Comparative narrative analysis of the series Lost as compared to other fictional audio-visual productions

Análisis narratológico comparativo de la serie Lost con producciones audiovisuales de ficción

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Abstract

Through a methodology based on narrative analysis, this research exposes how the multicultural, thematic and structural narrative construction of the television series Lost (ABC 2004-2010) has transcended to other contemporary and subsequent audiovisual creations. It becomes in a key piece that bases diverse communication discourses. Lost establishes a new creation model for different audiovisual products based on intertextuality. By observing different cases based on similarities and inheritances with this series, the hypothesis of this study suggests through the discourse analysis of different television and film fictions, how this influences their processes. Among them, we find Star Wars, which in its new cinematic proposals implanted considerable elements of content coinciding with Lost. Likewise, this article also shows from an analytical perspective the evolution and trends of different audiovisual products in recent years.

Keywords

Narrative; audiovisual communication; fiction; series; television; cinema.

Resumen

A través de una metodología basada en el análisis narratológico, esta investigación expone cómo la construcción narrativa multicultural, temática y estructural de la serie de televisión *Lost* (ABC 2004-2010) ha trascendido a otras creaciones audiovisuales coetáneas y posteriores. Se convierte en una pieza clave que fundamenta diversos discursos comunicacionales instaurando un nuevo modelo de creación para diferentes productos audiovisuales basados en la intertextualidad. Mediante la observación de distintos casos basados en similitudes y herencias de esta serie, la hipótesis de este estudio plantea a través del análisis del discurso de diferentes ficciones televisivas y cinematográficas, cómo ésta influye en sus procesos. Entre ellas encontramos a *Star Wars*, que en sus nuevas propuestas cinematográficas implanta considerables elementos de contenido coincidentes con *Lost*. Igualmente, este artículo también muestra desde una perspectiva analítica la evolución y tendencias de diferentes productos audiovisuales en los últimos años.

Palabras clave

Narrativa; comunicación audiovisual; ficción; series; televisión; cine.

1. Introduction

In a detailed analysis of the *Lost* narrative it is possible to observe the story's unitary nature. The series tells the tales of the events that follow the crash of a commercial plane on a deserted island. Those that survive number an eclectic list of very different characters among which are: Jack, a doctor and main character who has difficulty in leading the band of survivors; Kate, a young fugitive; Sawyer, a confidence man; Locke, paraplegic who regains the ability to walk on the island; Jin and Sun, a Korean couple; Hurley, a lottery winner; Claire, a young woman eight month pregnant; and Sayid, a former Iraqui soldier. To the original list additional characters appear such as Desmond and Penny, a couple separated by the island. Although they may appear different, their lives previous to the plane crash are all closely linked and all are somehow led to the island to fulfill a mission. *Lost* is a science fiction series in which the interrelation between culture and mystery give it a style and character of its own. It consists of a horizontal structure with additional episodic vertical constructions that deal with the past or future of the protagonists. The construction of "*Lost* is an example of story-framework. The previous is a narrative form that presents a series of short stories, often told by different narrators, that fit into a larger more extensive narrative" (Vaughn, 2007: 55). It is a series about characters seeking redemption on a deserted island. Created by J.J. Abrams for ABC it quickly became the standard for a new generation of series. For Gordillo (2009) the volume of "fictional television series and their truly enormous expansion, coupled with the ease in reception, has changed a phenomenon that for years was occasional or temporary into a [...] a regular event" (99). Cascajosa (2007), extols the paradigmatic event that was *Lost*; "the 2004 – 2005 season was a literal creative rebirth for *networks* thanks to the success of *House*, *Lost*, *Desperate Housewives* and *Grey's Anatomy*" (20). In this context the importance of *Lost* is salient. The influence of certain productions mark a before and after associated with audience approval and the success of the narrative discourse (Pinto, 1995). This particular series offers new ideas, concepts, formats and forms for the viewer, evolving the way in which stories are told.

2. Background

One of the fictional audiovisual productions that also marked history was the enormously successful *Star Wars* (1977). In its time the film opened in limited release, but its success has led to sequels, television series and established the concept of merchandising and promotional materials for films 8Company, 2010). The product became iconic, garnering the attention of The Walt Disney Company which bought Lucasfilm, the intellectual property owners, for 4 billion dollars in 2012[1]. The arrival of *Star Wars* generated clear cultural influences from the late 70s onward. Without this particular film other cinematic productions such as *Star Trek* (1979), *Alien* (1979), *E.T.* (1982), *Blade Runner* (1982), *Jurassic Park* (1993), *Independence day* (1996), *Matrix* (1999), *the original Pirates of the Caribbean trilogy* (2003 – 2007), *the Start Trek remake* (2009) or *the television series Battlestar Galactica* (1978) and *SeaQuest* (1993 – 1996) would not be the productions we know today, or they simply wouldn't exist. Although many of these productions are adaptations, their conception, and the audience's ability to assimilate these stories through the heroic figure of Joseph Campbell (1949), allow the creators to develop concepts in audiovisual discourse that approach that of the genres of odyssey, characters, epics and the fantastic. Several protagonists, the importance of a vehicle in the storyline, the struggle between good and evil, the mystical, incursions into science fiction, and the constant development of new special effects, are all common elements in American commercial success since the release of these productions.

George Lucas's work has also had an influence on the creation of *Lost*. All the same narrative concepts and direct references and characters and storylines in the intergalactic saga are proof of the fact. De la Torre (2015) considers

that *Star Wars* was a permanent reference in the management and development of *Lost*. A reference that made itself felt in varying ways" (182). Among them, the use of the Hero archetype, the struggle between good and evil, mystical energies that surround the plot, and a series of characters with similar roles within the plot. But, at the same time, the series that ran on ABC is now the standard in new productions. Just like *Star Wars* was one of the pillars in *Lost*, *Lost's* own formal narrative and discourse has made another step toward being considered the model of its time.

3. Methodology

The goal of the study is to understand how the television series *Lost* is a model for audiovisual productions in the fantasy genre. To that end the series is considered disruptive relative to the television landscape of the time due to its form and narrative proposal. For the effects of this study several contemporary audiovisual productions and productions that came after have been analyzed, productions both cinematic and for the small screen, as well as other cultural pieces.

Using a method substantiated by comparative narratology we recognize *Lost* as a significant work of fiction for the period, in which many creators seek inspiration due, for the most part, to its complex structure and subject matter. The labor involved, consisting in the following discourse analysis, enables the researchers to explore the conception of a new paradigm for television series. The new paradigm is the product of changes in consumer preferences and the efforts made to follow confusing plotlines and complex characters. Consequently, the study proposes specific goals focused on analyzing the key elements of the narrative of the series, and, to detect concrete aspects which constitute influences on other audiovisual and cultural products. According to De la Torre (2016) "*Lost* was for many, the first series of the new era of television fiction" (9).

In this particular point these objectives will be executed parallel to the study.

All progress made in the narrative, whatever the format, influences the surrounding elements in multiple ways. This creates a confrontation between a study of techniques and communicational tools on the intertextuality of the case. The narrative processes, the adaptations, "the inter-influences between different art forms, both in the direct scope of intertextuality as well as in the adaptations, the techniques and constructive mechanisms, has been a constant" (Valles, 2008: 17). To develop this study and scope of the objective, the researchers will take into consideration the comparative analysis of contemporary productions and later productions that have established the narrative and communicative model of the television series analyzed herein. Considering the degree of impact on different creations, creative decisions, plotline acceptance, discourse, diffusion and effect, they will determine the intertextual parallelism of the works that have continued in the vein of the model set by *Lost*.

4. Analysis and Results

4.1. The narrative discourse of *Lost* as a reference point

One of the greater narrative achievements of *Lost* has been its incursion into different cultures and languages within the same audiovisual narrative. It is true that the original crew of the series *Star Trek* (1966 – 1969) had already introduced conflict rooted in ethnic and idiomatic diversity, but they were fictional races. In addition to the previous, English was the common language, at times with a foreign accent or event translated (Camacho, 2014). An example is the character Jocelyn Packard in *Twin Peaks* (1990), another series that marked Lost. A situation in which the Lost scriptwriters changed, seeing it as an opportunity to internationally expand with the development of the characters Jin and Sun. The creative decision was made to allow both speaking in their original

languages and subtitling what they said. The couple represented the emerging influence of eastern culture within western commercialism. It may seem a stretch to believe these characteristics were inherent to the series, but the logic behind the existence of these characters in the plot and the careful handling of all cultures in the series, allows the researcher to affirm that "in *Lost* there are not traits of colonialism or racism" (Tous, 2010, 109). This defines the multicultural diversity of the series. Scolari, Maguregui and Piscitelli (2011) considers that "it is not about offering the same storyline again but in different languages, using different languages to compose autonomous pieces within a single storyline" (81).

Part of its success can be attributed to the audience's increasingly better skills in languages. Viewers can now follow more complex and globalized productions online, making it possible to increase the complexity of these productions still more. The potential of "*Lost's* international distribution was increased to due an ensemble cast, plotlines and scenarios that gave the protagonism to characters of different origins, languages and cultures of the world" (Menendez, 2011: 726). The series looks for communion with the audience that "leads to cathartic sentiment with people living similar situations, acknowledging the similarities between their experiences and that of other black people and Asians in general" (Baker, 1999: 214). From the launch of the series many audiovisual productions that came after have recognized the advantage of integrating diversity into the storyline. Some of these are: *Heroes* (2006 – 2010), *Physics or Chemistry* (2008 – 2011) and *Iron Man 3* (2013) with a running time exclusive to China. All of the above have introduced Asian characters of whom many alternate between English and their native language.

The series has made its mark as a quality TV program, unique to a particular generation, and established as a new approach to narrative on television. *Lost* set the guidelines and created the new model for how to create fiction television series. In this new scenario American television series have emerged to become true benchmarks and the new standard in quality and consumer models the world over. This is why we consider Lost a key component to online television, and a successful product that bears and influence, or left its mark on the cultural conception of the time. According to Jenkins (2008) "fans have always been early adopters for new media technology; their fascination with the fictional universe often inspires new forms of cultural production" (137). In fact, the series was entered into the book of *Guinness World Records* in 2009 when the series was lauded as the most downloaded series in history[2]. Due to its success and its narrative proposal, many successful audiovisual productions have followed the path first forged by *Lost*.

4.1.1. Narrative and structural influences on television series in the US

The first case we shall focus on is the Fox production *Prison Break* (2005 – 2009). This fictional series was promoted as the new version of *The Great Escape* (1963). The proposal was to create a series based on jail criteria which for the most part were responsible for the level of success of the first season. The series boasted an ensemble cast dominated by male characters; series in this genre develop a sense of being shut in and also fall in the category of action or adventure. The starting point is by no means close to that of Lost, but the way the story evolved revealed its influence. The main argument is a play on the secret pasts of the protagonists, revealed through *flashbacks*. The first episodes also reveal how the plot revolves around a hole in the ground; in the case of *Lost* it's a hatch that carries the dramatic tension. In both series, these openings are shown in similar shots, and represent the characters' hopes. *Prison Break* was critically acclaimed and loved by the audience in the first season, but the storylines were overextended. The main cause for the series cancellation, what was most different when compared to *Lost*, was the absence of a structural argument that bound the entire story.

Another series that was very successful was NBC's *Heroes* (2006), the studio a direct competitor for ABC: The production consisted of

elements very similar to those proposed in the *Lost* pilot. Once again we have an international ensemble cast in which the majority of the characters are men. All have special abilities that make them uniquely empowered to prevent the approaching apocalypse. These concepts were also suggested in the arguments underlying the story in *Lost*, where their presence on the island made them the chosen ones, with a mystical destiny in wait. The comparison doesn't stop there; among the cast of Heroes there is an Asian, a young blonde girl called Claire, a policeman (played by the actor known as the pilot of Flight 815 in Lost), and another Indian character, like the actor playing the role of Sayid in *Lost*, to the extent of having a similar look.

Another series that copied the *Lost* narrative DNA was *FlashForward* (2009 – 2010). Once the star product on ABC's lineup had ended the network commissioned a new fictional series with fantasy elements to fill the void left by *Lost*. The title itself is already an indication of the influence of *Lost*, it being a narrative concept widely evident to the viewer at large. In *FlashForward,* a series that only lasted a season, we find several stylistic references, starting with an unexplained disaster. The narrative also plays with the timeline of the characters' lives, and once again, an ensemble cast. Other similarities are an alcoholic character and a seed event narrated from different character viewpoints, like the crash of flight 185. The series also resorted to numerical reference that was important to the story. Several of the actors from *Lost* also participated in the production: Sonya Walger and Dominic Monaghan. The series "*FlashForward* adheres to Lost in an attempt to repeat the formula for success that ensured success" (Exposito, 2011: 128). Another production from the same network was the new version of V (2009 – 2011). The series once again starts with the opening of the protagonist's eye, a character portrayed by Elizabeth Mitchell, Juliet in *Lost*. In V many of the aliens use costumes and camouflage themselves as humans, leading to distrust between characters. The series plays with the viewers' trust and expectations. This fictional series, like the one before, came and went largely unnoticed due to "the big problem of many of these series being

the desire to reproduce Abrams formula, but only partially copying it" (De la Torre 2015: 54). Both revealed their underlying mysteries very quickly, but neither of them created charismatic characters nor interesting conflicts with which to engage the viewer.

Gordillo and Guarinos (2013) consider the fragmented use of time in storytelling and "elliptical structures are in almost all progressive series that push the boundaries of previous structures, be that in general design of the entire overall series, *Lost* […] or in the design of each episode, such as *Breaking Bad*" (187). In a series produced for AMC we find other inherited traits from Lost's narrative structure. The unique story concept and the characters' desperate search for redemption coincide with the J.J. Abrams fictional production. *Breaking Bad* (2008 – 2013) is a benchmark product in and of itself, a series that has become a television phenomenon and made the protagonist a cultural icon. In addition to the previous, there's a delicate, and by all standards excellent "script built on supporting characters" (Cobo, 2013: 219). Another element that brings these two series closer is the final outcome of their respective protagonists. Both series end with the same formal discourse, injured characters, with a bird's eye view shot that zooms out over the area in which the characters have struggled and given their all in the story.

4.1.2. Other stylistic resources used in television

A new singular and identifying aspect of *Lost* that should be taken into consideration is its *opening.* A sober, and simple title appearing then approaching the screen, accompanied by a simple sound effect. Bort (2010) acknowledges the opening in his scale for mimetic representation based on the drama's iconicity. In the same manner the introduction of this fleeting pattern is attributed to 24 (2001 – 2010), but it's the *Lost* model that reaches the level of impact and replica. Proof of the concept is in how different productions have applied the same format, setting the tone for the series in a matter of seconds. Some of the openings that have followed the same format are:

Heroes (2006 – 2010), *The Boarding School* (2007 – 2010), *Gossip Girl* (2007 – 2012), *Breaking Bad* (2008 – 2013), *FlashForward* (2009 – 2010), *V* (2009 – 2011), *Glee* (2009 – 2015), *El Barco* (2011 – 2013) and *Star Wars Rebels* (2014 – 2018).

4.2. *Lost* as an inspiration for other cultural sectors

Beyond the medium, "*Lost* has become a matter of American pop culture, given that other television programs now reference the series, it appears in comics, announcements, and in the titles of songs by certain music groups" (Tous, 2010: 89). This was an idea that also resonated with Scolari (2013) who argued that *Lost* "took no time at all to expand to other media and communicational spaces until it became one of the most interesting examples of transmedia narrative" (160).

In the world of the comic we have the case of *Pardillos* (2007 – 2011), created by Carlos Azaustre. The comic artist and illustrator began collaborating with different *web pages* and *blogs* with comic strips about *Lost*. But, given the high impact of his work he decided to rewrite the series. Scolari, Manguregui and Piscitelli (2011) recognize that *Pardillos* was "a comic in which the world of *lost* […] serves the purpose of armor in a work of rampant intertextuality that forges links between the culture of the Spanish masses of the early 21st century (64). These publications were a success and were awarded correspondingly by different associations[3].

In the music industry there are several echoes of the series' influence. The Spanish group Oreja de van Gogh managed to capture its mysticism by including winks that the fans could interpret. Concretely, in their album *A las cinco en Astoria* (2008) the last track ends with one hundred and eight steps, and of out of said numbers, the numbers coinciding with Hurley's cursed winning lottery numbers have a special effect as though someone were stepping puddles. In the same way, in September of 2008, they were on the front cover of 40 *Principales*[4] dressed as the characters of the series. In the US the band Weezer released their album *Hurley* (2010)[5]. The

album cover is an image of Jorge Garcia, the actor that portrayed the character. These events indicate the widespread recognition of the production in any media, with fans forming part of participatory culture (Jenkins, 2013).

In the videogame industry the success of the series has also had an influence in the creation of new storylines. There was an official rendering of the series in videogame format released in 2008, the stand out was the game *Just Cause 2* (2010). In the aforementioned game the protagonist must complete missions on a series of islands. On one of those islands a magnetic field causes planes to crash. The player must destroy the energy field. The similarities don't stop there; there are other recognizable elements such as the debris of a plane on a beach, a character enveloped in black smoke, and a hatch in the jungle[6]. These initiatives are executed with the general intent to garner recognition and "reach a broader audience that may include persons not generally accustomed to playing videogames" (Selva, 2009: 159). Elements of the series are used to promote and widen the market. This is also the case for mobile application *CookingStar.* The app is a free downloadable game where a cook duo called Desmond and Penny[7] prepare a menu. Even the design of the characters closely imitates the actors in the series.

4.3. *Lost* as a reflection for Hollywood cinema

In the current cinematic scenario we can also find echoes of the series. In matters of development there are also similarities to the *Harry Potter* saga (2001 – 2011) from the point the movies include the dementors in 2004: columns of black smoke. Another example is how the director Alex Proyas narrates a plane accident in *Knowing* (2009), a sequence identical to that of the first episode of the series. In the same movie there is also a numeric code and an organization that chases the protagonist which the character's son calls the whisperers. All these elements are applied within the realm of the paranormal, but with an intimate and humane background, just as it is portrayed in the series. Something similar occurs in *Batman vs. Super-*

man (2016), where Bruce Wayne starts the film running and rescuing people from the rubble of a collapsed skyscraper, a close approximation to the visual memory of 9-11. Like what "happens in *Lost*, fantasy and science fiction both serve as tools to freely visualize the climate of distrust and fear that ensued 9-11" (Cascajosa, 2005a: 194). Again, the similarities don't stop there; the same protagonist then meets with different characters with special abilities for the good of a common cause. The storyline comes straight out of the comics, but is resolved on the screen from a formal, audiovisual perspective.

Another film that lends credence to the argument is the Disney picture *Tangled* (2010). In this film the male lead, Flynn, is a thief and swindler who hides his real identity, like Sawyer from *Lost*. Both characters match so closely even their characters' origins as orphans are the same. Throughout the film, similar to what happens to the castaway, the character in *Tangled* eventually drops his fake identity. In the Disney film there is also another character that closely resembles a character in *Lost* appearing at a key moment in the series. At the end of the film Rapunzel's hair is cut, she weeps and tries to save her injured friend. Its at this moment when a character very similar to Kate in *Lost* makes an appearance, saying goodbye to her adopted son Aaron to return to the island and bring back his real mother Claire. The scene is filmed in a low-angle close up shot, practically identical to the moment just described in *Lost*. The princess reveals her freckles, the main identifying physical trait of the character in the series. This reveals a stylistic construction inherited from the television series. In the same manner both characters resolve to run away and live new adventures, in which we recognize Kate and Sawyer in the characters of Flynn and Rapunzel.

A new, rising narrative found in cinema is in the highest grossing movie in history: *Avatar* (2009). The Cameron production is a tale about a group of humans that arrive on a new, beautiful and fertile planet called Pandora which they intend to colonize. One of the members of the group is Jake Sully, a paraplegic who is submitted to testing to use his dead brother's avatar of a native

of Pandora. This allows Jake so regain the use of his legs. In an emotional scene Jake rediscovers the feeling of grass under his feet. From that moment on he becomes increasingly committed to the place that has given him this new opportunity. The situation and identification of the character with the planet Pandora is exactly the same way John Locke feels about the island. Both find a better version of themselves in a magical place. The setting is portrayed as a character in and of itself.

It is also significant how the character Jack and his complex issues in *Lost* also serve as inspiration. In the series the doctor has tremendous difficulty reconciling with those issues. His father's character refers to it as "*letting go*". The simple expression has become nothing short of an anthem for an entire generation thanks to the Disney film *Frozen* (2013). In the aforementioned movie Elsa must learn to live with her power, accept it and let it go. Jack must also learn to accept the things that happen to him, even if he doesn't believe in them. This idea is also present in the J.J. Abrams production *Super 8* (2011), where the child protagonist must overcome the death of his mother. From this perspective De la Torre (2015: 45) points out that for this filmmaker "the issue of breaking up a family unit, and the distancing of a son from a father isn't exclusive to *Super 8*", it is in fact a recurring theme in his movies. Returning "to *Lost*, many of the characters have a past in which there is a clear, predominant conflict with the paternal father figure" (De la Torre, 2015: 45).

4.3.1. *Lost* as a starting point in both style and form: the case of the latest *Star Wars* sequels

Taking into consideration the analysis developed so far in this paper, it is possible to understand why Disney, owner of the television network ABC and creator of *Lost*, decides to give Abrams control over the return of *Star Wars* to the big screen when purchasing Lucasfilm.

Almost four decades after the release of the original film, the difficult task of resuscitating the *Star Wars* saga falls to the mastermind behind

the series *Lost*, a series that inherited many of its narrative traits from *Star Wars*, and at the same time, becoming the narrative standard for the new generation of audiovisual productions. In its narrative, "the dosing of information in *Star Wars* is one of the clearest influences in the galactic saga identified with the works of J.J. Abrams" (De la Torres, 2015: 183). The directors work is clearly the successor of trends in family movies from the eighties, with *Super 8* (2011) as the biggest example of eighties nostalgia. In the film Abrams also manages to include defining elements of his own that give him a recognizable style. In all of his productions he manages to establish a common thread, a shared subtext in which he combines the introspective journey of discovery of his characters toward a new and better version of themselves, with carefully crafted and measured discourse. The previous are revealed and become recurring elements, the backdrop and banner of the series *Lost*. Consequently, Disney's reliance on Abrams can mean nothing but the continuance of this distinctive semiotic trait. The situation has been turned on its head. It is now the New Yorker's work which serves as pretext for the new chapters in *Star Wars*. We therefore discover that in *The Force Awakens* (2015), several storylines and character decisions relate to the same elements in the series. In this film a series of new characters inherit the struggle against the forces of evil in their fictional galaxy. Some of the new protagonists are: Rey, a young orphan connected to the Force; Finn, a former soldier running from the enemy, and Kylo Ren; a villain and heir to Darth Vader, the main antagonist in the entire *Star Wars* saga.

In first place comes the figure of the soldier gone AWOL, Finn, a character with much in common with practically any of *Lost's* main characters. He is black, represents diversity, wishes to escape from a reality not of his liking, and seeks an opportunity for redemption. The characters in *Lost* "are not lost on a deserted island, rather in their own emotional despair" (De la Torre, 2006: 25). Finn is *lost*. He has a secret that viewer is aware of but the other characters are not, a narrative concept defined as "an in-confessable memory" (Perez, 2007: 126), which is the same for Sawyer, Jin and Locke. Abrams doesn't hide

the conception of the character, and following a aircraft crash, he presents him using the same shots and similar reactions to those of Jack in the first seconds of the Pilot, episode 1.01.

The conception of the leading three characters, Rey, Finn and Kylo Ren, coincides in that they are all young, have been raised without a father figure, and all seek out that father figure despite the fact that, for varying reasons, the didn't enjoy a father child relationship. In *Lost* "the relationships of the survivors with their respective father figures is fundamental to understanding their relation to the island, the conflict they have with their progenitors renders them rootless" (De la Torre 2015: 45). For the new *Star Wars* characters their pasts are also transcendental, "the actions and choices have a weight, and the consequences of those choices are very real" (Burke, 2007: 108), and at the same time defining elements for the actants.

Another interesting creative proposal is to hide the *MacGuffin* in the story, for example Luke Skywalker on a mysterious lost island. The location has a mystic origin related to the very beginnings of the Jedi and the abstract concept of the Force. The "similarity between Force and Energy of the island in *Lost* is perhaps the most evident aspect. In both cases they are intangible powers with an undefined origin" (De la Torre, 2016: 182). If the idea of the Force in its day facilitated the creation and understanding of the island's power in *Lost*, on this occasion, the meta-reference to Abrams own creation brings *Star Wars* even further into it's own creative universe.

At the same time, a very recognizable element in the series produced by ABC is to end each episode with a cliffhanger[8]. Abrams transferred the concept over to Star Wars, a narrative gamble that was considered perhaps the greatest contribution to the saga in the ending of *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980). However here, the director decides to end the film halfway through an emotional scene which Rian Johnson, the director of the next chapter, begins his film with in *The Last Jedi* (2017). Never before had this been done in a *Star Wars* movie. The ellipsis between chapters had always been a few years, the argu-

ment as a result is prolonged both formally and horizontally, something common in many *Lost* episodes where the storyline was approached from different viewpoints or characters.

Lastly, the narrative structure implanted in the new segments of *Star Wars* is also worth noting. With the prequels the "continuity in reverse chronological order has reconfigured the final product through analepsis or flashbacks, resolving the matter through character building, as is the case with *Lost*" (Tous, 2010: 94). The new episodes once again do the same. Until now development of the Skywalker family generations has continued horizontally. Among these new releases there have also been a series of conclusive vertical spinoffs which will take up the back-story of one of the *Star Wars* characters. This is the case with *Rogue One* (2016) and *Solo* (2018). If we were to consider these big flashbacks, we could posit that they are opportunities to learn more of their origins, giving the story more depth and, following the example of *Lost*, where "the *flashback* is a basic structural element of the series, and presents some interesting connotations" (Perez, 2007: 123).

5. Conclusion

As has been detailed throughout the present research, a comparative narrative analysis of the current television model (Riva, 2011), *Lost* is a new manner in which to conceive the creation of audiovisual products of mass consumption. The innovative gamble of the fiction in question has "proven that it is possible for formal experimentation to find a niche with the audience, encouraging networks and producers to try new methods that escape tradition" (Cascajosa, 2005b: 5). How the audience identifies with characteristics of their proposal, as well as the echo of that proposal in other creations make it the model to follow within the international framework of audiovisual productions of its generation. A serial pattern of communication, centered on diversity and complexity of discourse which, as happened with the change in consumer behavior after the release of *Star Wars*, *Lost* manages to bring to the forefront

and make popular new techniques, new styles and new narrative ideas in multiplatform television series. Thanks to these efforts, *Lost* is today "a brand that continues to be publicized, even after the series' ending. Not only can we consider it a commercial product, we can also look at it as a cultural product that has found its way and inserted itself in the collective imagination" (Ramos & Lozano-Delmar, 2011: 431).

The comparative analysis using other audiovisual productions is only a sample of the scope and the impact the series has had. Added to similarities between fictional series, there are new consumer habits and a new relationship with television series. A situation corroborated by the evolution in audience consumer habits, as they search for increasingly rich and complex productions. Television and cinema today have the option of delivering their products to a global or cosmopolitan market in which language and culture are not barriers. Television networks, and consequently advertisers, have never had such a broad and international audience as they do today.

The commission of this method has come with the return of the *Star Wars* saga, a return in the hands of those in whose day gave form to this new model for television drama. They delved deep in philosophy, multiculturalism and formal innovation. In *Lost*, as with other series, "hegemonic regulations apply to scripts for all the classic films, the difference being that they have the enormous advantage of length in which they can develop character psyche and storylines" (Muñoz, 2016: 73). The influence can be seen in *Star Wars*, an unprecedented cultural and commercial phenomenon, but there's no question the saga has been reinvented and adapted for the new generations, applying the formal discourse we have described at length herein.

According to this analysis, the initial hypothesis has been verified in which *Lost* is acknowledged as the fundamental part of the change in paradigm of the audiovisual industry. It constitutes a guiding opportunity for future productions that look to innovate and take risks, and, it heralds interesting possibilities for development in advertising and commercial strategies. The im-

portance of the presence and intertextuality of this audiovisual product, with its corresponding cultural and media context, is manifest herein. Lost and its discourse have opened doors and revealed pathways for new creators that have an audience of "prosumers" (Scolari, 2013; Benassini, 2014), capable of establishing an emotional bond with products of fiction, interact with them, and recognize formal innovation.

Notes

1. Disney buys Lucasfilm. *El País*: https://elpais.com/ cultura/2012/10/30/actualidad/1351627793_778328. Html

2. Lost, the most downloaded series. *El Observador:* http: // www.elobservador.com.uy/la-isla-los-records-n55422

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