



THE EPIC AND WAR NARRATIVE APPROACH IN LIVE TRANSMEDIA SERIES

An Analysis of the Dream SMP Case

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ABSTRACT

This analysis explores the presence of epic and war elements in transmedia series, focusing on Dream SMP, Minecraft server Survival MultiPlayer as a key space for collaborative narratives with massive audiences. The theoretical framework employed in this study encompasses archetypes, triggers, plots and the hero's journey, with the methodological model applied to Dream SMP. The results obtained from this analysis reveal a transmedia narrative that combines war conflicts, political alliances and personal journeys, enriched by real-time interaction between creators and audiences. This redefines the epic narrative in new media as a unique cultural phenomenon.

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1. Introduction

In the domain of contemporary transmedia narratives, Dream SMP has emerged as a paradigmatic case that combines real-time narrative improvisation with active and massive viewer participation. This Minecraft server, created by the prominent streamer Dream in 2020, has evolved organically into a complex narrative structure that integrates epic, war and dramatic elements. Furthermore, Dream SMP utilised a variety of digital platforms, including Twitch, YouTube, Twitter and Reddit, to disseminate and augment its narrative, enabling audiences to partake directly in the construction and expansion of the stories.

As Jenkins (2007) observes, "transmedia narratives enable the dissemination of stories across multiple platforms, with each medium contributing distinctively to the overarching narrative" (p. 98). In the case of Dream SMP, Twitch and YouTube were the primary platforms where real-time narrative occurred, while social networks such as Twitter and Reddit acted as extensions that amplified and reinterpreted the events. This approach not only transformed viewers into active consumers but also redefined the role of the digital medium as a space for narrative improvisation and creative collaboration.

The present paper has two main objectives. Firstly, it will analyse how Dream SMP employed epic and war-like elements to structure its internal narrative. Secondly, it will explore how the active participation of audiences expanded and transformed that narrative. To this end, a qualitative methodological approach was adopted, combining content analysis of the server's narrative events with a detailed study of fan engagement on social media.

In the context of contemporary transmedia narratives, Dream SMP has emerged as a cultural phenomenon that has transcended the traditional limitations of video games. Utilising Minecraft as a medium, Dream SMP underwent a transformation from a rudimentary multiplayer server into a multifaceted and dynamic narrative universe that incorporated elements of improvisation, political intrigue, and war epics.

This server, created by the prominent YouTuber Dream, has been described as "an ever-evolving digital play" (Wired, 2021).

A distinguishing feature of Dream SMP is its capacity to engage viewers in the narrative. Through the utilisation of streaming platforms such as Twitch and YouTube, players and audiences collaborated in real time to shape the events. This phenomenon aligns with Jenkins' (2007) concept of "participatory culture," which refers to a milieu where consumers not only consume content, but also contribute to its creation and transformation.

The present article aims to analyse how Dream SMP employs epic and war elements in its narrative and how audience participation amplifies and expands these stories. A methodological approach combining content analysis and participatory observation is employed to achieve this, with a focus on the server's key events, main characters and fan interaction on social media.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. *Epic and War Narrative*

Epic and war narratives represent a form of literary expression that has been utilised since time immemorial to reflect the concerns, values and realities of diverse cultures. Early civilisations used it as a means of transmitting knowledge and traditions through oral storytelling.

According to Milman Parry (1970), it was the poet Homer who, in his works "The Iliad" and "The Odyssey", laid the foundations of epic narrative. Its distinguishing features include a structured framework, characterised by an introduction, invocation to the muses, the presence of heroes and gods, and the employment of elevated language. As M. L. West observes, "the epic is the epic of the gods. West further elucidates that "epic is, by definition, a type of poetry that deals with events of great significance" (West, 2001).

Homer's works from classical Greece have been cited as an exemplar of epic and war narrative. Other notable instances of epic narratives can be identified in the Spanish tradition, as exemplified by "The Song of Songs," and in Anglo-Saxon culture, as demonstrated by "The Poem of Beowulf." In both cases, the presence of a hero protagonist who must combat malevolent and seemingly superior forces is a notable feature.

The evolution of epic narrative over the centuries, adapting to different cultures and contexts, is a testament to its enduring influence in contemporary literature, reflecting human struggles and aspirations. As J.R.R. Tolkien eloquently captures, "epic is a mirror of life, where the actions of men and gods are interwoven in a story that transcends time" (Tolkien, 1936).

2.2. Plots and Narrative Triggers

As previously stated, the subject of these narratives is universal, encompassing themes such as honour, struggle, sacrifice and the search for identity. The following main plots can be identified:

- The struggle between good and evil: the hero confronts evil forces, usually culminating in a decisive battle that determines the fate of the hero and the community he represents (Parry, 1970).
- The Hero's Journey: Joseph Campbell popularised this narrative arc through his work "The Hero with a Thousand Faces". In this paradigm, the protagonist embarks on a mission. During his journey, the protagonist must face trials, allies, and enemies, leading to a transformation through personal growth. An exemplification of this paradigm is provided by Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings".
- Fall and redemption: within epic narratives, the hero encounters a fall, precipitated by factors such as pride, betrayal or misjudgement. The narrative then progresses to a depiction of the hero's journey towards redemption, where the hero is able to regain his honour and reconcile with his past.
- Sacrifice for the community: In this theme, the heroes must sacrifice their personal desires for the common good, emphasising the importance of duty and loyalty. An illustration of this can be found in the "Song of Songs".

2.3. Character Archetypes in Epic and War Narrative

The hero, as noted by Castro Balbuena, A (2022), is the protagonist of epic narratives, often endowed with extraordinary abilities and a profound sense of duty. Their journey is defined by personal growth and the surmounting of obstacles.

- The mentor: This character guides the hero, imparting knowledge and wisdom. They often serve as a father or mother figure.
- The villain: The hero's antagonist, they embody evil and the conflicts the hero must overcome. Their complex motivations lend depth to both the character and the narrative itself.
- The companion: A steadfast ally who aids the hero in their mission. This character frequently offers comic relief and alternative perspectives on events.
- The lady: This archetype may represent both the hero's love and their motivation, serving as a symbol of hope and redemption.
- The fallen warrior: A character who was once a hero but has since fallen from grace or succumbed to corruption. Their tale often acts as a cautionary lesson about the perils of ambition and pride.

Epic and war literature present plots and narrative arcs that delve into the complexity of the human condition. Through their archetypal characters, these narratives provide a rich portrayal of the conflicts, struggles, and aspirations that have inspired and propelled humanity throughout history.

2.4. Epic and War Narrative in Digital Contexts

Epic narrative, as defined by Campbell (1949) in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, follows an archetypal structure known as the 'hero's journey'. This includes stages such as the call to adventure, the overcoming of challenges and the transformative return. This model is evident in Dream SMP, where characters such as TommyInnit, Wilbur Soot and Technoblade embody different classic archetypes of

the hero, the anti-hero and the fallen leader, each with narrative trajectories that reflect their internal struggles, external conflicts and personal transformations.

Furthermore, the war conflicts in Dream SMP bear resemblance to the great literary epics (Fisher, 1989), with the assertion that "war stories allow for the exploration of themes such as loyalty, betrayal and sacrifice, which resonate deeply with audiences" (p. 23). Examples such as L'Manberg's War and Doomsday War in Dream SMP not only generate dramatic tension but also act as catalysts for character development and relationships between characters.

2.5. Transmedia Narrative and New Media

Transmedia narrative is defined as the expansion of a story across multiple platforms, with each medium contributing uniquely to the development of the narrative (Jenkins, 2007). This model facilitates not only the consumption of stories, but also their reinterpretation and expansion by audiences. In the context of Dream SMP, Twitch and YouTube function as the primary platforms for real-time narrative, while Twitter, Reddit and Wattpad act as extensions of the story, where fans document, analyse and reinterpret events.

As Scolari (2013) observes, "transmedia narratives not only distribute content, but also generate active communities of fans that build a sense of belonging and contribute to the expansion of the narrative universe" (p. 54).

This principle is evident in Dream SMP, where viewers not only watch, but also actively participate in the construction of the narrative, generating derivative content and theorising about future story arcs. During the "Doomsday War" narrative arc, for instance, Twitch live chats played a crucial role, with viewers suggesting strategies and reacting emotionally to events in real time. This level of interaction, as argued by Jenkins (2006), "transforms the narrative experience into an ongoing dialogue between creators and audiences, where the boundaries between producer and consumer are blurred" (p. 137).

2.6. Audience Participation: From Spectators to Co-Creators

In the context of transmedia narratives, audiences assume an active role in the expansion and reinterpretation of the narrative (Barahona Martínez et al., 2024). It is noteworthy that "in digital media, audiences transition from the role of mere receivers to that of participants who contribute their own interpretations and creations to the narrative fabric" (p. 45). In the context of Dream SMP, this phenomenon is exemplified by the substantial production of fan-derived content, encompassing fanarts, animations, fanfictions, and speculative theories.

This active engagement of audiences is a salient phenomenon in contemporary transmedia narratives. As Uhls (2020) observes, "digital platforms empower fans to assume the role of co-authors, generating content and expanding the original narratives in ways that creators do not always anticipate" (p. 45). In the context of Dream SMP, this dynamic is manifest in real-time interactions during streams, wherein fans propose actions and respond to live events, as well as in the production of derivative content such as fanarts, fanfictions and theories.

3. Methodology

The present study employs a qualitative approach to analyse the epic and war narrative elements in Dream SMP, and audience participation in the expansion of the narrative.

3.1. TDAPT Analysis Model

To identify the epic and warlike elements, a model was employed that breaks down:

1. Plots and Triggers:
 - a. The employment of structures such as the struggle between good and evil, the hero's journey, fall and redemption, or sacrifice for the community.
 - b. The identification of triggers that facilitate the initiation of wars and confrontations, which are the core of the general narrative, with a focus on power dynamics, diplomacy and the consequences of political decisions.

2. Archetypes:
 - a. Personal journeys narrating the growth of the characters in an epic way.
 - b. The presence of classical archetypes, as delineated by Campbell (1949).
3. Audience participation and transmedia:
 - a. Creation of derivative content in different media
 - b. Documentation of the narrative
 - c. Debates and theories on social networks
 - d. Influence of viewers on creators

The integration of audience participation into the model resulted in the creation of an organic transmedia product. The audience is not merely a passive observer, but rather an active participant who exerts influence on the narrative through various forms of expression such as comments, memes, and theories.

Table 1. Example of the TDAPT Model

	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3
Plots / Triggers			
Archetypes			
Audience Participation / Transmedia			

Source: Own elaboration., 2025.

The situations to be analysed will be as follows:

- Ascent and Fall of L'Mamberg
- The TommyInnit trial
- Dream Prison

These situations were chosen because they were the key points in the narrative of the events created, as they encouraged greater audience participation and generated discussion among the audience. They were extracted from other significant moments, such as factional wars or political events, that took place during the 18 months of the fiction.

3.2. Sample - Main Sources

The main sources reviewed to identify key information for the selected moments are distributed in live and recorded video, social media content or forums:

- Twitter: Popular hashtags such as #DreamSMP, #LManberg and #DoomsdayWar were examined, as well as dedicated accounts such as @DreamSMPUpdates.
- Reddit: Discussions in communities such as r/DreamSMP, where fans discuss events and theories.
- Wattpad: Fan fiction inspired by Dream SMP, such as the story "Heat Waves".

Videos and streams: broadcasts by the primary Dream SMP creators, including TommyInnit, Technoblade, Wilbur Soot and Dream, were incorporated. Furthermore, archived Twitch streams from the players' official channels (such as TommyInnit, Technoblade and Dream) were reviewed. As well as YouTube videos created by the server's participants or the community (such as EvanMCGaming's recaps or derivative animations such as SAD-ist's).

Social media: Relevant accounts on X's old Twitter (@DreamSMP) and posts on reddit and subreddit r/DreamSMP were analysed.

4. Results

4.1. TDAPT Model

Model As previously stated in the development of this research, an analysis model has been defined to facilitate the identification of the epic and war elements of the product and the way in which, thanks to the intervention of the audience, the experience has been improved for both the creators and the spectators, turning users into prosumers.

4.1.1. Plots / Triggers

The Dream SMP narrative is not the product of a single creative mind; rather, it is an example of collaborative narrative, where multiple creators contribute to the development of the story, adding complexity and depth. This collaborative effort involves streamers who, in addition to playing characters, act as co-authors of the story. Through the collective effort of these streamers and their audience, the narrative is enriched, and the audience is transformed into co-creators of the story.

The following examples illustrate the frames that have been observed in Dream SMP

1.L'Manberg's Independence would Represent the Struggle between Good and Evil.

A seminal event in the history of Dream SMP was the establishment of L'Manberg (Blueberry TV, 2020), a fictional nation under the leadership of Wilbur Soot. This event, which began as a spontaneous concept during the streams, rapidly evolved into a war and political conflict involving numerous participants. The L'Manberg War of Independence against Dream and his faction was not pre-planned (Wilbur Soot VOD, 2020); instead, it emerged from organic interaction between the participants. Wilbur, TommyInnit and other players adopted specific roles within the conflict, creating a narrative rich in alliances, betrayals and ethical debates.

2.TommyInnit's Trial, Redemption and Sacrifice for the Community

Another notable event was the trial of TommyInnit for his disruptive behaviour on the server, which resulted in his exile from the game (TommyInnit, 2020). This situation involving multiple characters allowed for the exploration of themes of justice, power and responsibility. The improvisation of the players during the trial enriched the plot, adding layers of complexity to the relationships between the characters.

3.Dream Prison takes us through one of the Trials of the Hero's Journey.

The capture and imprisonment of Dream (TommyInnit, 2020), the server's main antagonist, marked a turning point in the narrative. This event, co-created by prominent players such as Technoblade and TommyInnit, transformed Dream from an all-powerful villain to a vulnerable figure plotting his escape from the shadows. This narrative shift not only affected Dream's character but also generated new power dynamics within the server.

In the context of Dream SMP, wars and conflicts are identified as significant narrative drivers. L'Manberg's War, for instance, incorporated elements of political strategy, treachery, and epic battles reminiscent of great epic tales. According to Wilbur Soot, "the war narrative in Dream SMP is not only a visual spectacle, but also a reflection on politics and human alliances" (Business Insider, 2021).

In addition to war conflicts, Dream SMP's plots combine elements of epic and war narrative and are notable for their complexity and dynamism. Numerous characters undergo narrative arcs that mirror the hero's journey, confronting both internal and external challenges. Furthermore, the presence of temporary alliances and unexpected betrayals functions as a recurrent narrative device, serving to maintain the audience's engagement.

4.1.2. Archetypes and Characters

The "hero's journey", as described by (Campbell 1949) in "The Hero with a Thousand Faces", is a universal narrative model that follows a character's transformation through challenges and adventures. Within the context of Dream SMP, numerous characters undergo personal growth that aligns with this paradigm, thereby establishing a connection with epic traditions.

Dream SMP features a diverse cast of characters who represent classic epic narrative archetypes, such as the hero, the mentor, the villain and the traitor, although these characters do not always remain constant but fluctuate.

Within the context of Dream SMP, the classic narrative roles of hero, mentor, villain, and traitor are represented by a variety of characters who, while fluctuating and evolving throughout the story, fit these archetypes. This analysis is based on the main narrative arcs of the server, particularly the L'Manberg conflict, the TommyInnit trial, Dream's imprisonment and other key events. The characters that embody these roles are described below, along with examples and comparisons to literary and cinematic works.

The Hero: TommyInnit is the character that most closely aligns with the classic archetype of the hero in Campbell's work (Campbell 1949). The narrative of TommyInnit's story portrays a young man characterised by impulsivity and a chaotic lifestyle who, through conflict and sacrifice, grows into a man and accepts the responsibility of fighting for freedom and justice:

- **Humble Beginning:** Tommy's initial state is marked by immaturity and disorder, manifesting in minor disruptions on the server. Initially, he lacks significant power or influence, yet he evolves into a symbol of resistance.
- **Trials and challenges:** he faces numerous conflicts, such as his exile from L'Manberg, the destruction of his home, and his constant struggle against Dream, who subjects him to psychological manipulations that push him to the limit.
- **Personal growth:** Throughout the narrative, Tommy undergoes a transformation. Although he remains impulsive, he evolves into a leader willing to sacrifice himself for others, especially in his final confrontation with Dream.

In the crucial denouement of his journey, Tommy leads an effort to capture Dream, the central villain. This event serves to solidify his role as a hero of the server, one who fights for the freedom of his world even against a more powerful enemy.

The evolution of this narrative arc draws parallels with characters from literature, such as Frodo Baggins (*The Lord of the Rings*): like Frodo, Tommy is a seemingly insignificant character who has to face monumental challenges and a much more powerful adversary. A parallel can be drawn here with Harry Potter (*Harry Potter*): Tommy shares with Harry his impulsive character, his resistance against authority, and his role as a symbol of hope for others.

The Mentor: Wilbur Soot assumes the role of the mentor in the early stages of the narrative, particularly during the L'Manberg arc. As the founder and leader of this fictional nation, Wilbur provides guidance to characters such as TommyInnit and Tubbo in their quest for independence and the establishment of a concept of freedom. However, the complexity of his role as mentor is further enriched by his eventual descent into obscurity:

- **Guide and leader:** During the establishment of L'Manberg, Wilbur assumes the role of a charismatic leader, imparting to his allies the value of resistance and unity in the face of a shared adversary (Dream).
- **Father figure:** TommyInnit perceives Wilbur not only as a leader but also as a father figure who provides guidance and inspiration in his development as a hero.
- **Tragic decline:** as the narrative unfolds, Wilbur's character undergoes a profound transformation, marked by a loss of faith in his cause and an adoption of a nihilistic perspective that ultimately leads to his decision to destroy L'Manberg (Technoblade, 2021). This narrative development introduces a layer of complexity to Wilbur's role as a mentor figure.

At the height of his story, Wilbur blows up L'Manberg, betraying the ideals he once fought for and leaving an emotional void in Tommy and the rest of the characters. Despite this, his initial influence continues to shape the hero's development. With this character, we also find cinematic parallels in Obi-Wan Kenobi (*Star Wars*): Like Obi-Wan, Wilbur is a mentor who guides the hero, but whose story is marked by tragedy and sacrifice. And literary parallels in Boromir (*The Lord of the Rings*): Wilbur's fall recalls Boromir, who begins as a noble hero but succumbs to temptation and despair before achieving partial redemption.

The Villain: Dream is the principal antagonist of Dream SMP, a character who evolves from a respected strategist to a tyrannical dictator. His arc establishes him as the server's most formidable antagonist (r/Dream_SMP 2021), whose actions affect nearly every character and event:

- Manipulator: Dream uses his intelligence and charisma to manipulate other characters, such as TommyInnit and Tubbo, to achieve his goals. A notable instance of this is his psychological manipulation of Tommy during the exile, illustrating his ruthlessness and cunning.
- Obsessed with power: Dream seeks to maintain absolute control of the server, justifying his actions as necessary for stability. This obsession leads him to destroy L'Manberg and manipulate his former allies.
- Fallen Villain: Despite his eventual defeat and imprisonment, Dream remains a latent threat, plotting to regain his power from prison.

Dream's most emblematic moment as a villain is the second destruction of L'Manberg, where he uses his power to completely erase the nation, thereby eliminating a symbol of resistance and freedom. In this respect, Dream's role is analogous to that of Sauron (*The Lord of the Rings*) or Palpatine (*Star Wars*), omnipresent figures whose desire for control unleashes the epic struggle of heroes who, like manipulative masters, use others to consolidate their absolute power.

The Traitor: Eret embodies the archetype of the traitor, a character who initially allies with the heroes, but betrays them at a crucial moment (Eret, 2023) and changes the course of the narrative. Eret's betrayal constitutes one of the most significant and impactful events in the initial narratives of Dream SMP, thereby establishing him as an enigmatic and multifaceted character.

- Changed Loyalty: Initially, Eret is aligned with L'Manberg, providing assistance to Tommy, Wilbur and their allies in their confrontation with Dream. However, he betrays them by handing Dream over to them at a crucial moment.
- Ambiguous motivations: Despite initially betraying L'Manberg, Eret's motivations are more complex than simple ambition. Subsequently, Eret experiences a sense of remorse and seeks redemption, yet the repercussions of his treachery leave an indelible mark on his relationship with the heroes.

Eret's betrayal takes place during the war for L'Manberg's independence, when he hands Wilbur and his allies over to Dream. This act is accompanied by the iconic phrase "It was never meant to be" (Techno Dream, 2020), which becomes a symbol of betrayal. Literary and cinematic parallels can be found in Edmund (*The Chronicles of Narnia*): Eret initially betrays his allies but later shows remorse and seeks to redeem his actions. Similarly, Lando Calrissian (*Star Wars*) hands Han Solo over to Darth Vader, though he subsequently proves himself a valuable ally.

These characters not only participate in the server's narrative but also engage with the audience through streams and social media, forging an emotional connection that strengthens their role in the story.

4.1.3. User Participation and the Creation of a Transmedia Work

One of the most notable aspects of Dream SMP is the way in which fans have contributed to the narrative through derivative content, reinterpreting events, characters and story arcs in multiple creative formats. This phenomenon exemplifies what (Jenkins 2006) terms 'collective intelligence', defined as the collaborative effort of digital communities to enhance and expand narrative universes through the creation of content that surpasses the original creations of the creators (p. 137).

The real-time interaction between content creators and their audience during streams on platforms such as Twitch and YouTube allowed viewers to suggest ideas and ask questions through live chats, as well as reacting to events. For instance, during the narrative arc of the 'Doomsday War' (TommyInnit, 2020), viewers speculated in real time about the military strategies the characters would use, creating an atmosphere of tension and expectation.

In some cases, audience suggestions have been known to directly influence the development of the plot. In one particular instance, the streamer TommyInnit engaged with the chat to determine a response to Dream's betrayal, leading to an unanticipated alteration in the narrative. As posited by Jenkins (2007), 'audience participation in transmedia narratives not only expands the scope of the story but also introduces a level of unpredictability that enriches the narrative' (p. 101).

The collaborative narrative approach observed in Dream SMP bears resemblance to the narrative models prevalent in complex works, such as:

- 'Game of Thrones' (George R. R. Martin and HBO): as in Dream SMP, Game of Thrones presents multiple characters and interconnected perspectives. However, while the plots in Game of Thrones are predetermined by the author or scriptwriters, in Dream SMP they emerge from real-time interaction.
- 'Dungeons & Dragons' (role-playing games): In both Dream SMP and Dungeons & Dragons, the evolution of the narrative is shaped by the players' decisions and improvisation.

The subsequent paragraphs will delve into the intricacies of how users collaboratively expanded the Dream SMP world, thereby metamorphosing the broadcast of a role-playing game into a distinctive experience, 'transformed into a fictional universe that is a closed story' (Legerén Lago, B, Zagalo, Nelson, 2019).

4.1.3.1. Creation of Derivative Content

The audience's participation was not confined to real-time interaction during streams. In the aftermath of significant occurrences, viewers engaged in the production of derivative content, which served to augment the narrative through the creation of fanarts, animations, memes, theories, and fanfictions.

Fanarts

The visualisation of key moments through fanart is one of the most popular forms of derivative content within the Dream SMP community. These illustrations, created by fans, depict pivotal moments in the narrative, thereby adding a visual component that serves to enhance the emotional connection to the events and characters. These creations are predominantly disseminated on prominent platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Tumblr, where they attain substantial exposure.

A particularly noteworthy example is the visual depiction of the "Doomsday War", an event in which Technoblade and Dream destroy L'Manberg with TNT. In this context, fanart often focuses on:

- The drama of the moment: illustrations capturing the destruction of L'Manberg, depicting the main characters in heroic or tragic poses, with explosions and devastated landscapes in the background.
- Characters' emotions: many works explore the characters' feelings in the moment, such as Tubbo's sadness as he sees his home destroyed, or Technoblade's unrelenting expression as he carries out his plan.

Animations

Fan-made cinematic animations created by the community are another cornerstone of derivative content in Dream SMP. These creations frequently offer reinterpretations of pivotal narrative moments, characterised by a cinematic quality that has garnered acclaim from both fans and the server's original creators.

A notable example is the animated video titled "Hog Hunt" (SAD_ist, 2021), which reimagines the confrontation between Technoblade and Quackity. This animation is characterised by an emotive soundtrack, seamless transitions, and a dynamic artistic approach that serves to intensify the emotional impact of the conflict. The video portrays Technoblade as a tragic hero, fighting for his ideals in a hostile world.

The video's popularity is evidenced by its rapid accumulation of 33 million views on YouTube within a few days, establishing it as one of Dream SMP's most influential derivative works. This lends support to Scolari's (2013) proposition that "user-generated content is not merely an extension of the narrative but a creative reinterpretation that adds new layers of meaning" (p. 54).

Another work by SAD-ist, "Dawn of the 16th," captures the atmosphere leading up to the final confrontation between the L'Manberg and Dream SMP factions, highlighting the tension and sacrifice of the characters. In "The Fall", an animation, the destruction of L'Manberg during the "Doomsday War" is narrated, emphasising the tragedy and fractured relationships between characters.

These animations offer a reinterpretation of the server's events, creating a unique emotional experience that serves to amplify the impact of the original narrative. As Jenkins (2007) observes, "transmedia narratives empower enthusiasts to contribute their own creativity to the narrative universe, thereby adding new layers of meaning and emotion that enrich the overall experience" (p. 101).

Fanfictions

Through platforms such as Wattpad, fanfictions have become an important form of participation. Dream SMP fanfictions typically focus on the following:

- Character relationships: many stories explore non-canonical relationships, known as "ships," between characters such as Dream and GeorgeNotFound ("DreamNotFound") or Tubbo and Ranboo ("Bee Duo").
- Alternative events: some fan fiction reimagines significant server events, offering alternative endings or exploring the emotional consequences of the characters' decisions (LUV4PPARKER, 2020).
- Lore expansion: narratives that delve deeper into the narrative arcs of secondary characters, such as Niki Nihachu or Eret, who often play a less central role in the original streams.

"Heat Waves" is a story inspired by the characters Dream and GeorgeNotFound (Miabickley, 2021) that employs an introspective narrative to explore their emotions and relationships in a fictional context detached from the server's events. Despite not being part of the official canon, "Heat Waves" became a phenomenon within the community, amassing millions of views and comments. This popularity transcends the original narrative, influencing perceptions of the characters within the fandom. This suggests that "the narrative becomes a collective phenomenon when it allows participants to engage with their own stories, enriching the main tale" (Fisher, 1989, p. 32). This enables fans to explore aspects of the characters and events that are not always addressed in the original streams.

4.1.3.2. Documentation and Narrative Organisation

Another key form of participation is the exhaustive documentation of Dream SMP's events and storylines by fans. Since the server unfolds in real time and events can span hours or even days, not all viewers can follow every detail live. To address this, fans have created platforms such as the Dream SMP wiki (Dream Team Fandom, 2020) and Twitter accounts like "@DreamSMPUpdates", which chronologically catalogue events, post summaries, and analyse the narrative implications of each arc.

For instance, the "@DreamSMPUpdates" account became an essential resource for the community by providing real-time summaries and context for complex events, such as the presidential elections between SWAG2020 and POG2020. According to Jenkins (2006), "fan communities act as collaborative narrators, documenting and expanding stories in ways that the original creators do not always anticipate" (p. 137).

4.1.3.3. Debates and Theories on Social Media

Social media platforms, such as the former Twitter, now X (DreamSMP Updated [@dsmupdated]) and Reddit (Dreamsmp July 2020), are also key spaces for audience participation. Fans debate theories about the narrative, analyse character motivations, and even predict future plot twists. During the "Disc" saga, for instance, social media was flooded with speculation about the whereabouts of the music discs that TommyInnit was trying to protect from Dream. These discussions not only foster engagement but also create a sense of community among the server's followers.

A specific example of this dynamic occurred when Technoblade, one of the most influential characters in Dream SMP, was imprisoned as part of a betrayal arc. Fans debated intensely on Twitter using hashtags like #FreeTechno, analysing the ethical and political implications of his imprisonment within the narrative universe. According to Uhls (2020), "social media serve as spaces for collective analysis where fans not only consume but actively reinterpret narratives" (p. 45).

4.1.3.4. Influence on Creators

Fan participation has been demonstrated to exert a direct influence on content creators. In the context of Dream SMP, server member Fundy asserts that "fan feedback is instant feedback that helps us improve and adjust the narrative in real time. It is like having thousands of screenwriters telling you what works and what doesn't" (Business Insider, 2021). This level of interaction fosters a dynamic narrative that is in a state of constant evolution to meet the expectations of the audience.

In effect, audience participation in Dream SMP not only enriches the narrative but also transforms the narrative experience into a collective endeavour. From real-time interaction to the creation of derivative content and in-depth documentation, viewers play an integral role in the construction and expansion of the narrative universe. This level of participation is unprecedented in traditional media, and as Jenkins (2006) observes, "transmedia narratives allow audiences to become co-creators, generating an ongoing dialogue between creators and consumers" (p. 140).

4.2. Summary of Results

Table 2. Example of the TDAPT Model

	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3
Plots / Triggers	The independence of L'Mamberg	The TommyInnit trial	Dream Prison
Archetypes	Mentor	Villain	Hero
Audience Engagement/ Transmedia	With alternative roles and a narrative rich in alliance, betrayals and ethical debates Videos, memes, fan arts, fanfiction	Exploration of issues such as justice, power and responsibility Videos, memes, fan arts, fanfiction	Reflection on politics and human alliances. Videos, memes, fan arts, fanfiction

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

5. Conclusion: Dream SMP as a Cultural Phenomenon

Dream SMP is an innovative example of transmedia narrative that combines epic conflict with collaborative participation. This model carries profound implications for the future of digital narrative, highlighting the potential of interactive platforms to transform the way stories are told and consumed.

- Redefining epic narrative: Dream SMP adapts the classic elements of epic and war narrative to the digital environment, using Minecraft as the medium and streaming platforms as delivery channels.
- Transmedia phenomenon: Dream SMP is not merely a Minecraft server; it is a cultural phenomenon that exemplifies how new technologies enable the co-creation of stories in real time.
- Cultural impact: Its popularity and ability to connect with millions of people make it a unique case in the study of emerging narratives.

6. Discussion

The narrative of Dream SMP combines epic and war elements with audience participation to create a unique transmedia experience. This case demonstrates how digital platforms can transform traditional narratives, allowing audiences to become co-authors and expand the original stories in unexpected ways.

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