibidem*.

plausible. The main frames narratives, as well as the embedded ones (some are simply romances, as *Monte di Fo*; others are more or less burlesque anecdotes, as Captain Cambell's excentric and mischievous life-story) all of them giving an overall Oriental flavour to the text, up to including the impression that a true traveller should also be a good listeners in search of tales.

An Encomium to In-Betweenness (Instead of Conclusion)

Ultimately, *in-betweenness* seems to be the key-word for understanding Alecsandri's travelogue, a narrative also illustrative for what Virgil Nemoianu once called "Biedermeier Romanticism"¹¹, a trend well-represented in Romanian literature of the nineteenth century.

Besides, it is to note that there could be established a connection between travel experience and the well known literary-sociological trope of the fictional foreign observer, whose unfamiliarity with local customs provides a pretext for a detailed description of them (a trope frequently used not only by Alecsandri, but also by many of his Romantic generation fellows).

Oscillating between showing and telling, the author dramatizes the relationship between East and West, Europeans and non-Europeans, identity and otherness, finally giving a particular emphasis to the ambivalence of the main "characters": the European traveller and the Morrocan/ African Other. By the same token, his fictional universe is located on the shifting border between factual reality and fiction.

Initially, Alecsandri's narrative closely follows the order of his travels in France, then in North Africa, but gradually he inserts a variety of subplots and descriptions that turn his account in a sort of "narrative with drawers", a frame very similar to that of *The Arabian Nights*. Overall, in this attentively elaborated travelogue distinguishing between fact and fiction will prove a difficult, if not a superflous endeavor.

11. Virgil Nemoianu, *The Taming of Romanticism. European Literature and the Age of Biedermeier*, Harvard University Press, 1984.

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The Conflict of Narratives in the Representation of Women: A Review of Iranian Tourism Advertisements

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Introduction

After the 1979 Iranian revolution, a lot has changed in this country. One of these changes was the position of women in society. Although the newly established state promised the “rule of democracy in every sense” (Khomeini, Interview with Times Magazin, 1978), restrictive measures were taken against women very quickly. From their employment in public institutions to the headscarf, so-called “Islamic” measures were taken, and the society was tried to be reorganized “in line with the Islamic way of life.”

Islamization continued as a political formation for many years. The rules introduced in this regard merged with the element of force in time, and this force was legitimized through laws and regulations. However, as the Islamization of the society became evident, tourists’ arrival in Iran became a problem. How foreigners, especially women, will dress in the Islamic Republic of Iran was one of the topics of discussion between politicians and clergies. State officials did not take a clear stand on this issue, especially during the eight years of war between Iran and Iraq; also, the number of foreign tourists was not particularly high. However, it was not acceptable to travel to Iran without a headscarf. Iranian state officials later explained this situation with a formula: “We have a law called hijab; you who are Muslims must follow it because it is both a law and it is written in Sharia. If you are non-Muslim, you follow it as the law of Iranian citizenship, not

Sharia" (Gholami, 2020). This interpretation, with no exception, forces every woman to wear a headscarf in Iran.

Iran, where the hijab is compulsory, is sometimes attractive to tourists, but sometimes it has ceased to be the choice of tourists. The Russian ambassador in Tehran recently said that mandatory hijab and prohibition of alcoholic beverages in Iran are two major obstacles for Russian citizens to travel to this country (Dzhagaryan, 2022). Against this issue, the Iranian state began to prefer two methods; promoting pilgrimage to holy places and promoting the natural and historical beauty of Iran. Still, in both methods, they did not emphasize this country's social situation in their advertising narratives.

Although the advertisements were made by the state, they were prepared by the members of the civil society or the people working in the tourism sector. Both groups created narratives on Iran's touristic values. In the narratives of state-affiliated advertisements, no connection was established with tourists; individual or corporate employees in the tourism sector had a chance to create narratives from the tourists who came to Iran. In this context, the study examines Hoda Rostami's touristic narratives, which have come to the fore in recent years with her campaigns and photographs promoting Iran's social structure.

During the years of her activity, Hoda Rostami created a face of Iran in social networks through the photos she published, which, according to many Iranians, was different from the reality of this society. According to critics, she presented an image of Iranian women and the state of hijab to tourists, especially Europeans, in which hijab did not play a serious role in Iran. Therefore, this study aims to look at the narratives that have developed around the hijab topic in Iran and how they are reflected in the industry of tourism in order to answer this following question: how does tourism marketing in Iran depict the status of women in society?

To reach this goal and answer the question asked, this study first will focus on the narrative and its effects on tourism and will look at the tourism activities of Hoda Rostami, an influential figure in Iran. Rostami was chosen for this issue because, as a woman, she has garnered a lot of attention with her projects in recent years, but she has also been exposed to criticisms.

Most of the criticisms made about her are about the representation of women. According to most critics, she does not reflect the realities of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Therefore, this study first touch on her views and then the criticisms that have developed against her, and finally, within these different views, the study in hand will try to get closer to the reality of the hijab issue in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Narrative and the Power of Advertising for Tourism

Narratives greatly influence our social lives because they give us a way to make sense of the world and our own experiences. Narratives are an important part of human communication since they shape our perception of a culture. Furthermore, we come across narratives that are relevant to our lives in numerous forms, such as daily advertising. Advertisers, on the other hand, construct a captivating storyline or message that connects with their target audience. Narrative in advertising campaigns, when done creatively, professionally, and effectively, contributes significantly to its success of it, of course, by selecting the correct narrative perspectives. As “A narrative perspective particularly draws attention to temporal, relational, and performative processes entrepreneurs engage in as they attempt to get support for and give meaning to new projects” (Manning & Bejarano, 2017)

It can be said that the presence of a strong story behind the curtain of a company’s advertising efforts stirs more emotions and lets products communicate more effectively with audiences. Moreover, narrating helps enrich the content produced and is one of the most important components of content marketing. So, according to Bryan Eisenberg, “Effective content marketing is about mastering the art of storytelling. Facts tell, but stories sell.” (Eisenberg, 2020)

The narrative is beneficial in tourism because it helps to create a memorable and compelling experience for visitors. The narrative is used in tourism in a variety of ways, including creating a sense of place, improving the visitor experience, encouraging return visits, and generating publicity and hype. Storytelling in tourism means using a narrative to convey a desired message. The goal is to arouse the emotions of the audience to the point that they are stimulated to follow. “The success of a narrative presentation

in tourism destinations depends on the tourists' involvement, willingness, and ability to actively participate in the storytelling experience." (Lund, Cohen, & Scarles, 2018). Therefore, it can be said that storytelling is nowadays a common technique to increase the power of emotions in advertising. This is because people tend to store information in the form of a story because it is easier for them to remember.

When it comes to tourism and storytelling, storytelling becomes crucial and helpful in establishing customer relationships. In reality, narrative assists advertising in establishing a deeper connection with its target audience. By listening to compelling narratives, consumers can get to know an organization's principles, ethics, and personality. "Storytelling also has impacts on listeners in terms of affective responses, and critical and narrative thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and intentions" (Sabiote & Ballester, 2016).

Hoda Rostami, Narrative and Representation of Women

Hoda Rostami, an acclaimed social media influencer and traveler hailing from Iran, is widely believed to receive financial backing from the Iranian government. To effectively execute a fam trip¹ campaign, she collaborated with various foreign bloggers, influencers, and photographers to enhance and refine her campaign. However, her depiction of the Islamic dress regulation (hijab) for women in Iran appears to be somewhat distorted in her social media narratives. Rostami's posts frequently feature pictures of herself and other Iranian women and descriptions of the country's geography.

1. FAM trip is an abbreviation for "Familiarization Trip." It is a common practice in the travel industry to invite travel agents, tour operators, and other industry professionals to visit a destination to become more acquainted with it. Participants on a FAM trip is typically organized by local tourism boards, hotels, and other travel industry partners. Accommodations, meals, transportation, and a schedule of activities and tours highlighting the destination's attractions, accommodations, and amenities are provided. The goal is to give participants a thorough and hands-on understanding of the destination so that they can confidently recommend it to their clients.

By considering that art of narrative in tourism can significantly affect a campaign's success, it is executed with creativity and professionalism. It is, however, incumbent upon the individual responsible for crafting the narrative to select an appropriate perspective. In Rostami's case, selecting an accurate narrative perspective may be difficult due to the potential for legal repercussions from the Iranian government.

The ongoing suppression of women in Iran has given rise to concerns regarding the accuracy of her social media depictions of the situation, as well as opposition to any representations deemed inaccurate. Feminist organizations have been particularly vocal in their opposition to the Iranian government's imposition of the hijab as mandatory for Iranian women and have accordingly protested any such depictions. Consequently, some individuals and feminist organizations within Iran have taken issue with Rostami's social media posts, citing unrealistic or objectionable narratives regarding the country.

During the years Rostami has been working, she has received constant criticism regarding the representation of women. It is possible to evaluate Rostami's views and the point of view of her critics on three different issues:

1. She believes that in light of the current situation in Iran, where they are building a tall wall all the way around the nation, and given that she is a blogger and an influencer, she is aware of the allure of traveling. She is of the opinion that the increase in tourism will decrease the pace at which the wall is built, bring money into the country, and put that money directly into the pockets of eco-tourists and hotels that went out of business during the Corona era.

During the years that Rostami was active, the projects she carried out, especially the parts that related to the representation of women, were subjected to many criticisms. The effort that Rostami made to misrepresent the reality of living in the Islamic Republic was brought to light by multiple users of Twitter. One of them posted a picture from her Instagram profile in which she was not wearing a hijab beside an image of an Iranian women's rights activist who had been sentenced to several years in prison for not wearing a scarf. The user makes the

observation that in the first picture, the viewer can see Rostami, who is “an influencer tasked with beautifying the obligatory hijab,” whereas, in the second picture, the viewer can see Saba Kord Afshari, who has been sentenced to five years in prison for “spreading corruption and prostitution by removing her hijab in public.” The user also notes that Rostami is “an influencer tasked with beautifying the obligatory hijab.”

2. Rostami and her followers argued that those who disagree with them are “irrational” or “enemies of Iran.” Rostami and her fans are opposed to any efforts to characterize Iran adversely at a time when the majority of the world’s mainstream media portrays the country poorly. Nonetheless, other people think that labeling opponents as enemies of the country is just a political shield for them.

The opponents of her campaign defended their view by pointing to the fact that subsequent coverage of her campaign in state media was perceived by many as evidence that the Iranian government supported her plan.

3. The last issue is the concept that the audience of worldwide influencers prefers tourist attractions rather than feeling discomfort; she believes that this is the logic behind tourism. She provides support for her argument by asserting that not all of Iran is covered in gorgeous tiles and brilliant colors but that a foreign travel blogger publishes these images because he or she is not a journalist. She states this to show that not all of Iran is covered in such things.

In this case, the counterargument is that Rostami’s campaign distorts the reality of the obligatory hijab, particularly the worldwide influencers who are participating in this activity. As an illustration of this, Iranians were enraged when they saw a tweet in which one of the international influencers involved in her campaign praised the hijab as “a really good thing that also protects the skin from the sun.”

Islamic Revolution and Hijab, Roots of Reality

In March 1979, less than a month after the revolution, rumors spread about the necessity of an Islamic hijab for Iranian women. Ayatollah Khomeini

the leader of Islamic Republic, stated in a speech on March 6: "Islamic women must go out wearing a headscarf, not makeup; working in offices is not illegal, but women must wear an Islamic hijab." (Khomeini, Etefaat, 1978)

Female employees who attempted to enter their workplace on March 8 were denied entry and instructed to go home, wear a headscarf, and then return to the office. Nevertheless, rather than coming home, the women went to the streets. More than fifteen thousand women participated in a big march through the heart of Tehran. They chanted, "We did not start a revolution to withdraw." In that meeting, women read a resolution. In this proclamation, the demonstrators' demands include allowing women to choose their own clothing, having equal civil and political rights, eradicating inequity in labor regulations, and eliminating discrimination in regard to family rights (Sadr, 2014). That year, this request was not implemented. In 1980, however, the political establishment was able to make the hijab compulsory in all Iranian workplaces. One year later, restaurants were likewise required to conform to Islamic principles.

The majority of revolutionary political groups of that time, from the left and liberal to religious and secular forces, left the women protesting the hijab alone with their opposition or silence, paving the way for more and more suppression and infringement on women's rights in the months and years that followed. But the topic of women's rights arose once more in 1993 when a psychiatrist by the name of Dr. Homa Darabi set herself on fire in one of Tehran's principal squares. She shouted, "Long live Iran, long live freedom, and death to the dictator!" (Sanij, 2022)

A few years later, in Iran, the movement that later took the name of reforms took over the executive power in Iran. Women were given the opportunity to voice their desires, and a campaign titled One Million Signatures was launched to eradicate gender discrimination against women. Yet, women did not receive political support. Iran's legislative authority, the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution, enacted the law at the same time as this campaign. On the basis of this law (2004), a police entity named "Gestht Irshad" (guidance patrol) was founded to oversee the situation of hijab in Iran (isna.ir, 2016).

Since establishing the guidance patrol in Iranian society, widespread discontent has existed. In Iran, the Guidance Patrol warns women whose hijab does not conform with the political system's desires; they may then arrest the women and transport them to the police station. They will be given a pledge or sent to hijab training classes at the police station, and if they repeat the violation, they will be sentenced to prison or fined.

In several instances, the officers of this police agency subjected "bad hijab" individuals to physical and psychological violence (to those who do not follow the dress code). In recent months, there has been an escalation in violence; a husband was shot for objecting to the actions of this organization's operatives against his wife. The final example is Mahsa Amini, whose death was caused by the actions of this organization's agents. The tragedy has prompted widespread demonstrations in Iran for over two months.

Conclusion or where is Reality?

The central theme of Hoda Rostami's narrative can be analyzed by examining the Iranian government's efforts to make the hijab more visually appealing. According to Rostami, Iran is a magnificent country, with the hijab being one of its many attractive features. However, her critics argue that Rostami's depiction of women's liberation in Iranian society is inaccurate, as women are subjugated due to the mandatory hijab.

In determining which of these two perspectives accurately reflects the reality of Iranian society, it is essential to consider the existence of a "police zone" where women are subject to strict dress codes. Rostami's narratives may be deemed acceptable outside of these areas, but upon examining the regulations surrounding the hijab and the struggles faced by women in Iranian society, it becomes evident that the reality is vastly different from what Rostami portrays in her tourism advertisements.

In Iran, non-compliance with the hijab law is considered a sin. The authority to control women's dress code and headscarves is vested in any individual, including those who believe in the hijab. As a result, the government's enforcement of the mandatory hijab and its impact on Iranian

women cannot be overlooked. Given these factors, it can be concluded that Rostami's narratives fail to capture the harsh reality of the situation and provide a misleading depiction of Iranian society.

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Pre-service Teachers and their Perception of Storytelling

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Introduction

Storytelling has been defined as the art of narrating experiences or traditions through language and gestures (Chung, 2006) and as the vivid description of ideas, beliefs, personal experiences, and life-lessons through stories or narratives that evoke powerful emotions and insights (Serrat, 2008). Storytelling is an inherent human attribute that enhances social life, communication and community learning (Bratitsis & Ziannas, 2015).

Walter Benjamin (1973) noted that, “a story is different. It does not expend itself. It preserves and concentrates its strength and is capable of releasing it even after a long time” (p. 90). This is the power of stories: storytelling challenges stereotypes, inspires positive change and it encourages dialogue and reflection. Thus, it can empower individuals and contribute to a society that is more inclusive and equitable. In the same vein, it should be also pinpointed that emotions are key to storytelling to convey ideas and messages to connect to the audience. As Stevenson explains, emotions are a direct line to the brain (2014).

Defining storytelling is not as simple as it seems. Scholars all around have different opinions when approaching the subject and have not come to a consensus but all of them agree on the origin. The pretext to tell or retell a

belief or a tale to other people is a storytelling practice, which has passed on primarily through oral tradition (Anderson, 2010). A prime debate is whether it is a traditional form of storytelling, strictly oral. Contemporary traditional storytelling are legends or myths. Non-traditional forms of storytelling are non-professional telling or re-telling and embrace different methods of delivery. Contemporary examples of non-traditional storytelling are urban legends, personal narratives, or vernacular storytelling.

All in all, as Lucarevschi (2016) asserts, storytelling helps in the learning process and is a very effective pedagogical instrument to teach students all sorts of subjects, concepts, ideas, and didactics applied to classroom management. In fact, storytelling is relevant to enrich classroom cultural awareness and cultural literacy as well as to promote cultural heritage and these elements are paramount to foster social inclusion. It is one of the oldest forms of oral communication and still the most valid platform to establish human connections. Other authors also suggest that there appears to be a necessity for greater implementation of storytelling in teacher training programs as a tool to facilitate teacher reflection (Blinks et al, 2009).

This paper wants to reach an understanding of how pre-service teachers perceive the concept of storytelling to better include the results in the active debate that surrounds its conceptualization. Storytelling is currently being used both as a teaching tool (traditional and digital storytelling) and as a facilitator for pre-service teachers to reflect on their own teaching practices. As Smeda et al (2014) state:

The power of storytelling as a pedagogical tool has been recognised since the beginning of humanity, and in more recent times, for e-Learning (Neal [2001]). Digital storytelling has become a modern incarnation of the traditional art of oral storytelling; it allows almost anyone to use off-the-shelf hardware and software to weave personal stories with the help of still/moving images, music, and sound, combined with the author's creativity and innovation. (Smeda, 2014, p. 2)

Nevertheless, the extent to which pre-service teachers have a clear understanding of what "the traditional art of storytelling" implies, is key to developing further effective digital practices and foster self-reflection by means of storytelling.

Methodology and tools

During the academic year 2021-22 we asked the students of the Teaching Degree of the Faculty of Education, Translation, Sports, and Psychology at the University of Vic-Central University of Catalonia to answer a questionnaire about their perception of storytelling during their studies.

We delivered an online questionnaire to the students of the Degree of Primary and Early Childhood Education studies. The aim of this questionnaire (which was made of 8 open-ended questions) was to collect data for a research study on the concept of storytelling.

The information was collected anonymously among students in the first and last years of the degrees by means of an online form. Further research will be carried out after this pilot test. Answers were allowed both in L1 and English and there was no length limit for the justification.

The initial questions in order to pilot the test were the following ones:

1. What do you think “storytelling” is?
2. Is storytelling only for children? why?
3. Can we use storytelling to learn our first language? how?
4. Can we use storytelling to learn a foreign language? how?
5. Do you think storytelling is only used in education? comment your answer.
6. Beyond education, where can storytelling be used?
7. Can we find storytelling in several formats?
8. What subjects during the degree do you think storytelling is used?

Participants

The participants in the research were 68 students from the Degrees of Primary and Early Childhood Education studies at the UVic-UCC. As we have mentioned in the previous section, some of the students were from the first year of their studies and some of them were from a group in their 5th and final year of their studies.

All of them were taking subjects in English. As for the students of the first year, they were taking the subject called English for Academic Purposes. They had not yet been in contact with any subject related to Didactics, so they did not have any specific input, from the University point of view, about storytelling. On the other hand, the students of the 5th year had already been taught some subjects related to Didactics and so they were also introduced to some aspects of storytelling. Those students had also had the opportunity to attend different editions of the International Conference Storytelling held in Vic since, 2018.

Results

Preservice teachers can greatly benefit from using storytelling as a powerful teaching tool as it may help them to engage students, to improve their understanding and to boost their ability to think critically. Using storytelling preservice teachers can also develop their communication skills, and gain confidence in their ability to effectively interact in the classroom. Thus, by teaching trainee teachers how to incorporate storytelling techniques in their practices and exposing them to a variety of narratives that can be eventually included into their future lesson plans, we can help them create inclusive and dynamic learning environments.

Nonetheless, as far as the results of the aforementioned test are concerned, most students have an extremely limited understanding of the potential applications of storytelling. As a response to the question about the meaning behind the concept (Question 1), although it is multifaceted and deeply rooted in our human experience, students (pre-service teachers) identify storytelling with the fact of telling stories with no clear objective and without precisely describing the nature of this activity. However, occasionally, concepts such as realia or visual supports appear as inherent elements of this approach. Other aspects that should be considered as far as the conceptualization of the concept is concerned, although their representativity in pre-service students' answers is notably minor, are: visual attractiveness, aesthetical pleasure, entertaining, evocative and engaging nature, drama techniques and orality, and drawing-based approach. Finally, in two of the answers, pre-service teachers identified

prospective consumers in a marketing campaign and adults as potential audiences. Similarly, in one specific instance, interdisciplinarity is cited as a fundamental component of storytelling.

On the contrary, when asked about the potential audiences for storytelling (Question 2), pre-service teachers generally agree that it is not limited to young audiences and can benefit both young and adult audiences. However, most students, except for one instance where marketing purposes are mentioned, struggle to identify the specific reasons why storytelling can be useful for an adult audience and fail to provide any justifications for their answers.

As for the impact of storytelling on language learning, both L1 and L2 (Questions 3 and 4), pre-service teachers unanimously agree that storytelling can play a crucial role. Some of them point out that that learners learn a new language by being exposed to it. Hence, pre-service teachers point to language learning and improvement through storytelling, regardless of the age of the learner, with a focus on pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar structures. Additionally, they emphasize the need for visual aids or nonverbal language (such as gestures) and support activities to consolidate their learning.

Regarding the potential applications of storytelling, and in response to the question of whether respondents believe that storytelling is confined solely to the realm of education or if it has broader applicability (Question 5), the responses are indeterminate. Some respondents acknowledge their lack of knowledge on the subject, while others make inconsistent references to areas such as the audio-visual industry, healthcare, psychology, marketing, advertising, business, drama, or politics. Other responses associate storytelling with book clubs or restrict it beyond the educational context to the familial sphere (such as parents telling stories to their children). Consequently, the responses exhibit great diversity and lack substantiation by the respondent, thereby indicating a superficial understanding of the topic.

When directly questioned about the fields in which they believed storytelling had impact/potential and given the option to choose more than one area (Question 6), preservice teachers highlighted social inclusion

(26%) and audio-visuals (25%) as the most prominent, followed by business (17%), health (13%), and a generic subgroup identified as “Other” (13%).

After being asked about various formats for presenting storytelling (Question 7), the respondents provided the following responses: 50% believed storytelling is mostly presented in written form, 34% identified visual storytelling as the primary format, and only 16% believed storytelling is usually presented as audio content. It is important to note that out of 68 participants, 16 made use of the space provided in Question 8 (an open-ended question) to express their views as regards Question 7. They clarified that in Question 7 they identified the most common format for storytelling, but that they all three formats were equally valid.

Finally, as to the subjects in which storytelling pre-service teachers believe is used, the answers are very diverse. From a couple of students who claim that storytelling is barely used during the degree, to those who believe (six students) that it is used in most subjects. In this vein, one of them asserts that the teacher’s speech is storytelling itself. The rest of the answers reveal that the students place storytelling as a fundamental element in language subjects (L1 and L2) and language didactics (L1 and L2), literature (L1 and L2), art, and drama techniques. Other isolated responses point to Physical Education, motor development, sociology, psychology and to subjects related to the education system and teachers’ roles.

Conclusions

As it has already been mentioned, pre-service teachers can benefit from using storytelling as a teaching tool to engage students, improve their understanding, and develop critical thinking skills. By incorporating storytelling techniques in their practices and exposing them to various narratives, pre-service teachers can create inclusive and dynamic learning environments.

However, the results of the test that has been piloted indicate that most pre-service teachers have a limited understanding of the potential applications of storytelling. Moreover, they struggle to define it and its potential audiences and applications, except for its impact on language

learning. The respondents identified, beyond educational purposes, social inclusion, and audio-visuals as the fields where storytelling has the most impact/potential, and written storytelling as the primary format.

Finally, the responses from pre-service teachers regarding the use of storytelling in different subjects during their degrees are extremely diverse. Nonetheless, most respondents perceive it as a crucial element in language subjects (L1 and L2) and language didactics (L1 and L2), literature (L1 and L2), art, and drama techniques.

Consequently, according to the results of the pilot test, it becomes evident that pre-service teachers do not have a clear understanding of what traditional storytelling implies. Therefore, it is essential to lay the groundwork for a profound comprehension of storytelling before developing further practices related to it. Hence, to enhance the pre-service teachers' understanding of the nature of storytelling and ensure its future implementation as a teaching strategy, it is imperative that storytelling is consistently applied and recognized throughout the degree program.

In the next phase of this project, there are several variables that will be examined to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that may play a role in pre-service teachers' attitudes toward storytelling. One of them is gender, which may act as an unconscious mediating factor in students' responses. Understanding and acknowledging gender as a mediating factor is essential for promoting equality and challenging biases that may have important implications on social dynamics, opportunities, and power structures.

Another variable to be considered is the intake of storytelling-related input throughout the degree. It will be interesting to examine whether the amount of exposure to storytelling has any impact on the students' perception of its nature and usefulness. Additionally, the development of a teaching identity throughout the degree will be explored as pre-service teachers' answers may be influenced by the course they are in and their growing sense of what it means to be a teacher. The students were not requested to provide identification of their respective courses. However,

it has been planned to incorporate this aspect in the final questionnaire, which is scheduled to be administered at a later time.

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The relevance of space when co-creating: Storytelling in the metaverse

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Introduction

The Metaverse is used to describe virtual reality worlds; it could also be a mixture of realities. Its first use in Neal Stephenson's novel "Snow Crash" published in 1992 describes the setting of the future world in cyberspace where people from different regions are immersed in virtual space using a virtual avatar and the world of Internet. This is the inspiration of the Metaverse universe.

It must be borne in mind that the concept of transmedia storytelling was introduced by American researcher Henry Jenkins in an article published in January 2003. Transmedia storytelling has two meanings: on the one hand, it is a story that is told through multiple media and platforms, but transmedia narratives are also characterized by another component: part of the recipients is not limited to consuming the cultural product (Scolari, 2014).

Another definition of transmedia storytelling is telling a story through multiple media and preferably, though not always, with a degree of audience participation, interaction, or collaboration (Pratten, 2011). Transmedia has

been enriched by technological advances, media convergence and the role that the prosumer has acquired as an influencer in the creation of new products, giving way to the appearance of new relationships and transnational flows (Jenkins H. 2017).

This virtual space facilitates interaction, collaboration, and new experiences. The metaverse universe has different spaces that you can access with your own virtual avatar. The virtual world allows you to interact with other members and collaborate and co-create or simply share experiences. This virtual world that forms the Metaverse favors spatial narratives and storytelling.

The comic strip can be considered a starting point for the transmedia universes; enriched through multiple media, the Metaverse is the evolution of the transmedia narrative (Bellón, 2012). The narrative begins in a comic strip, continues into a cartoon television series, expands into a feature film and series, extends into a feature film, interactive video games, and now the Metaverse.

The digital space will also expand the concept of spatial narrative created from architecture. The development of digital technology facilitates the construction of digital spaces and makes it possible to increase digital narrative spaces (Duan et al. 2022).

This article aims to explore this new transmedia storytelling through its main characteristics with current representative examples, such as the cult of the wizard of forgotten rubble: when you have a character from forgotten rubble, you have outstanding creative control.

Thus, the research methodology focuses on studying a specific case to explain the transmedia, spatial narrative centered on the metaverse; Specifically, in the case in which the community adds the biographies of its characters in the Book of Lore, a chain compendium of these stories, poems, and art. Much of the community-generated content seeps into its broader media ecosystem. Therefore, this case study represents the transmedia spatial storytelling that is being developed by the virtual space Metaverse. The study of individual cases, previously selected, reflects the importance of space to create a collective story in the virtual space.

Literature Review

Spatial narration allows, through the appropriate applications, to narrate interactive stories in different places, with greater spatial awareness of the environment, through the combination of historical visual elements, generating an inspiring experience. In addition, the user appreciates to be familiar with the environment, so in the case of games, the user wants to know the place where the game takes place and even invests more time in the game if the application at the spatial level is attractive (Pulver et al. 2020).

In the academic literature there are articles that relate virtual reality and other immersive technologies as opportunities to improve spatial narratives, with virtual mediation, as in the case of immersive journalism with the sensation of presence and connecting the user and the character. These virtual reality stories allow you to interact and respond to the environment through spatial narrative. Other research focused on examining the meaning of place in virtual reality news shows that the user is much more involved with the story through spatial narrative and contributes to the discussion with greater narrative power in immersive news through the appropriate selection of spaces (Kukkakorpi & Pantti, 2021).

The spatial narrative exists in different environments such as tourism (Agustina et al., 2022), specifically, in theme parks, mediating the immersion of visitors through experiences with spatial immersion, sensory immersion, conceptual-imaginative immersion and emotional immersion. The visitor experience in theme parks is better managed (Fu et al. 2022). It is remarkable that, in the last decade, new possibilities of immersive storytelling in virtual reality have been created and spatial audio has been essential to create 'Presence' and 'Immersion'. The viewer as part of the virtual environment can interact, navigate, and choose the viewing direction, in addition, sound recording, and playback have brought challenges in the field of cinematic virtual reality (Chaurasia & Majhi, 2022).

On the other hand, the spatial storytelling model is used in many museums, using technology as a narrative medium to increase the level of enthusiasm

of visitors with the stories told and the space where these stories are given. In a museum, spatial narration is decisive, and the process of compiling history is transcendent for visitors through the narration of what they see, through different narrative means: location, construction, spatial organization, form-space, and human narration. Thus, storytelling and technology engage visitors by combining characters, interactive panels, animations, building stories, and spatial components (Trisno et al., 2022). Museums use spatial narratives for their interpretive framework, with audiovisual techniques to convey the meanings of the works. In addition, the architecture of the museum itself is also a means of spatial narration of historical time that narrates and manifests itself in space and allows visitors to increase their understanding. Thus, museums are spatial storytelling tools with architectural dimensions and other spatial, lighting, and material qualities that allow visitors' cognitive understanding (Lu, 2017). Other studies report how architecture, as a work of art, allows spatial narration in a sensory and cultural context, that is, the spatial configuration of architectural works allows a very significant narration (Lu, 2016). In the spatial narration, the architectural and cinematographic space has an extensive literature. Furthermore, space and cinematographic methods are valuable tools in the creation, evaluation, and representation of spatial narratives (Kretzer, 2021).

The spatial narrative also focuses on landscapes, decisive due to the importance of landscape as a basic instrument in the construction of artistic space. The narrative centered on space and landscape helps the telling of tales and popular narratives as well as their representation. It should be noted that the simple telling of a story, its oral sources and the description of the landscape bring us closer to reality with the spatial narrative (Correja, 2020). Suffice it to say that spatial skills are essential in everyday tasks; with technology, this integration in everyday environments is facilitated and, in the case of children, learning spatial narrative skills from a young age helps to acquire other, more playful learning (Baykal, 2018).

Continuing with the spatial narrative in the setting of novels, a powerful spatial narrative is required, specifically, in war scenarios, the way in which a novel represents the spaces of the city and the country at war are decisive in building the narrative (Majer, 2019).

On the other hand, in urban interventions it is necessary to plan the intervention without neglecting the spatial narrative, nor the symbolic meanings of a neighborhood, for example, since the power of resistance of local stories and the attachment to the place of the people conditions the urban intervention, due to its connection with the place as part of its historical continuity and the spatial narrative, all this must be carefully analyzed (Wallin et al. 2018).

Regarding the historical narrative and national identity in certain areas, together with the spatial narrative of polyethnicity and polyculturality, the need for geolocation in certain narratives is confirmed (Gil'Manov & Mal'Tsev, 2020). Thus, the spatial narrative makes it possible to transform historical consciousness and local historiographies to describe society (Bauer, 2019). On the other hand, to know how to rule in the future with spatial justice, spatial literary narratives help to enrich future imaginaries, with endorsements of spatial historical narrative (Ameel, 2019). Another possibility of spatial narration is to conceive utopian proposals for the areas where one lives, with emerging local utopias to explore a possible future for a given inhabited area, giving meaning to certain ideas (Koning & Dijk, 2021).

On the other hand, the interaction of people through platforms, with conversations in a virtual world, allows telling similar stories to those that are live and direct. These platforms, especially those for games, have grown remarkably in popularity today, just like NFTs, as non-fungible files and digital property assets backed by blockchain technology. Technology advances and immersive technologies come into play that make living a virtual life sharing experiences, as in the case of games, and with the metaverse and especially with the spatial construction of the metaverse, the emergence of digital space continually expands the spatial narrative, and it contributes to establishing relevant rules in the metaverse paradigm (Duan & Chen, 2022).

The “metaverse” is derived from the words “meta” and “universe” and refers to a hypothetical environment connected to the real world (Pratten, 2011). The metaverse is a virtual space, a new universe, parallel to the real one, where the physical and the digital merge, through teams, with a new

economy, new commercial activities, new relationships, possibilities and new places to build (Zompero, 2022). This transmedia storytelling tells different parts of the main story in various platforms, and the audience can be included in the story and can experiment, since the metaverse concept supports the creation of 3D virtual environments through reality devices. augmented, with individuals from this universe crucial in the construction and development of the metaverse, with “avatars” and blockchain instruments for transmedia storytelling. Thus, the metaverse is a new player in transmedia storytelling with potential uses (Akdogan, 2022). In the metaverse there is room for games, architecture, artificial intelligence, manufacturing, public planning and film and television production, among others, with the digitization of economic, political, and social life, through properly controlled games (Jungherr & Schlarb, 2022).

Furthermore, with transmedia storytelling the integral elements of a fiction are systematically dispersed across multiple delivery channels to create a unified and coordinated entertainment experience, each medium making its own unique contribution to the narrative project (Jenkins, 2010). Transmedia journalism allows media coverage to contribute to the analytical needs of planned events, and the production of multiplatform news media is a reality that will grow and improve (Rampazzo & TárCIA, 2017).

The world is beginning to see emerging behaviors of potential creativity, innovation, and engagement in virtual worlds, potentially converging with the metaverse, online virtual worlds, and the physical world, with new online regions and continued growth in culture as an essential and communication element with faster and more immersive media transitions (Collins, 2008).

At the time of building the fictional narrative universe, there are different ways to develop it, with micro-stories that allow the transition between media, with the creation of parallel stories and peripheral stories and with platforms for the creation of user-generated content; at this point, the audience engages in the story by doing things like experiencing the story, creating material about it, and sharing it on social media. At the point of story development, the content platforms created by users also serve as an audience participation element (Scolari, 2009).

The term “metaverse” facilitates digital transformation in all aspects of physical life and integrates cutting-edge technology that allows human users to live and play within a self-sufficient, persistent, shared-domain environment, as a virtual environment parallel to the world - physical and in which users communicate through digital avatars (Lee et al., 2021); in addition the main story of the transmedia storytelling is brought to the metaverse universe with a new and different platform. The metaverse has been the subject of academic studies in different fields, from literature to art, from music to education, along with culture, film, and games (Narin, 2021).

It should be noted that transmedia can diversify the narratives of the industry, since each medium can follow a different character, whose perspective reinterprets the central themes and events of the story. Bradley (2022) points out the importance of speed to accelerate the transition between stories; in addition, the introduction of tools such as NFT elevates the metaverse as a transmedia tool of the future, with a richer storytelling and stronger connections with the audience (Kustritz, 2022), with challenges and opportunities to address financial challenges.

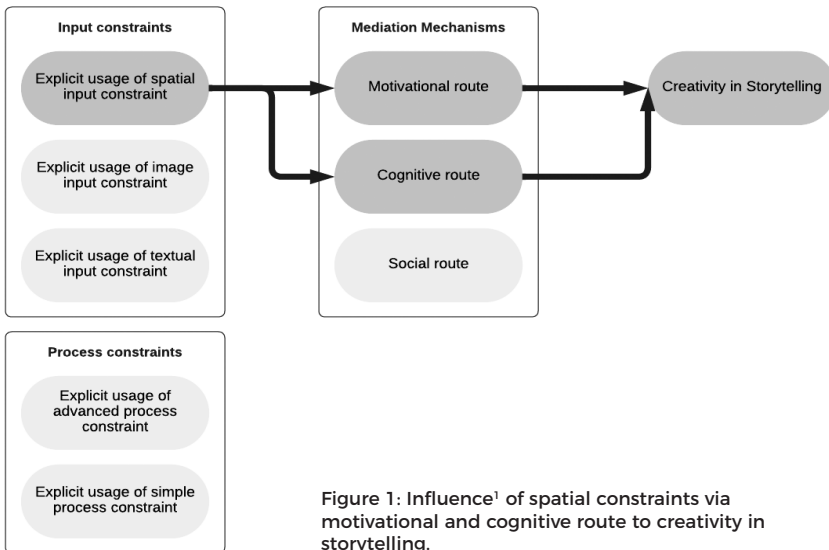
Valeonti et al. (2021) point out that the introduction of blockchain-based metaverses in transmedia films will allow paying for digital assets such as NFTs. Many brands and companies are trying to link their products to the metaverse, and as audiences search for stories in various mediums, storytellers look for new ways to tell stories, and transmedia storytelling is expected to increase within the metaverse.

Theoretical Framework

The key to storytelling is coming up with innovative ideas and implementing them in the narrative even if efforts to be creative and innovative are constrained by issues like rules, constraints, deadlines, and a lack of resources. Strategic management, entrepreneurship, industrial organization, technology and operations management, organizational behavior, and marketing have all shown a keen interest in the impact of restrictions on creativity and innovation. Acar et al. (2019) proposes a framework for how restrictions impact creativity and innovation by focusing on constraints, mediation, and moderation mechanics. There

are three mediations: motivational, cognitive, and social routes. This paper builds on this framework to identify how spatial constraints via motivational and cognitive influence storytelling.

This article primarily focuses on input constraints since they are the sort of restriction that is most encountered and extensively investigated. We focus on how spatial constraints affect via a motivational, cognitive, and social route in storytelling. However, there are other types of constraints such as process constraints and output constraints. Process constraints are limitations that specify the procedures that must be carried out throughout innovation and creative processes, such as the adoption of guidelines during brainstorming sessions. The other constraint, output, focuses on requirements that outline what the project's intended outcome should be, such as the restrictions on what the output should (or should not) achieve or contain (for example, the usage of specified materials or colors) (Acar et al., 2019). Figure 1 depicts the theoretical model for this paper.



1. Light grey boxes are control variables, while dark grey boxes are relevant variables assessed in this paper.

The mechanisms linked to the desire to participate in activities connected to creativity and innovation are referred to as the motivational route. This route comprises components like intrinsic motivation to come up with concepts, take chances, or explore. A lot of research has been done on the impact of input restrictions on creativity and invention, and it has been shown to have both good and negative—even curvilinear—effects. Individuals think of time pressure as a challenge that forces them to be more creative, organizational behavior has discovered that time pressure is positively associated to individual creativity (Ohly & Fritz, 2010). Having scarce versus abundant resources while keeping the amount of resources constant enhances creativity (Mehta and Zhu, 2016). Similarly, spatial constraints transform an unlimited resource in the digital landscape (e.g., virtual land) into a scarce one. Hence,

Hypothesis 1: Creativity increases when explicit references to spatial constraints under the motivational route.

The creative and innovative cognitive processes are referred to as the cognitive route. These processes specifically relate to accessing, looking for, and paying attention to information as well as changing and recombining that information to produce original and creative results. These are associated with cognitive fixation, and opportunity identification. Entrepreneurs, due to their inability to secure traditional finance from banks or investors, seek to rely on cash from their social networks. This constraint increases their creativity to find new forms of funds (Rutherford et al., 2012). The empirical data supports the idea that limitations can promote entrepreneurial growth, mostly through the cognitive route, by identifying new opportunities (An et al., 2018), or recombination of resources (Gibbert et al., 2007). In a similar way, spatial constraints, when using elements from multiple resources increases, are innovative by identifying new opportunities.

Hypothesis 2: Creativity increases when explicit references to spatial constraints under the cognitive route.

Methodology

To test our hypotheses, we selected an organization that is web 3.0 native focusing on spatial storytelling with different characters. This organization is Magic Machine, the organization behind a NFT (i.e., Non-Fungible-Tokens) collection named Forgotten Runes Wizard (i.e., FRWC). FRWC is the first collection that uses NFT to build a fantasy franchise that is co-created in a community. FRWC is a collection comprised of 10000 characters that are represented by one NFT per character. Each character lived in a particular place of the universe as seen in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Map of the Forgotten Runes Wizard Cult

FRWC uses NFT to incentivize co-creation by giving the NFT owner full creative control of it. The owner can add a story, poem or even an image. Magic Machine incentivizes co-creation by rewarding those that owned and added some story-building into a character of their own. The reward was done by giving other NFT that could be used for story-building.

Figure 3 depicts three examples of storytelling done by different members of the community. Subfigure 3.1 depicts the attributes of a character named “Summoner Milton of the Quantum Shadow”. He is a red wizard, wearing a robe of shadow and a caduceus, while having a high affinity to wraith and he lives in the Quantum Shadow.



TRAITS			
HEAD Red Wizard (1.05)	BODY Robe of Shadow (1.92)	AFFINITY Wraith (2.40) 3/4	
FAMILIAR Forever Bat (3.65)	PROP Caduceus (1.92)	BIO TITLE Summoner (0.85)	
RACE None (395)	BACKGROUND Green (25)	NAME Milton (0.75)	
		ORIGIN Quantum Shadow (2.95)	

WIKI PAGE | LORE | TO DO

The Journal of Summoner Milton of the Quantum Shadow
Journal Entry #318

I did it. The summoning circle is stable. As I write what may be my last journal entry, I warn anybody who reads this message... do not carry on my work. The summoning circle is stable but what came through is not. I can hear the snarling, the heavy breathing as it searches for me in the room. Will more pass through the rift? I do not know, and I dare not peek over the table behind which I hide. I see no way out.

Subfigure 3.1:
Summoner Milton
of the Quantum
Shadow



Brother's hands that clasped I cannot find
except in memory, where we again
run over diamond ice. The ties that bind
are weaker than a shadow. I knew when
the time had come for fighting, I could not
prevail except through compacts with the dark
that lent its power. Brother's duel we fought
to lead. A prince that promises a spark
is soon remembered. We dwell deep in void
and I emerge to parley. What I've wrought
has changed us. Daniel, laughing and annoyed
dwells in my memory. I half-forgot
him, brim-filled with dark power. Still, I know
the sweeter, simpler moments, long ago.

Forgotten Runes
WIZARD'S GUILD

Subfigure 3.2: Battle
Mage Samuel of
the Quantum Shadow



Subfigure 3.3:
Sorcerer Hadrien
of the Quantum
Shadow

Figure 3: Storytelling for three different characters

The collected data focused on a particular location named Quantum Shadow is relevant in the franchise. This location has received some particular attention as can be seen in Figure 4. A TV show is being produced, a videogame and a comic use this location. There were thirty-nine characters in that region, eleven of whom had a story built by the community. The collection of data was done by using their internal marketplace².

Each character with storytelling is considered as an artifact. An artifact is a set of “bundles of material and cultural properties packaged in some socially recognizable form such as hardware and /or software” (Orlikowski et al. 2001, p. 121). Each artifact is analyzed, and a set of variables are determined based on each operationalization as depicted in Table 1. Notice that output constraints are non-existent as the owner of the NFT has no regulations, standards or project outcome requirements imposed by Magic Machine.

2. The Marketplace can be found at the following address <https://forgotten.market/>



Figure 4: A frame of a TV show being produced (top-left), a videogame (bottom-left) and a comic (right)

Item	Variable	Effect	Operationalization
InImage	Control	Explicit usage of image input constraint	Usage of image descriptors by the co-creator
InText	Control	Explicit usage of textual input constraint	Usage of hidden text descriptors by the co-creator
ProcAdvanced	Control	Explicit usage of advanced process constraint	Usage of advanced form of communications such as poems by the co-creator
ProcVisual	Control	Explicit usage of simple process constraint	Usage of simple form of images by the co-creator
InSpatial	Independent	Explicit usage of spatial input constraint	Usage of spatial references by the co-creator
Motiv	Independent	Motivational route	Reference of a meta-arch event creating by Magic Machine (Sacred Flame)
Cogn	Independent	Cognitive route	Explicit reference via hyperlinks to other NFTs

Social	Control	Social route	Usage of other characters to build the story
Creativity	Dependent	Creativity in Storytelling	Creation of a Storytelling

Table 1: Description of the type of variables, the effect, and the justification for its operationalization

Results

There is evidence as seen in Table 2 that there is effective co-creation. Different individuals are collectively building a storytelling around the spatial region known as “Quantum Shadow”. It is noticeable that there are no contributions among the different contributions, which suggests some coordination among the parties.

Artifact	Contribution to defining the spatial region
Pyromancer Peppy of the Quantum Shadow	The Platonic Shadow consumes energy
Void Disciple Lupa of the Quantum Shadow	There is uncertainty in the Quantum Shadow
Battle Mage Samuel of the Quantum Shadow	The Platonic Shadow is surrounded with clouds that prevents seeing inside
Necromancer Bane of the Quantum Shadow	A place of great power, capable of transmuting wizards into powerful entities
Summoner Milton of the Quantum Shadow	A place you can summon using a portal
Shaman Solomon of the Quantum Shadow	A place of darkness where the wizard become a nightmare
Battle Mage Ratko of the Quantum Shadow	Quantum shadow has two components seen and unseen
Mystic David of the Quantum Shadow	Quantum Shadow is a place full of watchful powers. It can be accessed in astral form. Entities hunt the souls in it.

Table 2: Sound contribution to the co-creation of a spatial region known as Quantum Shadow

Figure 5 depicts p-correlation value, histogram, and scatter plots across the different variables. The first hypothesis (i.e., creativity increases when

explicit references to spatial constraints under the motivational route) is confirmed as there is a high correlation of 0.81 (i.e., green rectangle in Figure 5). The second hypothesis (i.e., creativity increases when explicit references to spatial constraints under the cognitive route) is also confirmed as there is a high correlation of 0.81 (i.e., blue rectangle in Figure 5). Finally, there was no evidence that creativity does evidence of an increase when explicit references to spatial constraints under the social route.

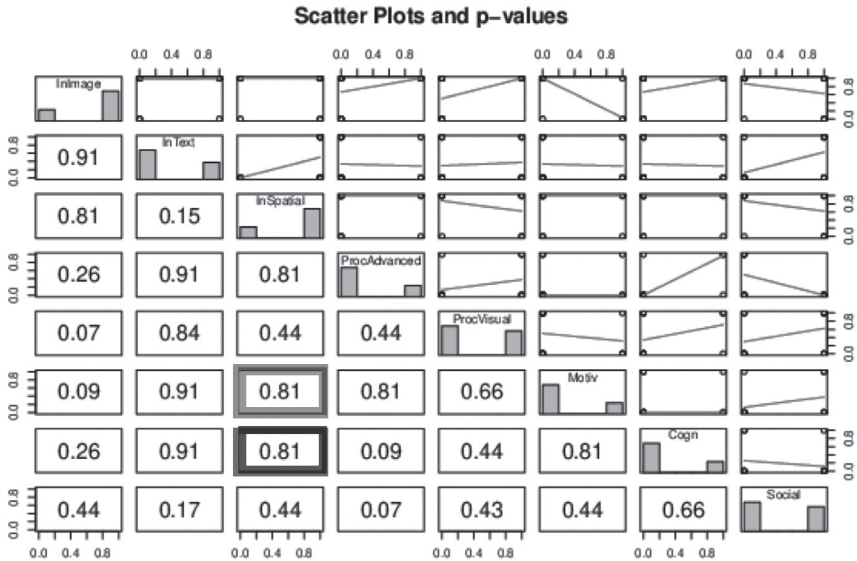


Figure 5: p-correlation value, histogram, and scatter plots across the different variables

Discussion and Conclusions

Storytelling is boosted when certain constraints are forced into a community that is seeking co-creation. Building on creativity framework proposed by Acar et al. (2019), this paper focuses on spatial constraints, which are confirmed to influence creativity via a motivational and cognitive route. The data collected is from a web 3.0 company that uses NFT to incentivize co-creation while having certain constraints to the characters the generated.

Digital technology facilitates the construction of digital spaces and makes it possible to increase digital narrative spaces (Duan et al. 2022). In addition, the meaning of the place in virtual reality connects with the story through the spatial narrative and has more narrative power with the opportune selection of spaces (Kukkakorpi & Pantti, 2021). The spatial narrative and its symbolism and the stories of the local people cannot be neglected (Wallin et al. 2018). On the other hand, the spatial narrative of polyethnicity and polyculturality allows geolocation in certain narratives (Gil'Manov & Mal'Tsev, 2020), and utopian proposals are strengthened by location giving meaning to certain ideas (Koning & Dijk, 2021). Thus, technological advances and immersive technologies of a virtual life with spatial construction help the narrative remarkably (Duan & Chen, 2022).

In an environment where the entertainment offer is multiplying via constant technological advances, it is important not only to offer this type of transmedia fiction, but also to pay special attention to the fan communities that are created around them, which are the ones that have a deep degree of commitment to these games and act as prescribers with respect to other potential viewers, artefacts, or other participants.

According to Bradley (2022), audience communities are increasingly interactive speeding up the transitions between stories and this is important. The expected introduction tools like NFTs from these communities elevates the story and enhances future transmedia tools. The Metaverse universe handles richer storytelling and a stronger connection with audiences. The transmedia storytelling offers a possible strategy to create new audiences around a narrative world as the *Forgotten Runes Wizard Cult*.

The results of this paper are preliminary, despite having confirmation on both hypotheses. The data from this paper presents several limitations such as its data size, and its sample being compromised by one year. This in turn limited the method applied as we used a simple method that considers the effect on two isolated variables. Future research should aim to collect more data and use a more advanced model such as structural equation modelling.

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‘Mundus est fabula’: narrative discourse as constitutive principle of literary space

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Introduction

The Toussaintian subject is in a constant struggle against reality. On numerous occasions, the subject prefers to escape the outside world and take refuge in a closed space, such as the bathroom in *La salle de bain*, the photo booth in *L'appareil photo*, or the room in Ostend in *La Disparition du paysage*. The relationship to the outside is conditioned by the mediation of a pane of glass, through which the world appears as an uninhabitable place. Indeed, the topos of the window in *La salle de bain* and *La Disparition du paysage* evokes the impossibility of accessing reality and thus of sensing the outside world. The subject thus always remains in front of the world, relating to reality as if contemplating a painting. For Toussaint, to look at the world is to approach reality in a way that is limited to signifying the world perceived through the positivist prism. The Toussaintian character indicates this through the game of darts in *La salle de bain*; the game is a metaphor for a gaze that fixes reality in the same way that the dart penetrates the dartboard: ‘My nightmares were rigid, geometric. They had a simple but recurring argument: a whirlpool that encompasses me and carries me away in its centre, for example, or straight lines placed in front of my eyes whose I try endlessly to modify their structure, replacing one segment with another, making endless corrections to purify them. For a few days I had been playing darts so much that during the night, on the surface of my sleep, haunting images of darts appeared’ (Toussaint, 1985, p.84-85). Geometric shapes trigger a sense of anxiety in the Toussaintian subject, insofar as they suggest a linear movement that leads to the target

as the ultimate point. This idea of linearity also appears in the perception of the movement of the rain:

There are two ways to watch the rain fall, at home, behind a pane of glass. The first is to keep one's gaze fixed on any point in space and to see the succession of rain at the chosen spot; this way is restful for the mind, but does not convey any idea of the finality of the movement. The second, which requires more flexibility from the eyes, consists of following the fall of one drop at a time with the gaze, from its intrusion into the field of vision to the dispersion of its water on the ground. That movement, however dazzling it may seem, tends essentially towards immobility, and consequently, however slow it may sometimes seem, it continuously drags bodies towards death, which is immobility' (Toussaint, 1985, p.36).

The subject of *La Disparition du Paysage* also remains in this same immobility; while sitting in a wheelchair, he is condemned to '[experience] the monotony of the hours [while] [his] eye constructs geometric figures [and] assembles scattered events' (Toussaint, 2021, p.11-12).

Far from perceiving reality as a flow of continuity, the subject always retains a fragmented vision of it. Toussaint, a great reader of Descartes, operates with a somewhat Cartesian approach. It is noteworthy that many elements of Cartesian philosophy emerge, such as the reclusiveness of the subject, which the author defines as 'Entelechy of the mind': 'It did not take me ten seconds to disappear into the gloriously blurred and even world that my mind was constantly presenting to me. And so, supported by my resting body, I had warmly entrenched myself in my thoughts [...]. There was no need to hurry to put an end to this entelechy. Thought, it seemed to me, is a river that should be left alone to unfold in ignorance of its own flow' (Toussaint, 1988, p.31-32). In this case, thought represents a flow of continuity that contrasts with the fragmented perception of reality. For Toussaint, thought, the flow of which is described as 'setting the mind in motion [or again] mental disencrage' (Toussaint, 2022, p.65) is at the origin of the (literary) world.

Another typically Cartesian reference lies in the opposition between body and mind, as the passage of time evokes the inner movement of the body, which gradually becomes entangled with destruction, a change the mind

does not notice. Toussaint does not mention Descartes to portray a world still caught up in the dialectic between body and mind in the contemporary era. On the contrary, the author dwells on a contemporary interpretation of Cartesian conceptions, which reveal the paradoxical character of a who that claims his or her inscription in presence through thought, according to the famous formula 'I think, therefore I am'. Toussaint shows how the literary world emerges as a fabrication of the mind in narrative time, which proves to be the time of the subject's flow of thought. In other words, 'mundus est fabula'; narrative seizes the ability to articulate existence, which is bound up in the flow of a continuity that ceaselessly articulates its own collapse.

Toussaint refers to Descartes to explain his paradoxical character. Indeed, paradox is an element that runs through the author's narratives; it arises, for example, in the oppositional relationship between a body that moves towards death and a staring gaze that conveys the impression of immobility. Or, more strikingly, the complexity of the enveloping narrative structure in *La Disparition du Paysage*, under the sign of paradox, articulates the constitution of the narrative through its own collapse. Likewise, rather than recovering reality, Toussaint prefers to take refuge in the narrative instrument in order to create an effect of reality. Considering that the subject does not stand in reality but rather emerges in 'the heart of literature' (Toussaint, 2022, p.106), their inner withdrawal first symbolises a return to the narrative itself; second, it represents the entry into a sensible reality through the destruction of the body. Retreat in this context is another *topos* in Toussaint's work, whether in the form of a withdrawal from reality, the visible surface of the world, or the body, intended as elements of corporeality. This withdrawal occurs in favour of an abstract reality that is invented and constructed within the narrative itself. For Toussaint, reality constitutes an imaginary non-place within which the subject withdraws; therefore, access to the real paradoxically occurs by moving away from reality. This study aims to show how the author plays with dichotomies; feigning is the same as telling the truth, considering that narrative becomes a discourse that articulates the being in narrative time.

Reality, a non-place: space as a place of withdrawal, spacing, and virtualities

In *C'est vous l'écrivain*, Toussaint describes his first contact with writing, recalling his father's office, where he wrote his books. This office was secluded from the world, he says, because '[it had] no material reality [in the author's] memory' (Toussaint, 2022, p.46). Moreover, he notes that the specificity of this place was precisely that it was not confined in space but in time, 'as if it had been the time of writing itself that formed the office' (Toussaint, 2020, p.47). Thus, this closed space, seemingly an abstract and fictional place—in contrast to the outside world, which one would instead associate with the real and the living—in fact represents a reality of its own. Toussaint has indeed maintained the 'habit' of writing in a closed place like the office, which represents a space 'protected from the outside world' (Toussaint, 2020, p.43) and 'a shelter from the world' (Toussaint, 2020, p.50).

The way the author describes the office gives rise to a kind of rivalry with the reality that remains outside the scope of this non-place. It is therefore not surprising that, just as the writer prefers closed rooms to give free rein to the conception of the narrative, the characters in his stories are also usually in closed spaces. This retreat is intended to express a distance from the outside world, which is inaccessible and does not provide the necessary conditions for conceiving of the narrative as event-oriented writing that can restore a sensation that is all the more authentic than the one reality would allow. This is why reality has a negative connotation, appearing as an obstacle '[which the subject runs] up against, [in the same way that] one can tire an olive, for example, before successfully poking it into one's fork' (Toussaint, 1988, p.14). It is also with great fatigue that the Toussaintian subject manages to escape these closed spaces, as in *La salle de bain*, where the character only does so by taking the risk of compromising his abstract life (Toussaint, 1985, p.15).

Nevertheless, the refuge in a closed place does not imply a total negation of reality. On the contrary, it gives rise to an opening that is 'internal' to the subject, as Toussaint intends to 'make the world emerge again in the abyssal depths of his ego' (Toussaint, 2022, p.54). The subject's withdrawal

is intended in terms of a destructive process of corporeality. In this way, the subject experiences an immaterial reality that emerges in and through the flow of thought, which is represented through the flow of writing. This process of dematerialisation grants entry into a sensitive, virtual space that is impossible to circumscribe. In fact, the space becomes an open, elliptical place into which the subject can project him or herself.

Between imagination and dream: memory as a matrix of oblivion and a place of figurability without figures

In *L'homme qui marchait dans la couleur*, Didi-Huberman argues that 'the dream [...] gives us the overwhelming evidence of place, [while] awakening immediately deprives us of it, since the evidence of place consists [first] of the matter—the somatic matter—of our sleep' (Didi-Huberman, 2001, p.39). If we were to speak of evidence or a certainty that *La Disparition du Paysage* conveys to us, there would indeed be little to mention, since the protagonist has no memory of his past and fails to reconfigure an image in its entirety, ultimately failing to tell a whole story, or any story at all. The narrative consists of several small fragments which, however, prove to be self-insufficient, as they do not tell us anything coherent. In this way, the reader is ultimately immersed not in the story, but in the elliptical blanks that frame the story: 'I remember only a great emptiness and numbness, a slowing down of the body. In this indistinct fog, only a few blurred images emerge' [...]'' (Toussaint, 2021, p.17). On the edge between dream and reality, the Toussaintian subject tries to connect the scattered fragments of his memory, but without success. All that remains in his mind is the sensation of the absence of something that has happened. Just as Didi-Huberman notes that 'waking up dispossesses us [of the evidence of place]', waking up from a coma and thus returning to reality deprives the subject of the possibility of reconstructing his memories, which now appear as voids. As the image of reality, in this case disconnected from the mental image at the beginning of the narrative, disappears behind '[an] indistinct fog', the Toussaintian subject loses the connection to the outside world, which finally gradually collapses.

Only in the first attempt to escape into the imaginary does the subject 'succeed in freeing himself from reality in which he has been stuck for

months [and finally begin then] to build Asian landscapes on [the] East-End canvas, on [the] Flemish foundations, Japanese cities superimposed on the real beach [that he has] before his eyes' (Toussaint, 2021, p.14). Thus, from this moment on, the Toussaintian subject crosses the boundary between reality and imagination, where reality merges with fiction. The mental image and the image of reality are juxtaposed and form a single reality. Consequently, 'space [...] [is hollowed out] to become a place of retreat and imminence that refers to the gaze itself: a looking into [...] as opposed to any gaze in search of an object (a looking at)' (Didi-Huberman, 2001, p.42). The progression of the narrative proves to be a simultaneous progression into the inwardness of the subject, who, through imagination, has freed himself from his body in order to plunge into virtual depths. In fact, when the subject triggers imaginary moments, they cease to stare at reality through the window (a looking at) in favour of an internal meditation that links a succession of images contained within each other (a looking into). Fiction and reality become two sides of the same coin, as narrative does not aim to represent a reality: it becomes the object of reality. The novel narrates reality as it unfolds.

As Toussaint claims that the subject does not stand in reality, but emerges in literature, he refers to a reality that is inherent in literature, not in the sense of an object of reality to be contemplated, but in the sense of a meta-reality that makes it possible to experience the constitutive process of narrative. Thus, *La Disparition du paysage* consists of an arrangement of images modelled on the city of Tokyo, the café Métropole de Brouckère, or the attack in Brussels on 22 March 2016. All of these scenes are characterised by their incompleteness, as each one fails to narrate accomplished facts arranged in chronological order by a causal link. In fact, they do not refer to any meaning outside themselves, but rather appear as places constructed through the imagination in the subject's mind. It is therefore in narrative time that these scenes emerge as immaterial and virtual constructs. The city of Tokyo then appears

in the distance in the rectangle of the window, dotted with mysterious lights that just flash on the horizon, neon tubes and streetlights, billboards, street and arterial lighting, bridges, railway tracks, underground highways and a network of intertwined elevated roads, reflections of gems and bracelets

of stacked light, garlands and broken lines of golden points of light, often tiny, stable or twinkling, near and far, red signals from balloons, which in the night are fixed at the tips of the aerials and at the corners of the roofs (Toussaint, 2021, p.15).

The description of the city assumes a certain inwardness of the image, as it does not consist of concrete elements that structure it. The city then emerges through the informal, in the form of lights, 'neon tubes and street lamps, signs, street and arterial lighting' that form 'a network of exaggerated avenues', thus creating a dynamic image that turns what is narrated into an eventful experience. The main interest of this image is not to provide a concrete image of Tokyo, but rather to manifest the power of the place deployed by the means of an immaterial description of the city as an emergent element that cannot be circumscribed by a conceptual form.

The image of the Café Métropole is also 'a crucial fragment of this hermetic puzzle' (Toussaint, 2021, p.25), as images are like 'dreams'. In fact, these scenes seem to be '[dreams] attempted [in a way that is non-linear, like] a puzzle whose final image is unattainable for us, and which we are trying to reconstruct by putting together scattered or more or less scattered pieces in one's head' (Toussaint, 2021, p.25). The more the subject tries to reconstruct his memory, the more the corporeality of his memories eludes him. Therefore, the scene in the Café Métropole seems to have a hidden meaning (Toussaint, 2021, p.27), as the subject, while waiting for someone to arrive, notices: 'It is I I am waiting for, and will wait in vain, for I never arrived at the appointment that morning' (Toussaint, 2021, p.27).

It follows that the narrative does not become an event through an action reconstructed by the subject. This is suggested by the meaning hidden behind the subject's expectation in the scene. In other words, literary space is not a place that must be reached, nor does it contain a figurative door that would allow access to the event. On the contrary, the place, in contrast to the story, is self-sufficient because it is conceived in the immediacy of the imagination and, therefore, in narrative time. Thus, the subject is led to experience the narrative from within, which is configured through immaterial forms that convert the narrative into a place of 'figurability without "figures"' (Didi-Huberman, 2001, p.46). From such a narrative

conception, it follows that, in order to deploy the inherent power of place, it is necessary to free the subject's field of vision from everything that paradoxically belongs to the visible. In an objective representation of things, the gaze tends to focus primarily on the concrete elements that occupy space rather than perceiving space as part of the flow of a continuity that also describes its emergence, which is why it is necessary to move away from the visible surface of the world.

Toussaintian imagination, a setting in motion of the mind: the body of the narrative created by the flow of thought

The absence of causality between the images in *La Disparition du paysage* implies spacing that leaves the reader free to complete the image at will through their own imagination:

When I write, I always locate the people I describe. One always knows very precisely where they are in space. You could almost say that you see the gestures they make. Because I really want them to appear in the reader's mind, that when the reader reads me, they have a visual experience. I have the feeling that this sequence of images that you find in my books is similar to a kind of visual inner monologue. If you think about it, it is very similar to what happens in dreams. At night, when we dream, the images that come across us, pass by in the manner of a visual continuum. And these images always have a very close connection with our personal history, with our intimacy, with our sensitivity. That is what I am trying to do when I write; I try to propose a visual inner monologue that has a very strong connection with my own sensibility, but which, as a writer, I also try to connect to the sensibility of the reader, not the reader in general, but the of each reader in particular, one person at a time. What I ask of each reader is thus to bring their own spirit and sensibility to bear. [...] Although it is I who am proposing an image, the image will only be truly complete when the reader completes it (Toussaint, 2022, p.138-139).

Thus, these elliptical voids—according to the image of 'puzzle pieces with irregular—and tattered—edges'—represent marginal sites from which the narrative departs. The narrative instrument is transformed into a site of construction where, according to Toussaint, it is necessary to transcend

reality in order to render a sense of reality: 'Perhaps this is what I have always loved most about writing, the fact that in order to reach the world, one must remove oneself from the world. To remove yourself from the world. Not to flee from it or reject it, but precisely to reach it' (Toussaint, 2022, p. 54). In order to reach the world and to transmit a sensation of reality, the setting aside of reality, is simultaneously a withdrawal from material life. It is noteworthy that 'thought' constitutes the materiality of the visual flow of images. In this sense, it is not about reconstructing reality, but about building on reality in order to produce a real effect. When the Toussaintian subject proclaims the impossibility of accessing the last image of memory, he simultaneously states the impossibility of reaching its foundation.

In *Ego Sum*, Nancy intends to reinterpret Descartes' *Les Principes de la Philosophie* by turning them into a literary work that conveys philosophical content. According to the formula 'mundus est fabula', the world appears like a play that is supposed to expose the truth of the world by explaining its own nature (Nancy, 1979, p.102). It follows from such an approach that the invention of a fable amounts to establishing a reality of its own, one that does not have to contend with an objective truth outside the world it creates. Nancy understands 'the fable [as] the story of Descartes' thinking life' (Nancy, 1979, p.97), insofar as 'mundus est fabula' is the subject of a formula that redefines the notion of the ontology of the subject: '[Since] Descartes, the subject is the world, and reciprocally mundus est fabula: the subject, the pure property of the Self, is a fable' (Nancy, 1979, p.100).

Toussaint's narrative adopts a similar perspective, conceiving of writing as a separate reality, or rather, as one reality among others. It should be noted that, in Toussaint, thought and writing are synonymous, given that writing articulates (and does not represent) the flow of the subject's thought. In any case, the fictional world is neither an imitation of reality nor does it aim to establish an absolute truth. On the contrary, the fictional world conveys a truth that is intrinsic to its creation and that can only be called true if one stays within its parameters. The subject appears in this case as the inventor of his own narrative (Nancy, 1979, p.103). *La Disparition du Paysage* turns the subject's thinking into '[a] discourse of truth in act, of the action of truth' (Nancy, 1979, p.105), insofar as walking through

the narrative is synonymous with the experience of '[a] truth in action'. Toussaint's narrative becomes a discourse 'because he does not aim at a doctrine of truth, his writing must be apprehended as a fable that is also the whole doctrine' (Nancy, 1979, p.109). In this sense, it is not a story that forms the content of the work, but 'the flow of thought' that determines its plot, from which it follows that the subject is the world.

Nevertheless, as the constitution of literary space occurs in terms of a fluid reality that is created by the flow of thought, it becomes impossible not only to arrive at the final image—as is the case in *La Disparition du Paysage*—but also to recall the essence of an experienced reality by the means of memory. Generally speaking, the attempt to grasp the actual principle dissimulated behind existence constitutes an endeavour that has posed problems. Indeed, the question of essence is the origin of the dialectic between body and mind because the question of essence is the basis of the search for truth. The subject striving for absolute truth has paradoxically further widened the gap between themselves and the world, between subjectivity and objectivity. To fix reality in the search for absolute truth is ultimately to move even further away from the substance of things. For this reason, the spaces in between—in this case, 'the tattered edges' between the scenes in *La Disparition du Paysage*—are places of retreat. The more the Toussaintian subject tries to grasp the image, the more it eludes him. The limit thus becomes a place of transgression because the extremity is not, strictly speaking, a closure nor an ultimate point of completion, but rather a limit that paradoxically '[exceeds ...] this closure and [undoes] on [itself its] own completion' (Nancy, 1979, p.115). Following the development of the narrative, the Toussaintian subject begins by triggering an imaginary moment in order to project himself into the flow of his thoughts. After the scene in Tokyo, 'the subject dives back in, [he] finds the stream again at the point where he had left [it]' (Toussaint, 2021, p.32). He states that 'it is in [himself] where [the stream] is to be found [and that he is] the substance and the origin; it is in [himself] that it takes its source and it is in [himself] that it travels, invisible, peaceful, inexhaustible, underground. To activate it, [he] needs only a moment of solitude and silence' (Toussaint, 2021, p.32). Later, he finally succeeds in '[taking] refuge in [his] inner world. Wherever [he] is, [he] succeeds in [removing] himself from the place where [he] is

physically, in order soon to be only spiritual, greater, more fruitful, more substantial, as if extended by a life that is the totality of his thoughts' (Toussaint, 2021, p.33). The outside world finally disappears as the subject gradually penetrates the depths of his ego, to the point where reality becomes informal:

Little by little, my thoughts, cradled by the hum of the train in the tunnel, polarise on a point far from my inner horizon, and I feel the scene of a novel emerging in my mind's eye, still formless, not yet fully grown out of its chrysalis, from which I see it slowly emerging. I am moving in this still-unfinished scene, in the making, still formless, immaterial, which I slowly allow to enter my consciousness. [...] I experience it from within, I move weightlessly through its coils, I combine the developing shadows, I arrange their shapes—when I am suddenly interrupted by a blinding white light (Toussaint, 2021, p.35-36).

At the extremity of the subject's most interior place, this scene in process deploying in the subject's consciousness, is ultimately 'swept away [...] in a volley of glass and iron debris' (Toussaint, 2021, p.36). In this sense, the subject's inwardness as the most recalled place opens up and leads to its destruction as soon as 'the external world rushes into [the subject's] thoughts through this open breach' (Toussaint, 2021, p.36). Another scene follows that initially seems to locate the subject in the outside world again, as he observes the work on the roof of the casino outside his window. As the work progresses, the subject's field of vision narrows: 'The level of the building rises ever higher in front of me, slowly, inexorably, and my view becomes blocked as the construction grows in height. A wall is now in my field of vision, and I can no longer see the lowest section of the beach, which has completely disappeared from my window frame' (Toussaint, 2021, p.43). The subject finally loses any connection to the outside world, standing 'alone in the dark' (Toussaint, 2021, p.46) and facing a void where 'this long, grey and melancholy evocation of the view of this flat in Ostend is [his] last conscious vision, the last visible moment of [his] life is coming to an end' (Toussaint, 2021, p.46). Even if, at first glance, the subject's inner and outer worlds seem to be dichotomised, this is only apparently the case. The Ostend room is not only a closed place that would be conducive to the unfolding of the imagination, but above all, it is a place of entrenchment.

The scene in the making, then, in which the subject evolves, exceeds the very enclosure that its withdrawal entails.

Conclusion

Toussaint's narrative evokes a moment of opening that collapses the field of vision of the outside world. It is not the outside world itself that collapses, as the subject remains inside the room until the end of the narrative; it is a place of closure that finally opens up through imagination. Nor is *La Disparition du Paysage* about the death of the subject as such, for 'the last moment of his life coming to an end' refers to the field of vision framed by the window. Rather, the visual phenomena gradually disappear 'from the subject's frame of the window', implying a change in the way things are seen. The subject's distance from reality first leads to a moment of unfolding that takes him out into the world, leading to an imaginary state, which in a second step leads to a distance from materiality and finally to the loss of visibility. The window located between the subject and the outside world does not convey an image of reality in dialectical terms—separating the subject from the object—but becomes a transgressive place where the virtual becoming of the field of vision originates. If, for Toussaint, imagining is tantamount to building on reality, the elevation of the building metaphorically represents this imaginary construction, as '[the] roof of the casino has been prepared to receive a concrete slab, it has been as if dug out and has the appearance of an empty swimming pool' (Toussaint, 2021, p.40)—like the elliptical spaces in the narrative that constitute voids that represent places of imaginary fulfilment. In short, the building that rises to the top prepares for entry into a virtual reality that no longer has anything in common with the material world, where interiority and exteriority appear in terms of a cycle of construction and destruction. Once again, Toussaint plays with the dichotomy of the term 'death', in that it does not refer to nothingness, but rather suggests the beginning of a new approach to reality. Now, if matter is in the process of disappearing, what is to be understood when the Toussaintian subject suddenly 'plunges back into living reality [...], into the sensitive substance of hours' (Toussaint, 2021, p.29) after having transposed himself into an imaginary moment? What is the substance in question? In this regard, Nancy argues that 'fiction

is nothing indeed, (apart from being the fiction that nothing exists)—except that I fictionalise' (Nancy, 1979, p.117). Indeed, the substance of *La Disparition du Paysage* paradoxically consists of its lack of substance. In the same way that the end of the story is a place of entrenchment, the narrative is inscribed under the sign of constant becoming. It follows that no substance can be established, as the narrative instrument does not refer to any meaning that is external to it: meaning originates through the emergence of narrative. The sensible substance to which the Toussaintian subject refers consists of the 'emergent' dynamic dissimulated behind the manifestation of the novel. Narrative becomes discourse because its being originates simultaneously in narrative time. Nevertheless, this leads to Nancy's paradoxical conclusion that to fictionalise is to say that nothing exists, knowing that, as the narrative progresses, writing articulates the ephemeral nature of existence. According to Nancy, 'fiction is nothing' because nothing can be grasped or circumscribed, as the narrative is in constant evolution. Articulating presence implies the absence of something that has manifested itself but which is no longer there, if only in the form of a fluid matter with 'irregular, dizzying edges'. It is *this*—the essence of which remains enigmatic—that comprises the substance of the narrative: the very movement (the flow of thought, the time of writing) that participates in the genesis of the narrative instrument.

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The Importance of Reading Classical Texts Again: *The Little Prince* as an Exercise of Education and Self-Care

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*“Is it possible for a book to become a meeting?
If the encounter is something that changes the course of a life,
that reorients it, if the encounter is an event that offers meaning to life
opening it to a new image of the world,
then a book, undoubtedly, can be a meeting”*

(Recalcati, 2020, p. 25)

Reading: a complex and current challenge

Reading can have many meanings, often personal: it is an intimate moment of reflection, leisure, confrontation. Reading means interpreting and trying to understand different points of view from ours: in a word *thinking*. Therefore, reading means trying to develop a thought that is as open as possible, free from prejudices and stereotypes, reflective and *hermeneutic*.

Reading, as Massimo Recalcati says, has a deep meaning, because it is not only a tool to read and know the world, but we ourselves are read by the books while we're reading them, because a narration helps us to understand our depth, our experience, our life.

A book becomes, then, a *knife*, which marks our life, dividing it in half, touching it in an irreversible way; a *body*, with its own scent, its own look and, finally, a *sea*, open, infinite, able to overcome every possible wall and closure (Recalcati, 2020).

Talking about reading, especially aimed at the youngest, becomes a very complex and articulated theme for today's society: it is a challenge faced by all those who work in educational services (from the family - first - to school, to extra-school services, etc.) and for which they are responsible. Reading becomes a complex theme-problem for many reasons because it is influenced by different aspects that are discriminating and that could promote greater or lesser passion for reading.

First, to mention just a few aspects, let's think about how much reading is strongly conditioned by family habits (as the statistics indicate, parents readers represent a model for children and young people, who will be more or less stimulated to read during their day and their growth); at the same time the residence environment is also very important, because the dissemination, for example, of libraries and bookshops or, more generally, of recreational places where to confront other people and read, are a strong discriminator on the percentage of readers of that specific geographical area.

More generally, if we wanted to outline a reference framework for the situation of readers, analyzing the Italian situation, we could observe how "in 2020 the share of readers increased slightly compared to the previous year: they are 41.4% of people aged 6 and over (+1.4 percentage points). Since the year 2000, when the share of readers was 38.6%, the trend has been increasing until reaching its peak in 2010 with 46.8% and then decreasing again and returning, in 2016 (40.5%), around the level of 2001" (Istat, 2022).

Despite the difficulty behind this practice, reading means taking an educational and formative path, a *quality experience* (Dewey, 2014), which makes us know and better understand some cultures and aspects of other traditions close to us or far away, but also take a path with and on ourselves, with our emotions, with our experience, with what we are. In this way the reading becomes *Self-Care* - a central ontological category in pedagogy - able to offer the reader not only knowledge but also *transformation* (Cambi, 2010).

In this perspective, this *transformation* becomes an instrument to improving the reader's humanity and self-understanding. It is understood as *Bildung*, as a human education of man, as a "complex and dynamic

process of spiritual growth (that is, inner and mediated by culture to refine and enrich the interiority itself) and the development of the oneself in a more humanly rich and accomplished self" (Cambi, 2012, p. 44).

This challenge is certainly difficult, but it is extremely necessary and current, because it emphasizes the urgency of educational experiences that give new importance and *Care* to the human (in the complexity of its entire existence) in a society too technological and materialistic. The human existence is complex not only for the potentialities of human rationality, but also for the inner and emotional dimension - polyforms, changing, in some ways unknown (Galimberti, 2021) - that animates both the development of the individual as Self and his relationship with the Other.

In this context the return to *classical texts* could mean the implementation of *quality experiences* necessary in an educational process (Dewey, 2014), not only because such books *always say something* (Calvino, 2010) but because this book can implement the *exercise of thought* that today is necessary and should be valued, through a reflection on themselves and on what is around us.

Reading classical texts again to give a *form* to ourselves

In its deepest meaning, *Bildung* means defining and constructing a form for man, especially through that hermeneutical-reflective and, therefore, trans-formative circle that characterizes it. It, in fact, "hinges on the person [...] typically modern [...], imposes on it a sense [...] and realizes it [...] as a form" (Cambi & Santelli Beccagato, 2004, p. 11), always changing and to be questioned. To do this, *Bildung* uses the Foucaultian category of *Care*. Taking *Care* of oneself and of other people means "listening, questioning, remodeling oneself internally, structuring and restructuring oneself according to a design (or form) that precisely in the reciprocal balance between the various elements [...] finds its own barycentre" (Cambi, 2004, pp. 129-130).

Art helps us in this, as a pedagogical tool, as an experience, as a means of *Self-Care*. Art helps us in all its forms (from literature to music, from cinema to theater, from painting to sculpture), not only as a cultural and historical

expression, but above all as an instrument of education. This tool is used by man to read reality, to interpret it, to analyze it, to better understand it. And art makes this action because it narrates to people who live it facts and events that concern the person, the complexity of his emotional side, his daily difficulties, his experience: his Being (Cambi, 2004). For these reasons art can exalt the particularities of the human being, his *uniqueness* and *diversity*, developing deep reflections and thoughts that touch the most intimate and private (therefore personal) part of the person.

Among all the forms of art, the verbal channel used by literature perhaps implements in a particular way, the *Care*: through the narration, the reader takes part in the stories told in the texts, expanding their world, and developing experiences that give shape to the reader-person (Cambi, 2004). But can all the texts offer us these opportunities? Probably not, because not all literature, “even if it involves and captures (think of the various genres of *black, yellow, pink*), [...] usually manages to touch neither deep shares of the person, nor high and complex dimensions of human, social, historical experience” (Cambi, 2004, p. 133).

The classics, however, the so-called *timeless works*, have the main characteristic of narrating humanity outside of any historical time, of any circumstance, telling the deepest aspects of a culture. But they are timeless, because “they have grasped the basic metaphors of every time, which then coincide with the deepest plots where thoughts, feelings and feelings flow [...] that, only thanks to those books, find the right words to express themselves” (Galimberti, 2018, p. 174). A surely *timeless book* is *The Little Prince* (De Saint-Exupéry, 2012), translated into more than four hundred languages and dialects, which has represented and represents an important *meeting* in the growth of each of us and which contains important pedagogical meanings.

***The Little Prince* as an exercise of education and Self-Care**

Reading *The Little Prince*, one of the most important classical texts in world literature, means interpreting the many languages and metaphors that characterize it. The values he communicates, in fact, certainly exceed what could seem a simple and unreal story. His messages deeply touch the

emotional sphere of the reader who tries to read the many interpretations of the story. His words, his story, his characters have represented a sensitivity that, page after page, make us reflect on the difference between superfluous and necessary, between secondary and primary aspects, because this classic text invites us to overcome the materiality and appearance of reality, to give importance to our interiority and sensitivity: to *look* with the *heart* (De Saint-Exupéry, 2012).

The first message of this classic text can be described with a question: how much sensitivity is there in adults? How much imagination remains during growth? Reading the Narrator's childhood we can reflect on this question, because "all adults were children once. (But few of them remember it)" (De Saint-Exupéry, 2012, p. 5). The actions of adults, in fact, according to De Saint-Exupéry, are often rational and calibrated and deny the imagination: "in fact, it is only because of them that the star of the Little Prince is classified as the asteroid B 612: to believe in its existence, adults will not want to know if butterflies live there, but rather know its size, its weight, the distance... of the numbers... But the Little Prince just had to know that there was a rose" (De Saint-Exupéry, 2012, p. VII). This belief without the need to know the concreteness of this asteroid is the demonstration of the symbolic capacity present in the Little Prince, as in every child.

With growth, however, even the imagination of the Narrator decreases and increases that rationality typical of adults. When De Saint-Exupéry started school at the age of six, all his symbolic and fantastic side that characterized him until that moment, began to diminish, because the teachers wanted him to replace drawing with writing. The pencil, until then used with imagination, must now be used to mark numbers and letters on paper. Even if, like him, any child would prefer to draw a "funnel" while the teacher teaches to write that same word, he will soon understand that this is the fate that children must live to become great.

The journey that the Little Prince undertakes can therefore be seen as the metaphor of what leads from the innate imagination of children to the knowledge learned at school, towards rational adulthood. Growing up and abandoning the imaginary vision of life, "the great never understand anything by themselves" (De Saint-Exupéry, 2012, p. 8), because they need

a child who makes them understand the emotion of a drawing or any other fantastic aspect of reality that only children can perceive.

This different point of view, this seeing with the mind rather than with the heart, is what characterizes adults who knew the Narrator as a child. These adults cannot understand the real meaning of his drawing and their comments make him give up his passion for painting (obviously not considered important), to devote himself to issues considered more relevant. Their rational, superficial, and scientific judgment of the Narrator's drawing (which automatically excludes the symbolic aspect of the drawing), can make us reflect on the school.

Many times, assessments of teachers are assigned without considering the pupil's thought or emotions. Sometimes we consider only the simple observation of the achieved result, but we do not perceive a discomfort or mood that children can manifest with their actions or with what they don't say with words.

In addition to the importance of imagination, the moments lived by the Little Prince during his journey (they are a central part of the narrative) can become for the reader a metaphor of today's society: this is one of the most extraordinary aspects of this classic text. This journey begins when the protagonist of the story finds on his star a flower: it is not just any flower, but the only flower, the only Rose that inhabits, in addition to the Little Prince, the asteroid B 612. On it, in fact, there are only weeds, which every day the protagonist removes from the ground, for fear that they grow a lot and occupy the entire asteroid.

Spending his days alone contemplating the sunsets, admiring the beauty of the universe, and looking for some company, when the Little Prince sees that unique Rose growing on his planet, he is immediately very excited and enchanted by her. He begins to take care of her and to grant her every wish to be well. But after many requests that the Rose tells the Little Prince and not looking at the care and his commitment to make her feel good, the protagonist begins to doubt her and decides to leave his planet to make a journey between the various asteroids near the B 612. In each of these planets he meets characters who have particular and different characteristics.

The first planet is inhabited by a King, a monarch of the entire Universe (because it also ruled the stars and the sky). But there is a peculiarity: this king is only on his planet and, therefore, governs the normal development of nature (for example, he tells the Sun to rise). This King suffers a lot from his loneliness and when the Little Prince goes away, he proposes him a job that, generally, does not exist: this request hides the King's need not to be alone. This is an indirect request that only those who look at the depth of the person can understand. These kinds of demands are often made by today's adolescents because they many times live a social condition that, many times, makes them feel bad. For this reason, they seek help through unspoken sentences or actions that communicate emotions and moods (Galimberti, 2014).

After visiting the first planet, the Little Prince arrives at the second planet, where he meets a very vain character: for him it is important only to be appreciated by others. Reading this part of the narrative we can think of the need for acceptance that young people look for on social media: each *like* they receive satisfies their need for acceptance and recognition for others.

The third planet that the protagonist visits is, instead, inhabited by a Drunkard who drinks to forget. Also, in this case our reflection focuses in particular on adolescents (but also on adults who have this addiction), who get drunk not to think about the sufferings and problems of life. Here we see all the characteristics of the nihilist society, which hinders the meaning of our life and makes it difficult to understand why we must act, if we are not sure that we will reach the goal we would like (Galimberti, 2014).

On the next planet the Little Prince meets a Businessman, symbol of post-modern society. He gives a lot of importance to money and to the development of the market. The Businessman has the stars, counts them, and the more he counts, the more he has. So, when the Little Prince arrives and distracts him from his work, the inhabitant of this planet is not happy, because he has lost time to spend to make more profit. This is one of the aims of contemporary man; this is the basis of the economy that needs a constant production, and, at the same time, a self-destruction of the goods produced, so that it persists in time. If what the Little Prince communicates to us is the beauty of life and its richness beyond the material aspect, all this

is eclipsed by the Businessman, a metaphor of the advent of a predominant market in society and in people's lives.

The Little Prince's journey continues and reaches the fifth planet, where he meets another man who thinks only of work (turning on and off the street lamps) and who has no time for himself. Just doing this activity, this bizarre character doesn't have the opportunity to explore the world and have exciting experiences. The same fate of this inhabitant characterizes, again, also all those postmodern men who, instead of turning on and off the street lamps, turn on and off every day the machines they work with, convinced that "those who do not work do not exist" (Galimberti, 2016, p. 282).

Alienating themselves totally, the inhabitant of this planet, as part of the postmodern people, are interested only in their own work, "as if this had become the only indicator of the recognizability of man" (Galimberti, 2016, p. 283). The myth of efficiency requires them not to carry out other activities other than work and communicates to them the belief that they have no free time. Sad and incredulous, the Little Prince continues his journey, arriving at the sixth planet, whose inhabitant is a Geographer, whose work is to transcribe in a large book everything that explorers tell him about.

The Geographer has no experience, he does not know concretely what he writes in the books, he has never seen what they tell him: "the geographer is too important to go around. He never leaves his office, but receives explorers, interrogates them, and takes notes on their memories" (De Saint- Exupery, 2012, p. 74). There is only one small detail: the Geographer has no explorer at hand, and for this reason he always remained in his ignorance. In this sense, the story of the inhabitant of the sixth planet raises questions: how many young people today experience what they study? Does their knowledge remain in the abstract, without a link with reality, or is it experienced in the first person when possible?

The metaphor of this planet is fundamental because it helps us to reflect on the importance of knowledge, a critical approach to knowledge and, again, the importance of experience in learning.

After leaving the sixth planet, the Little Prince arrives on Earth, which, unlike the previous planets, is characterized by a multitude of inhabitants.

After an initial moment of discomfort, because he does not find people to talk to, the protagonist finally arrives in a flower garden, full of roses.

In that moment, the Little Prince understands that his Rose, which he thought was unique in the world, is any rose. This moment of sadness and resignation, hides the protagonist an important awareness, which he will understand only after meeting the Fox: this is one of the most emotional moments of the narration. Their encounter is very important in the story, because the values that the Fox communicates to the Little Prince and the readers, reveal the deepest meaning of this narrative. The words that the Little Prince and the Fox say to each contain those values that are indispensable for living together and for developing positive relationships, caring relationships. Relationships that are able to consider and exalt the uniqueness of each one.

“Who are you?” asked the Little Prince. “You’re very cute...” “I am a fox”, said the fox.

“Come and play with me”, the little prince proposed, “I am so sad...” “I cannot play with you”, said the fox, “I am not tamed”
(De Saint-Exupery, 2012, p. 91)

The Fox is not only a new friend to the Little Prince, but she will tell him what it really means to care and love someone. His words, of great emotional strength, give the Little Prince and his readers a beautiful reflection on the importance of diversity. “What does it mean to *tame*?” (De Saint-Exupery, p. 92), the Little Prince asks to the Fox, and she replies: “this is something to be forgotten. It means *creating bonds*” (De Saint-Exupery, p. 92). Strong, stable, lasting, and not hasty, superficial, momentary bonds. Bonding means going beyond appearance, eliminating prejudice, understanding, and caring for the other person. It means showing others that we are present, and we are a point of reference. It means understanding that, even among many people, that person will always be unique to us and different from the rest of the group.

“You, until now, for me, are but a boy equal to a hundred thousand children. And I don’t need you. And you don’t need me either. I am but for you a fox equal to a hundred thousand foxes. But if you tame me, we

will need each other. You will be unique to me in the world, and I will be unique to you in the world” (De Saint-Exupery, p. 92).

Being unique in the world: it is at this moment that the Little Prince understands that his Rose is precious, even if there are many other specimens. At this moment he realizes that, even in the midst of a flower garden full of roses, he will not find any other rose like his.

“If you tame me, my life will be like enlightened. I will know a sound of steps that will be different from all the others. The other steps make me hide under the ground. Yours, will get me out of the den, like a music” (De Saint- Exupery, p. 92).

Perceiving the uniqueness of the other does not only mean understanding his characteristics, his singularity, but also establishing a relationship with him based on listening. A listening of the person, which has an educational value. Listening to understand. Listening to take care of others to be attentive to their needs. Listening to grow together and develop a stable relationship, which does not stop at appearances and prejudices, but reaches the interiority of the person. To become responsible forever for those who are tamed you have to spend time for this action, engage a lot and wait long to create an important relationship. Only if we are attentive to others, and not superficial, we can really understand the singularity of that person. “It is very simple: you can only see with the heart. The essential is invisible to the eyes” (De Saint-Exupery, p. 98).

This is the main message of this narrative.

Diversity means uniqueness. *Uniqueness* means looking with the heart. *Looking with the heart* means going beyond superficiality to find the beauty of life, of feelings and, above all, of human relationships.

“From you, the men”, said the little prince, “they cultivate five thousand roses in the same garden... and they do not find what they seek...” [...]

“And yet what they seek could be found in a single rose or a little water...” [...]. “But the eyes are blind. We must search with the heart” (De Saint-Exupery, p. 108).

Classical texts and school: what relationship?

In educational contexts (especially at school) is proper importance given to classical texts? Is the educational importance understood?

The experience of Self Care through the reading of the classics needs time: to reflect, to understand, to question ourselves and think about the experiences we have lived. Working on ourselves and *reading ourselves* takes time and is an extremely complex educational action. At school this is not always possible, especially because, in some cases, attention to this exercise of thought (to which this experience aspires and which it seeks to develop) is lacking. Often at school it is more important, instead, the “teaching of commentary, paraphrase, contextualization, leaving at the margins - entirely on the margins - every teaching of reception” (Cambi, 2004, p. 135).

The *teaching of commentary*, however, also has consequences on the students’ approach to the text, which is often read in a passive, non-personalized, superficial way, without understanding its importance (Venturi, 2019). Within this context, therefore, we should consider the development of complex thought as a necessity, as Edgar Morin said (Morin, 2014). His reflections bring about a profound change in scholastic practice because it should put inter-disciplinarity at the center of teaching. This term is meant to overcome the rigid division of knowledge, trying to develop a knowledge that is more reasoned, linked to a continuous exercise of thought.

The notional school (which promotes a well-filled head, rich in content), should be accompanied by a reform of thought (Morin, 2014), which aims at a more complex, articulate, not mechanical thought, but capable of implementing dialogue, comparison, exchange. It would be appropriate to put at the center of teaching at school reflection and self-reflection, to also promote self-knowledge. In this way it would give importance not only to the mind of the student, but also to the person in its totality, through teaching practices that consider his growth and put him at the center of the educational and formative process, in a perspective of reflection and continuous exchange. In this perspective, reading the texts again the classics could be considered a valid tool for several reasons: knowing the cultural tradition, implementing a process of reflection, introspection, and interpretation of the Self and, finally, develop a self-critical action on us.

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Carto or The Video Game Ability to Tell a Story Through and With a Map

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For Mark JP Wolf, there are three components necessary to build an imaginary world. These elements are “space, or setting; time, or events; and existents, or characters” (as cited in Ryan, 2016, p.60). For each of these components, the game designer has several tools to help the audience to be engaged and make the imaginary world understandable. The maps are one of these tools, in our case related to space or setting. Pursuing this attempt to define the elements of an imaginary world, but focusing on video games specificities, Janet H. Murray listed four major distinctive properties:

“The boundary between videogames and other forms of digital media is also becoming confusing. Video games exploit all of the four key affordances of digital media: They are procedural, participatory, encyclopedic, and spatial (Murray, 1997). They include elaborate rule systems, rely on active intervention by the interactor and convene large numbers of simultaneous players, include vast amounts of information and multiple media forms, and offer complex spaces to move through.” (Murray Janet H., 2006, p.187)

Between the two researchers, we can observe that space seems to have a central place in the definition of video game storytelling. Extending these first considerations, Henry Jenkins forged the concept of *narrative architecture* to explain how space is used to develop and enhance the narration inside a video game. To understand this specificity of the digital medium, we have to replace a plot approach (that movies use a lot for example) by a space approach, as he said:

“Spatial stories are not badly constructed stories, rather, they are stories that respond to alternative aesthetic principles, privileging spatial exploration over plot development (...) the organization of the plot becomes a matter of designing the geography of imaginary worlds so that obstacles thwart and affordances facilitate the protagonist’s forward movement towards resolution. Over the past several decades, game designers have become more and more adept at setting and varying the rhythm of game play through features of the game space.” (Jenkins Henry, 2004, p.121)

Indeed, video game storytelling is more, as Jenkins explained again (Jenkins, 2004), a question of designing worlds rather than simply telling stories. However, despite this emphasis on narrative space, we need to make a distinction between the digital world to explore and the tools at the gamer’s disposal to facilitate his exploration. As Mark J.P. Wolf demonstrated, decades of video games helped us to distinguish a “game’s diegetic and nondiegetic spaces” (Wolf, 2011).

In other words, video games most often use maps as an extradiegetic (or non-diegetic) tool to facilitate the exploration of the virtual world (in 2d or 3D). For example, in the *Witcher III*, the player can use a map to find his own way by navigating inside the menu, exploring the interface attached to the UX design. This practice is, if we could say, outside of the game experience. We have to literally stop the game to read the map.

In the video game *Carto*, created by *Sunhead Games*, the principal idea was to exceed this first use of a map as an informative and extradiegetic tool to permit the map to become as Françoise Bahokten, Inspirational Content Advisor at *Ubisoft*, said “the vector of immersion, stories and emotions” (Bahoken, 2011).

So, how did they succeed in telling a story through and with a map ? Is it possible to give to the map a central role in the space approach of storytelling ? Changing its position from passive and non diegetic to diegetic and interactive ? To highlight this ludo-narrative proposition, we’ll explain through an holistic approach (combining both transmedial studies, game studies and narratological approach) the specific conception of *Carto’s* core gameplay which consists of solving puzzles from a map; then we’ll analyze the concept of shaping an island through this core gameplay

in order to conjugate gamer's freedom to interact and a controlled story; to conclude, we will detail how language and map work together in *Carto* to enhance both narration and emotions.

A core gameplay combining puzzle and maps

In *Carto*, you are Carto, a young girl who is lost on an island, and you are searching for your Granny. To do that, you will explore a small island and find new tiles which will help you to create a map (as a puzzle) that will change the world you're exploring. In *Sunhead Game's* production, the puzzles are linked to the *storyworld*. This way the map is not just used as a strategic tool, like in any abstract puzzle game, but becomes the engine of the narration.

The original idea behind the core gameplay came from the board game *Carcassonne*. As Lee-Kuo Chen, game designer for *Carto*, explained the team wanted a game "like *Carcassonne*, but you are able to travel on the tile you place" (Ronaghan, 2021). This way, the map which is originally subordinate to the game world has been considered here, since the early game development phase, as the first and key element of the game design and by extension of the gameplay.

The navigation here is impossible without the reading and the manipulation of the map. For Mark J.P. Wolf, navigation is interaction with space itself because "navigation is more than merely getting from one place to another; it is a cyclical process which involves exploration, the forming of a cognitive map of how spaces are connected, which in turn aids the decision-making processes employed by the player to move through those spaces for further exploration." (Wolf, 2011, p.19). Following this consideration, I normally could explore an imaginary world of a video game just by moving and creating my cognitive map but here it's simply undoable.

By placing the map at the heart of the gameplay, and not on the outskirts of it, *Sunhead Games* changed its status. As Thomas Veauclin said video games purpose a direct or indirect kind of narration (Veauclin, 2019). Inside this dichotomy, you'll find interactive or non-interactive tools to help the narration to develop. In *Carto*, the map being at the center of the

core gameplay becomes a direct and interactive narration because by its manipulation I am able to explore the 2D world which will be mostly non interactive or not directly related to the gameplay (tiles to find, people with whom I'll talk). A problem remains, how to conjugate the freedom of shaping and reshaping a map and the desire of a unified and structured story?

Shaping an island through the manipulation of a map

Ronan Le Breton explained in *Design narratif* that an interactive narration is organic, so you need to think it by taking account the interrelation between gameplay, art, program and UX/UI (Le Breton, 2018, p. 62). The problem with the idea of interaction, so the fact of letting a tierce person like the player to have an impact on the story¹, is the freedom of the gamer. If the game is not scripted, like following a corridor (one path), how can the developer control the distribution of the information, the development of a coherent story and by extension the rise of some emotions.

To deal with freedom, a central idea at the heart of interactive storytelling, *Carto's* developers decided to create an island. The choice of a fake island is not a detail when creating an imaginary world. As M.L. Ryan claimed in *Narrating Space*, the island is an optimum geographical form to push the audience to be engaged but also, for the creator, to control the distribution of information. Why and how?

First, "islands constitute a microcosm of the real world: they contain mountains, valleys..." as Ryan explained (Ryan, 2016, p.57). In fact, in *Carto* you can see, through the map, a forest, a coast, a village, a cave, etc. This way, gamer's immersion is easier because he could project himself in a plausible and intelligible world using his knowledge of reality. Secondly, "islands satisfy the mind because their limited size makes them knowable

1. We're using the term "story" in a Genettian way. For Gérard Genette, in *Figure III*, there is a tripartition important to understand more precisely the wide concept of *story*. For him, "l'histoire" is a series of events including one or several characters in a specific world. The "récit" is more the organization of "l'histoire" and the narration is the mode of communication for the "récit". By extension, the existence of a story needs a kind of coherence, closeness and unity of the events narrated to be understood by the audience.

and mappable” (Ryan, 2016, p.57). The limited size of an island is a great ally to combine the gamer’s freedom and a controlled narration even if it seems to be paradoxical.

In his article about narrative architecture, Henry Jenkins underlined the difference between an author of a film or book and a game designer concerning the distribution of the events forming the story: “The author of a film or a book has a high degree of control over when and if we receive specific bits of information, but a game designer can somewhat control the narrative process by distributing the information across the game space” (Jenkins, 2004, p. 126).

A limited, and more easily controllable, space like an island that the gamer has to construct step by step through a map in *Carto* will help the players to know this space. One of the main reasons behind this is also related to the concept of cognitive maps which will be easier to construct for the audience thanks to this island structure. Nicolas Ouejan, game designer at *That Company*, explained this concept in a GDC conference (Ouejan, 2021). As a gamer, we’ll constantly navigate between a cognitive map and a digital map or world (in 2D or 3D).

Usually, navigation through game space is facilitated by the affordances like the shapes of a building or interactive objects and signifiers as colors, signs and even words respecting the saying “Form follows Function” (Game Maker’s Toolkit, 2016). For example, the saga *Uncharted* likes to add some scratches on a wall to guide the gamer, or a wood stick with a slice of rope indicating a possible interaction. All these common elements fall under the ego centered approach of space as Nicolas Ouejan said. The fact that in *Carto* the game developers decided to avoid these aids developed a more *area centered approach* to space. The space exists by itself, I’ve just to recompose it through a map to make it intelligible for me. The exploration of the 2D world could help me in *Carto* but the key element for the navigation remains the map.

According to Lee-Kuo Chen: “there’s still lots of freedom in how you choose to arrange the tiles on the map.” (Ronaghan, 2019). Even if the solution could be one and unique, you’ll explore several combinations depending on how you deal with space. Some people will think first then

combine the map, some will make several manipulations of the map before exploring the world, and some could explore the world to have a better idea of a cognitive map in order to correctly shape *Carto's* map. Even if the key action of the gameplay is manipulating a map, the freedom of dealing with space could change from a gamer to another. The limited mapped island is here to maintain a coherence and avoid the gamer to be lost.

The last point of M.L. Ryan's interest in creating a fake island is that "islands can be explored and settled, thus combining the freedom of movement characteristic of space with the intimacy of place." (Ryan, 2016, p. 57). In *Carto's*, this question of freedom was always considered in relation with the idea of exploration. Not as an obstacle leading to a scripted game to easily control the gamer but much more like a motivation to integrate freedom and exploration as the engine of the story.

Lee-Kuo Chen clarified that the goal of *Carto* was to deliver an emotional, strategic and narrative experience with and through the map, not by giving it a peripheral place but, on the contrary, the first place, from the prototype (using papers) to the final product: "We wanted players to be able to have a sense of discovery by traveling to new lands, to feel the joy of satisfaction by restructuring the world, to be amazed by the puzzles, and to feel happy by experiencing a small but delightful story." (Couture, 2021).

Map and language to enhance narration and emotions

To tell a story with and through a map, *Carto's* developers decided to combine in a more efficient way the map and the digital world. If the mapped island will help to control the gamer's freedom all in permitting the game developer to develop a coherent narration, and the core gameplay will oblige the player to adopt an area approach of space (combining narrative and strategic sides), conjugating language and map will enrich the narrative and emotional capacity of the map. Like M.L. Ryan said "when language and map complement each other, space can be represented in both its emotional, phenomenological and strategic dimensions." (Ryan, 2016, p. 46).

The shape, and reshape of the map, is directly linked with the world you'll have to explore. Not an empty world but an island full with people, habitations and legends. In a certain way, the map is first in the creative process as R.L. Stevenson proclaimed about *Treasure Island*, the novel emerging from the map and not the contrary: "Somewhat in this way, as I poured upon my map of "Treasure Island", the future characters of the book began to appear there visibly among imaginary woods." (cited in Ryan, 2016, p. 54). This conception of considering map as the first and central element to elaborate a story, even interactive, is confirmed by Lee-Kuo Chen:

"When we started the project there was no narrative, no art, no sound. The design space was totally open, so we (designer + programmer) kept adding puzzle ideas into our world and design doc. Though after we started thinking of the story, art, and sound, we realized that we had to focus on the best ideas and cut the rest. The puzzles left in the final game are the ones that we thought would be doable and fun to most players." (Ronaghan, 2021)

For example, in *Carto*, you'll restructure the map to herd sheep, help islanders to find their homes and missing objects or place forest tiles according to the exact direction of a fallen tree. The only way to understand it and do the right manipulation is by interacting with the environment, in other words by speaking with other characters². The need of social interactions, and understanding of the island's inhabitants, will add a narrative and emotional layer to the map's manipulation.

Conclusion

As Scott McCloud prophesied, the "infinite canvas" offered by digital media may make it possible to tell stories with and through maps in very different ways." (McCloud, 2000, p.204). Realizing McCloud's prophecy, *Carto* gave to the map three key functions by placing it at the crossroads of the creative process in an attempt to conjugate interaction and environmental storytelling in a more active way than usual.

2. <https://kotaku.com/carto-s-cozy-puzzles-are-just-tough-enough-1845971204>

Map will promote engagement and immersion by permitting the gamer to shape and reshape it thanks to the core gameplay in order to explore the world imagined. Map will facilitate the understanding of the story by using the island as the context of a limited but structured narration still allowing freedom. And finally, the map will reveal the strategic or symbolic configuration of the setting by imaging puzzles through the map, helped by the interactions with inhabitants.

Beyond this ability to tell a story through and with a map, *Carto's* originality remains the gamer's ability to play and rearrange the level design of the game. Normally, as a gamer I could explore, with more or less freedom, the imaginary world created by the game developer. But, my impact on this space is globally restricted or ineffective. In *Carto*, the player is not just a protagonist circulating inside a digital world but a co-level designer. Inside the limitations of the game, I can shape the microcosm as I want, just for my desire to model and create my own story/land but also to develop the preconceived story. This way, the gamer can shape and reshape the *heterocosm* (Linda Hutcheon, 2012, p. 82), literally another world, cosmos. An original way to invite the gamer to contribute much more to the game world's formation and more widely to tell a story by the manipulation of space through a map.

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This book is the result of the University of Vic-Central University of Catalonia (UVic-UCC) organising the Fifth International Conference entitled: "Storytelling Revisited: Narrating Spaces. Literature, Education, Gender, Geography, and Tourism", held in Vic (Barcelona) on 22nd and 23rd November 2022. This Conference provided a forum for teachers, students, researchers, and professionals to deepen into the analysis of storytelling in relation to narrating spaces and all the surrounding topics: literature, education, geography, and tourism. It was an interdisciplinary conference organised by several research groups across UVic-UCC: GLOSSA (Formed by former research groups TEXTLICO, GRELL and GRAC), GETLIHC and TRACTE, from the Faculty of Education, Translation, Sports and Psychology (FETEP), EMPREN, from the Faculty of Business and Communication Studies (FEC), and ISaMBeS, from the Faculty of Healthcare Sciences and Wellbeing (FCSB). This academic meeting revolved around the study of narrative structures and storytelling applied to narrating spaces, destination marketing, literature, gender, geography, and their didactic implications. All these considerations are consistently held with a gender perspective in mind, recognizing it as a fundamental element to comprehend their implications within the domain of storytelling and the associated topics that have been discussed during this year's Conference.