

# Interactive and transmedia narratives in crime fiction for teaching literature

## *Narrativas interactivas y transmedia en las novelas policíacas para la enseñanza de la literatura*

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ARTICLE



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RECEIVED: 2023-10-27 / ACCEPTED: 2024-02-15

#### **Abstract**

The plots of soft-boiled novels usually offer a game of riddles and puzzles that challenge the reader. That is why structures have been easier to adapt to new dimensions. Through interactive literature and transmedia narrative, the aim is to explore how this genre has been transferred to other works in different formats. The study will address some concrete examples to finally show the design of an interactive and transmedia product with the purpose

of teaching literature to high school students. The research does not aim to show a learning process but the design and development of a game to learn.

#### **KEYWORDS**

Interactive literature, transmedia narrative, soft-boiled, Sherlock Holmes, gamification, teaching literature.

## Resumen

Las tramas de las novelas policíacas acostumbran a ofrecer un juego de enigmas y rompecabezas que retan al lector. Esto ha facilitado que estas estructuras se hayan trasladado a nuevas dimensiones argumentales. A través de la literatura interactiva y la narrativa transmedia se pretende explorar cómo este género se ha ido adaptando a otras obras en distintos formatos. El estudio abordará algunos ejemplos concretos para finalmente mostrar el diseño

de un producto interactivo y transmedia con la finalidad de enseñar literatura a alumnos de secundaria. La investigación no pretende mostrar un proceso de aprendizaje, sino el diseño y elaboración de un juego didáctico.

## PALABRAS CLAVE

Literatura interactiva, narrativa transmedia, novela policíaca, Sherlock Holmes, gamificación, didáctica de la literatura.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Interactive literature and transmedia narratives are two emerging forms of storytelling that have gained significant attention in recent years. These innovative media have revolutionized how stories are told and consumed, blurring the lines between traditional literature. Interactive literature refers to narratives that actively engage the readers, allowing them to participate in the story and shape its outcome. This way of consumption of stories has been transferred to different spheres. Thanks to the appearance of ICT, it has been exploited in many other ways involving multiplatform formats. As Pisan (2007) describes:

People are natural storytellers; computers much less so. Interactive Fiction (IF) is a unique collaboration among the author who composes the story, the computer that simulates the fictional world, and the interactor who explores and modifies the world through text-based commands. Although the possible endings are preordained by the author, the interactor is free to choose her own path. The pleasure of IF is in the balance of reading the story, interacting with the world, and solving the puzzles.

IF works crafted by talented authors go beyond games and should be treated as pieces of literary fiction. As such, IF is part of the electronic literature movement along with hypertext fiction, chatbots, email, text messaging-based novels, computer-generated poems, and collaborative writing projects. All of these forms are reaching out to the larger community for wider acceptance and recognition (p. 1124).

Within the concept of interactive fiction or literature, another term that has taken advantage of new media to expand new literary experiences. It is transmedia narrative, which involves the expansion of a story across multiple platforms and media, creating a rich and immersive experience, although not necessarily interactive. One of the most accepted definitions of the concept has been that of Henry Jenkins:

Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story. So, for example, in *The*

*Matrix* franchise, key bits of information are conveyed through three live action films, a series of animated shorts, two collections of comic book stories, and several video games. There is no one single source or ur-text where one can turn to gain all of the information needed to comprehend the *Matrix* universe (Jenkins, 2007).

Both interactive and transmedia narratives offer unique opportunities for both authors and readers, challenging traditional notions of storytelling and pushing the limits of creativity. Although, they share some features, such as the fact that both are storytelling methods that can use multiple platforms or that they might take advantage of ICT, there are also some differences. On one hand, transmedia storytelling is a way of telling stories using multiple platforms: videos, books, movies, video games, podcasts, etc. The story can be explained in a non-linear way, and it is impossible to understand the whole universe unless the consumer goes into the different products. An example of this could be *Harry Potter*, which through books, films, fan-fics, and video games, the universe is expanding, creating new narrative lines. On the other hand, interactive fiction is a type of story that engages the reader in making choices that can affect the outcome of the action. The plot or storyline is normally text-based or in graphical formats. Examples would be *Zork*, an interactive fiction game in which players explore some dungeons, or *Choose Your Own Adventure*, a series of books where the reader assumes the role of the protagonist and by making choices determines the story's outcome. So, while the focus of the transmedia narrative is the multi-platform factor, interactive fiction looks to give the reader or player control over a story (McErlean, 2018, p. 164-167).

The rise of digital technology and the internet has played a crucial role in developing and spreading interactive literature. With the advent of e-books, mobile devices, and online platforms, authors can now create interactive stories that readers can access and experience in new and exciting ways. These narratives often incorporate elements such as hyperlinks, graphic elements, multimedia content, and branching stories, allowing readers to actively engage with the text and make decisions that shape the direction of the plot. This level of interactivity not only enhances the reader's immersion but also provides a sense of action and ownership over the story.

Transmedia literature, on the other hand, takes storytelling to a whole new level by expanding the narrative across multiple platforms and media. This approach allows authors to create a more expansive and interconnected story world where different elements of storytelling are explored through various media. By using different platforms, transmedia literature offers readers a more immersive experience as they can explore different aspects of the story and delve into different narratives. This cross-platform approach also allows for greater audience engagement and participation, as readers can actively contribute to the story through fan fiction, online discussions, and interactive experiences.

This article aims to demonstrate how the classic structures of crime novels have been used to create interactive and transmedia literature and how this genre can be leveraged to introduce concepts, genres, and literary works to readers in educational contexts. To do so, different examples of interactive and transmedia literature will be briefly analysed, discussing the unique storytelling techniques employed and the ways in which these media have challenged traditional notions of narrative structure

and reader-author relationships. In addition, the implications of interactive and transmedia literature for authors and readers will be explored, discussing the opportunities and challenges presented by these innovative forms of storytelling. By examining the evolution and impact of interactive literature and transmedia narratives, this paper also wants to show “the benefits of transmedia narrative in an educational environment from a constructive and participatory model, meaningful learning, zone of proximal development, active methodology, learning by discovery, cooperative, dynamic and communicative learning, dialogue, and multiple intelligences” (Peña-Acuña, 2020, p. 3). Lastly, a new project design using transmedia and interactive narratives will be presented. This work aims to introduce crime fiction, as well as literature concepts, to secondary school learners through a game designed following the structures of the soft-boiled work, and the objective is to find the culprit of murder among different famous literary characters. All in all, it is meant to be a tool for teaching literature through gamification.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The question that arises is why crime fiction structures are ideal for using interactive and transmedia structures and how to take advantage of them to teach literature. To answer this, it is important to define the term crime fiction, which can be very broad and sometimes ambiguous. That is why we chose to focus on soft-boiled literature, which could be considered a subgenre of crime fiction. Soft-boiled novels have often been viewed as a puzzle to be solved that aims to answer the question “who

did it”<sup>1</sup> through an investigation that can be carried out by a private detective or an “accident”<sup>2</sup> detective. So, according to Vázquez de Praga (1986), the plot usually presents:

A man with a determined and constant mission: to discover the truth, a mission he has to fulfill from outside the story. The detective comes to unravel a mystery in the construction of which he has not participated, to star in a chase generally detached from his private life, from his authentic personality, which will only appear fragmentarily in the novel as an accessory factor to speed up and enliven the plot, which could continue its course without any alteration with another detective with different personal characteristics (p. 24).

The soft-boiled is considered to have originated in 1841 with Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, as the story stars the detective C. Auguste Dupin, one of the first detectives to appear as protagonists in a crime story. From this moment, the genre became increasingly popular with the addition of characters such as Sherlock Holmes (by Arthur Conan Doyle), Hercule Poirot (Agatha Christie’s hero), Monsieur Lecoq (Émile Gaboriau’s detective) or Judge Di (historical character of China, but who has starred in some novels by Robert Hans Van Gulik) (Hoveyda, 1967, p. 11-16).

Based on these structures and precedents, the intention has been to create a game of logic and deduction, which uses the narrative structure of a soft-boiled novel and multiple

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1 That is why they are often also called ‘Whodunits’, a contraction of ‘who did it?’ or ‘who has done it?’.

2 A non-official detective but a person who accidentally or voluntarily takes the lead of an investigation.

platforms or resources to solve it, thus transmedia narrative and interactive literature. It has been proven that introducing a playful challenge to the students usually improves their motivation and, consequently, their engagement (Ling, 2018, p. 142). In addition, the aim is also to introduce students to crime fiction and soft-boiled, more specifically, structures and to explore some of the most important universal literary works. The authors, Sílvia Plana Molas (secondary school teacher), Aida Montoya Esteban (secondary school teacher), and Irene Solanich Sanglas (lecturer and researcher) (the three of them as members of *L'escriba*<sup>3</sup>) with illustrations by Sara Costa based the game on the structures of the Whodunit so that the students must investigate using different provided material the information they will receive and find out who the murderer is.

### 3. ANALYSIS OF EXISTING WORKS AND PRECEDENTS

Before creating the game, we thought it would be necessary to set how the soft-boiled premises have been adapted into other games and formats. We have seen that one of the most popular characters for interactive products and transmedia narratives has been Sherlock Holmes, created by Arthur Conan Doyle and first appearing in *The Strand Magazine* in 1887. Whether through adaptations, reinterpretations, and pastiches, the figure of the London detective has inspired products that have transcended the literary dimension. Some examples could be board games (*Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective* and sequels), films and

series (the most faithful ones like *The Hound of Baskerville*, 1983, crossovers like *Murder by Decree*, 1979, updated versions like *Sherlock*, 2010–2017, or the freer ones, such as *Detective Conan*, 1994 and still broadcasting), escape rooms or treasure hunts. Thon (2019) describes it in the following way:

Particularly in the context of transmedia franchises that are governed by “multiplicity” rather than “continuity,” modification will often be the dominant relation between work-specific characters. Indeed, there can be little doubt that the Victorian master detective Sherlock Holmes represented by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s short stories and novels (1892–1927), the 21st-century Sherlock Holmes represented by BBC’s *Sherlock* (2010–2017), and the 21st-century American immigrant Sherlock Holmes represented by CBS’s *Elementary* (2012–present), the 21st-century African-American Sherlock Holmes in Boller, Leonardi, and Stroman’s comics series *Watson and Holmes* (2013–present), the canine master detective in the Italian-Japanese anime series *Sherlock hound* (1984–1985), or the rodent master detective in Walt Disney’s animated film *The great mouse detective* (1986) do not – and do not seem to be intended to – coalesce into a single transmedia character (p. 188).

In the case of Sherlock Holmes, the entire universe is ramifying or branching out to continue expanding it and offering new plots. Often the same characters are used, with the same names and roles, or they are framed in different times and spaces. However, the narrative structures often remain. If we look at the list mentioned in the methodology of the study, we

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<sup>3</sup> *L'escriba* is an association and a website with literary and cinematographic content (reviews, articles, and recommendations). The internet platform of *L'escriba* is used to save and spread the contents of the game here, explained with the title of *El crim de L'escriba*.

can see how most of the works and products listed above about the London Detective are fulfilled.

Perhaps even more obvious and following the previously mentioned structures, we should also include here Cluedo (in some countries, such as the USA, it is called Clue), which would later be adapted into a film, *Murder by Death* (1976), that would continue to expand the narrative of the board game. Van Ditmarsch (2002) provides this summary of the context and history of the game's creation:

Cluedo was invented in 1943 by Anthony E. Pratt, a solicitor's clerk, and (his wife) Elva Pratt. Anthony Pratt is said to have invented the game when he was temporarily laid off because of World War II and was instead doing mostly boring fire brigade duty. Elva Pratt devised the board. The Pratts' original version was called 'Murder'. It had ten weapons instead of six, and some suspects had other names. In 1949 Cluedo was launched by Waddingtons Games in the UK. In the USA the game is called Clue. Apart from the original Cluedo, there are various other versions available. There is now even a Harry Potter 'Mystery at Hogwarts Game', that is obviously Cluedo-inspired. Anthony Pratt died in 1994, in obscurity. His death only became generally known in 1996, after a public appeal by Waddingtons. His tombstone reads 'inventor of Cluedo' (p. 20).

Cluedo illustrates the plan of a luxurious house on a board with all the rooms in which the crime has occurred. There are several suspects locked up (mostly middle/upper class as far as we can tell), all identified by colour. There is also a certain number of weapons that may have

been used to commit the crime. The players, by asking questions to each other and deducing from the answers, have to guess who killed the victim and how and where he or she was killed; therefore, at no time is there explicit violence because the crime happened before the start of the game (out of the scene) and therefore everything becomes a game of logic. In this case, like in many crime games, the player embodies the detective, and the competition focuses on who will be the first to discover the truth and, therefore, restore order.

Another quite paradigmatic case is that of Miss Fisher, the protagonist of twenty-one novels by the Australian author Kerry Greenwood (1989-2014), with plots located in Melbourne in the 1920s. The character became popular with the series *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* (released in 2012). From that moment on, the universe that Greenwood created for detectives expanded into other formats: in 2017 a digital game was created called *Miss Fisher and the Deathly Maze*, in 2019 the film *Miss Fisher & The Crypt of Tears*, and a spin-off from the 2012 series now titled *Miss Fisher's Modern Murder Mysteries*. According to Väliiso et al. (2020), "The pleasure of this story world strongly lies in its nature as historical fiction, as a heroine created in the twenty-first century has landed in the past to show her contemporaries a glimpse of future worlds" (p. 399). In addition, they also claim that:

The Miss Fisher storyworld negotiates the boundaries of several different media intertextually, multimodally and transmedially. It exemplifies how digital developments have changed the distribution of crime texts and series and also the modes of consumer engagement when they allow for (transnational) audience interaction (Väliiso et al., 2020, p. 399)

## 4. DESIGN AND RESULTS

As we have seen, the soft-boiled stories usually follow a closed structure and rarely move out from this narrative. *“L’argument comença amb un crim simple o múltiple que forma part de la introducció, la consegüent investigació que forma part del nus o cos i, finalment, la resolució del cas que conforma el desenllaç de la trama”* (“The story begins with a simple or multiple crime that is part of the introduction, the subsequent investigation that is part of the body, and, finally, the resolution of the case, which is the plot’s denouement”) (Solanich-Sanglas, 2023, p. 31). The following list enumerates some of the main characteristics of soft-boiled novels and will later be used to elaborate the game presented in this study:

- The main characters are often middle/upper-class white people. Actually, there is not a broad social representation in these stories, which is why some years later (during the 20s and 30s of the 21<sup>st</sup> century) the hard-boiled is created, proposing new plots and new social realities (Heath, 2003, p. 423-444).
- The detective who stars in the story usually has aristocratic connections and an overbearing or eccentric character.
- The detective is not usually completely solitary, but it can have small connotations of isolation. However, he or she often works through small circles, family ties, or friendships (Charles, Morrison, and Clark, 2002, p. 18).
- The detective’s objective and the novel’s action is to restore stability and order manipulated by the criminal or criminals.
- The characters have a blind trust in the power of reason and logic to solve the mysteries and achieve the goal.
- The investigation is always carried out using a list or closed circle of suspects, often quite prominent characters in the plot, to be able to play with the reader’s mind.
- Although the characters can often come from a city, the action is usually on the outskirts or in wilder or country landscapes, always framed and characterized by British aspects such as mansions, afternoon teas, etc. (Menand, 2009).
- There is not much explicit violence. The crime, often murder, always happens “off the scene” and usually the reader learns about it when it has already happened. In fact, it is most likely that the reader learns about the crime at the same time as the detective, the protagonist of the story.
- The plot is structured like a puzzle to be solved: enough clues are offered for the reader to get involved in the investigation, but they are complicated enough (sometimes some false) to make it difficult to identify the culprit. However, it follows the rules of fair play between the author and the reader.
- The antagonist usually assumes a false identity to pass himself or herself off as another character and deceive both the characters surrounding him or her in the plot and the reader.
- The crime weapon is usually strategically hidden and is not usually found until the end of the story.
- The chronology of the plot can sometimes be a little confusing since often all the characters (detective, culprit, suspects, and involved) are all together in one room or a certain location in order to unravel the mystery that surrounds the story (Panek, 2000, p. 96).

- The crime, at first, usually takes place in a closed room or in an unlikely situation but ends up having a logical explanation.
- The authors write and characterize characters' speech with linguistic traits (colloquial, slang, formal, and geographical) (Rzepka, 2005, p. 29).
- The vision of the world is one of order and coherence. Everything fits, and everything is in place, except for the moment when the criminal acts. When the mystery is solved, everything returns to the order established by the universe. "Evil is an abnormal disruption of an essentially benevolent social order" (Cawelti, 1976, p. 149).
- The aim of this type of novel is usually the discovery of the identity of the culprit<sup>4</sup>.

Bearing the list in mind, we created a plot that would engage students. The characters are chosen to offer diversity in terms of literary genre, territory, and period diversity. In addition, most of them have been represented and adapted into pop culture (media culture or mass culture<sup>5</sup>), so students might be familiar with them because some of the works might have been adapted into cinema or series or because they have already read the original story. Furthermore, most works come from British tradition and literature since, as mentioned in the Methodology of this paper, this is where most of the soft-boiled action takes place. However, the

4 The list has been adapted from the thesis titled *La novel·la criminal a les darreries dels segle XX. La Negra (1986-1998), el creixement i consolidació d'un gènere en català* (Solanch-Sanglas, 2023, p. 34-35)

5 According to Oxford Reference, the term "mass culture" refers to "Cultural products that are both mass-produced and for mass audiences. Examples include mass-media entertainments—films, television programmes, popular books, newspapers, magazines, popular music, leisure goods, household items, clothing, and mechanically-reproduced art" («mass culture», s.d.).

game is designed so that the students do not have to know the literary contents in depth before playing but as a starting point to present all the features.

The premise is that Phileas Fogg has managed to complete the journey around the world in eighty days and wants to celebrate with his most famous friends in literature. King Arthur decides to give the castle of Camelot, but he cannot be there because he has another commitment, so the host will be Queen Guinevere.

As mentioned before, to design the game's plot, we followed the rules and structure of soft-boiled novels. Therefore, the features mentioned above translate as follows in the game:

<p>Closed list of suspects and characters within the game</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vito Corleone (<i>The Godfather</i> by Mario Puzo, 1969).</li> <li>• Cacophonix (series of comics <i>Asterix</i> by René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo, 1959).</li> <li>• Queen Guinevere (<i>Matter of Britain</i>, anonymous, 1335).</li> <li>• Dracula (<i>Dracula</i> by Bram Stoker, 1897).</li> <li>• Tarzan (<i>Tarzan of the Apes</i> by Edgar Rice Burroughs, 1912/1914).</li> <li>• Alice (<i>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland</i> by Lewis Carroll, 1865).</li> <li>• Launcelot du Lac (<i>Matter of Britain</i>, anonymous, 1335).</li> <li>• Phileas Fogg (<i>Around the World in Eighty Days</i> by Jules Verne, 1872).</li> <li>• Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hide (<i>Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> by Robert Louis Stevenson, 1886).</li> <li>• Sherlock Holmes (<i>series of novels and short stories</i> by Arthur Conan Doyle, 1887).</li> <li>• Julius Caesar (non-fictional character, though used a lot in other works, 44 BC).</li> </ul>
<p>Protagonist detective</p>	<p>Sherlock Holmes seems the detective and acts as one, however, the "accidental" detectives are the students.</p>



The goal	Find out who killed Caesar and restore the stability and order that has been manipulated by the criminal or criminals.
Use of reason and logic to solve mysteries.	Through different clues, the students must make a final deduction.
Location of the action	Although lots of characters come from cities, the action takes place in the castle of Camelot, a remote location in the countryside. The United Kingdom is the location chosen for the action and where most of the literary works chosen come from.
There is no explicit violence.	The murder takes place in the library, while all the diners including the protagonist (the students) are in the dining room. Whoever finds the corpse is one of the main characters, so the players learn about the crime when it has already happened.
The plot is structured like a puzzle to be solved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are different types of clues:</li> <li>• Written: the real context of each literary work and each character.</li> <li>• Auditory: as detectives, students are supposed to interrogate the suspects and therefore must listen to each one's alibis.</li> <li>• Visuals: The illustrations also contain useful information to corroborate or disprove the alibis.</li> <li>• There is printed material and material that is projected.</li> </ul>
Crime weapon	The crime weapon is not missing nor hidden but happens unnoticed. It won't be known until the end.
Chronology	The detectives (players) gather all the characters together in the library to hear the case resolution, after having interviewed them to find out their alibi one by one.
The crime	Crime scene evidence always points to the most obvious suspects, and it may seem like the crime or some of the alibis are implausible, but in reality, it ends up having a logical explanation.

The language and speech of the characters	The language used throughout the games is Catalan. The alibis scripts are performed by dubbing actors who emulate the characters' dialects, slang, tones, rhythms, and sociolinguistic features (sometimes even stereotypical).
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The game consists of a booklet written in the second-person singular so that the readers/players get an engaging sensation when they are reading or listening. The plot follows the structure aforementioned in the methodology. In this sense, part 1 would be the introduction, parts 2, 3, and 4 the body, and 5 the denouement. The parts are stated below (titles are literally translated from Catalan into English):

1. The crime—the assassination of Julius Caesar (in which all the previously explained context is also narrated, and it ends when the readers/players are aware of the murder but have not seen the scene yet).
2. You have been in the dining room the whole time... (this section provides an alibi to the reader/player by which we know he or she was not the killer. Also, there is information about who left the diner and at what moment).
3. The suspects (each of the suspects is illustrated and accompanied by a paragraph that shows the literary context. The work in which it appears is discussed, and a minimum of information about the historical and geographical context and the author is given).
4. The alibis (although they are voiced and recorded, the booklet also contains the script

of the interviews that the reader/player pretends to have with the suspects).

5. The deduction (it is the moment when all the characters meet to give them the proper explanations of who killed Julius Caesar and why).

In addition to the booklet, the students also have images that accompany each part of the text:

- The dinner (showing the distribution of diners at the Round Table and an empty chair representing where the reader/player is sitting).
- The scene of the crime (in the centre there is the corpse of Julius Caesar and all the characters surrounding the victim can be seen with fear and worry on their faces).
- The interrogations (there are ten images in which each of the characters is seen sitting in an armchair. The player/reader is supposed to be sitting right in front of them, asking the questions they are answering).
- Plan of the castle (it shows the layout of all the castle rooms that are mentioned at some point in the story).

The game has been developed in Catalan and has been tested in some secondary schools in Catalonia. However, no study has yet been piloted or data collected; therefore, this is not the focus of this study.

So far, the game has been tested with two different dynamics: autonomous and guided. In the autonomous system, the students have all the material from the beginning, and they read the texts from the booklet themselves, with the teacher helping them. They stop at the alibis part, where of reading them to each other or individually, they have an electronic device in which they have to listen to them. This same device is what they use to look for extra infor-

mation about the characters and the works if they consider it necessary. The characters often mention some aspects that refer to the original literary works from which they come, and students might not be aware of some concepts brought into the alibis, so an internet connection is useful for them to look for extra information, as well as the teacher in class.

On the other hand, the guided form is the one that makes all the students go at the same pace. It is the teacher who acts as the narrator and therefore reads the texts aloud. Often, he or she can also put a question to the students, who are normally taking notes, about the works, authors, and vocabulary, among others. In this way, the teacher can have information about what previous knowledge students have and it will facilitate subsequent guidance. The alibis are projected for the whole classroom and heard together.

In either way, students always have all the aforementioned material available so that they can elaborate the hypothesis and keep track of the movement each character is sating in their alibis. Students normally cooperate and explain their assumptions and deductions to each other, and a debate in class is created. Before ending the session, the deduction is read so everyone can hear who guessed it correctly and who did not.

When introducing a crime fiction game, following the soft-boiled and whodunit patterns, students have fun and engage in a cooperative game that uses transmedia narratives (or multiplatform formats) and interactive literature. In fact, beneath this game, there are two general learning objectives. On the one hand, to be able to explain and present the archetypical structure of the soft-boiled and take it as an excuse to talk about the genre and introduce it to classrooms. Also, from a more

vindictive side, it allows popular genres to also have a place in education. On the other hand, the activity seeks to be able to present literary content from different works and genres that the students probably know from other products of mass culture or popular culture (films or series, especially). Now, however, within the literary dimension, which really was the origin of the story in question.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The narrative structures of detective novels allow for the gamification of plots. The fact that the premise of detective novels is already a puzzle that aims to challenge the reader to discover, together with the detective, who has been the culprit, makes it easily transferable to new formats. In this sense, it is easy to find different crime genre products adapted to new structures and new narratives. Escape rooms or escape books have not been mentioned in this study, but they are also narratives that take advantage of the structures of crime fiction to create a real adventure or a role-playing game. So, given that the current digital world allows access to new models of narratives, it is not surprising that ICT can be used to preset new adaptations based on previous formats, or new stories that take advantage of spaces or archetypes of any genre, but especially the soft-boiled.

As it has been proved, proposing an activity or project using the structures of this sort of stories also allows to talk about other works and genres, not necessarily belonging to crime fiction. So, we can say that interactive literature and transmedia narrative allow us to emulate

gamified structures to be able to present literary content in more exciting and up-to-date ways to introduce concepts or works to be worked on in schools within educational curricula. According to Mills et al. (2022):

DIL [Digital Interactive Literature] is essential in school curricula that are oriented to the global trajectory of digital futures in multimedia communication and creative expression of contemporary and traditional stories. The iterative re-telling of some of the most enduring, entertaining and culturally and personally significant works of classic literature for adults and for children in concert with ever-changing new technologies would be reason enough for the embracing of DIL in future-oriented curricula. Such retellings, leveraging the affordances of new technologies, offer innovative, engaging and often challenging re-interpretations of the original and subsequent versions of these narratives, as well as emerging innovative digital narrative forms, all contributing to the ongoing vibrancy of literary experience (p. 215).

All in all, future and further research seeks to collect data from the application of this activity in different schools and centres and wants to put the focus on the learning process more than the design of the learning tool used, as this has been done in this study.

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